



WEEK THREE – DECEMBER 2019 – SECOND/THIRD

Bible Story: *Born to Be Our Friend* • Luke 1:26–56

Bottom Line: *You can have joy because God is with you.*

Memory Verse: *“Always be joyful because you belong to the Lord. I will say it again. Be joyful!”*
Philippians 4:4

Life App: *Joy—Finding a way to be happy, even when things don’t go your way*

Basic Truth: *I can trust God no matter what.*

Summary: We continue the story of Christmas in Luke 1:26–56. The Messiah had been promised for generations, but no one would have guessed that God would use a young woman to bring that promise to fulfillment— including that young woman herself. Mary was awestruck when the angel came to announce that she was about to have a child who would be the Savior of the world. She finds joy, trusting that God is up to something bigger than she could have possibly imagined.

PRE-SERVICE ACTIVITIES

1. Early Arriver Idea

Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: Index cards; markers

What You Do:

- Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and asking about their past week
- Invite kids to place their offerings in the *For Everyone* box on the wall near the main entrance
- Ask kids to list people they like to do things with. They should keep it generic, like: mom, grandpa, friend, brother, cousin, etc.
- Write down their responses on index cards (one per card)
- Lay the index cards on the floor so they're spread out.
- Read the name on each card so kids remember what they all say.
- Say the sentences below. After each one, instruct kids to move and put their foot next to the person they would choose.
 - Who would you want to be with you at the park?
 - Who would you want to be with you at the library?
 - Who would you want to be with you at your game?
 - Who would you want to be with you at an amusement park?
 - Who would you want to be with you when you read a book?
 - Who would you want to be with you when you scrape your knee?
- Continue along these same lines as long as you have time.

2. Dear Friend!

Create: an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing

What You Need: Construction paper, markers, Christmas stickers (optional)

What You Do:

- Provide each kid with a piece of construction paper, markers, and Christmas stickers (optional).
- Tell your group that you will be making Christmas cards for a friend or family member
- Instruct kids to fold the paper in half to make a greeting card.
- Encourage them to write messages of joy on their cards, such as “Thank you for all you do during this season,” or, “I pray you have a JOY-filled Christmas!”

- Help kids know what kinds of messages make sense, given who you’re giving the cards to.
- Instruct your group to leave the back of the cards blank.
- Allow kids to make more than one card if time and supplies allow it.

What You Say:

*“You all really outdid yourselves! Can you imagine how happy the people who receive these are going to be? I think your cards will remind them that no matter what their Christmas looks like, they can have joy. **[Transition] Today in Large Group, we are going to learn about how we, too, can always have joy even when things don’t turn out how we expected them to!**”*

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

LARGE GROUP

OVERVIEW:

Bottom Line: *You can have joy because God is with you. Our circumstances do not have to determine how joyful we feel. We may not be happy about what is happening, but joy goes beyond happiness as it is rooted in our trust that God will carry us through whatever we face.*

SMALL GROUP

1. Even When

[Application Activity]

Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play

What You Need: “Even When” and “Even When Labels” Activity Pages; scissors; markers; gift boxes or brown paper bags; bows and other Christmas gift decorating supplies

What You Do:

- Give each kid an “Even When” Activity Page, scissors, and markers.
- Encourage your group to color the illustrations on the Activity Page.
- When kids are finished, instruct them to cut each picture out.
- As your few are coloring, prompt them with questions such as:
 - “What do you think is happening in this picture?”
 - “What would you do if that was happening to you?”
- When kids are finished coloring and cutting, provide each kid with a gift box (or bag), label, and decorating supplies.
- Encourage them to place their label on the front of the box.

- Next, instruct them to decorate their box with markers and the provided decorating supplies.
- Lastly, encourage your few to put their squares inside the box.

What You Say:

“Look at that! It looks like you are going home with a gift from church today. Okay, maybe this isn’t quite the gift you were hoping for. But my hope is that you will use this box to BE a gift to others! We have lots of different scenarios inside our boxes: someone who is sad, someone who is moving, someone who is not having the perfect Christmas, and more. And you can even create more of your own pictures to put inside when you get home. What kinds of things might happen this week to steal your joy? (Let a few kids answer.)

*“When you see someone struggling to have joy, take one of these pictures out and give it to them. Remind them that **[Bottom Line]** you can have joy because God is with you. Who knows, maybe you could be the person who helps turn their Christmas around!” **[Make It Personal]** (Share a personal example from a time you were able to encourage someone and remind them that God is with them.)*

2. Messages of Joy

[Memory Verse Activity]

Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: Cards from the “Dear Friend” activity, Bibles, markers

What You Do:

- Recite Philippians 4:4 together out loud.
- Hand out the cards the kids made earlier.
- Provide them with markers and a Bible. (Kids may need to share Bibles.)
- Instruct them to open up to Philippians 4:4 and to write out the memory verse on the back of the cards.
- Ask kids to share some situations they’ve experienced where it was hard to have joy.
- Remind kids about who their cards will go to and what kinds of difficult situations the card receivers might be going through.

What You Say:

*“God’s Word is meant to be shared with others! It’s the best gift you could ever give someone this Christmas season. So, way to go! You can cross ‘best gift giver’ off your to-do list. These cards are going to people who may have a little less joy than all of the rest of us, but thanks to you, you are reminding them that **[Bottom Line]** you can have joy because God is with you. Our verse is going to remind them that no matter what they are facing or what their*

circumstances look like, they can always have joy because of who they belong to. I can't wait for our friends and family members to receive these!"

3. Pray and Dismiss

[Prayer Activity]

Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: Cards from previous activity

What You Do:

- Encourage your few to hold their cards in their lap.
- Tell kids you are going to pray over the people who will be receiving these cards.

What You Say:

*"Dear God, we lift up each person who will be receiving one of these cards. We pray that from the moment they are given this card they would see Your love for them and how important they are in Your heart. We know that their Christmas might look different than they wanted it to, and so we pray that no matter what this Christmas season has been like for them, these cards would be a reminder of how **[Bottom Line]** you can have joy because God is with you."*

As adults arrive to pick up, have each kid display their "Even When" gift box. Ask them, "Who is one person you think you'll be able to encourage with your box this week?"