



WEEK FIVE – DECEMBER 2019 – PRETEEN

Bible Story: *Led by the Light* • Matthew 2:1–12

Key Question: *How can you find joy all year long?*

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 need to make the wise choice.*

Summary: In Matthew 2:1–12, we see how the announcement of Jesus’ birth was far-reaching. Wise men from the East saw a star that set them on an adventure to find a promised King of Israel. When they finally found Jesus, they worshipped Him as king. God protected Jesus and the Wise Men from Herod’s plot to kill Jesus.

PRE–SERVICE ACTIVITY

1. Get Your Head in the Game

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

What You Need: N/A

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
- Sit together in a circle.
- Instruct kids to create a Packing List for a trip. Start by asking them to think (silently) about the things they normally take when they go somewhere overnight.
 - Begin with the word “shoes” then use the last letter (S) as the first letter in the next word.
 - Continue adding to the list by beginning the new word with the last letter of the previous word.
 - For example, “socks” or “sweater.”
- Continue around the circle several times or as time and interest allows.

What You Say:

“Packing for a trip is fun as you look forward to going to a new place or visiting family. In our lesson today some people were going on a long journey. They had an interesting list of things to take with them. Let’s go to Large Group and find out about it.”

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

LARGE GROUP

OVERVIEW:

Key Question: *How can you find joy all year long? Joy isn’t something we need to only find during the Christmas season. God offers joy to us each and every day. Sometimes kids just aren’t sure where to start. We pray that kids discover how they can choose joy as they grow in their relationship with Jesus.*

SMALL GROUP

1. Take a Snapshot

[Application Activity]

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

What You Need: Prepared bags of M&Ms paper, pens

What You Do:

- Form groups of two or three kids.
- Give each group paper, pen, and one of the sealed snack bags you prepared ahead of time.
- Ask each team to count the number of red M&Ms in their bags then write the number on one side of the paper.
 - Count the green M&Ms and write that number on the other side of the paper.
- Explain that for the green candy their team will work together to come up with a list of things that help us seek and find God, one per piece of green candy.
 - On the other side of the paper, for the red candy, they will list things that stop or slow down our search for God, one for each piece of red candy.
 - Each list can contain actions, attitudes, habits, or anything that influences us to seek after God or turn away from Him.
- Bring the groups together and invite them to share their lists (and eat some M&Ms!).

What You Say:

“If you’re searching for God, the Bible is one of the best places to find Him. The Bible is like a huge, long letter from God. It’ll help you get to know what God’s like and what matters to Him. The Bible is filled with stories of others who searched for God and how they found and lived for Him. You’ll read about God’s love, His promises, power, and plans for you. It also helps to spend time at church learning with those who follow Jesus. If you want joy that lasts longer than your Christmas tree, keep searching for God and don’t let anything keep you from finding Him.”

2. Discussion Questions

[Application Activity]

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

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- Ask:
 - Why is it important to seek God?
 - What do you learn from the wise men about searching for Jesus?
 - What has God done to seek us out?
 - When we need to find joy, why does it help to seek God out?

3. Make It Personal with Prayer

[Prayer Activity]

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

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- Form groups of three.
- Ask one person in each group to stand, another to sit, and the third to kneel.
- Tell kids that they will begin praying in these positions and then at your signal, they will switch to another position of their choice.
 - However, all three poses must be kept at all times. In other words, someone is always standing, another sitting, and the third person kneeling.
- Encourage them to pray for God's help to grow closer to Him.
- Suggest to the kids . . .
 - As you sit, pray about forming the habit of sitting and reading your Bible every day.
 - As you stand, pray about the places you can go and people you can talk to that will help you learn how to knowing God better.
 - As you kneel, ask God to help you take time to talk to Him in prayer more often than you do.
- Remind kids that all of the thing they prayed about are great ways to search for God.

What You Say:

“Dear God, it will soon be the beginning of a new year. We don't know what that year will bring, but You do. Help us to find joy by searching for You as we kneel in prayer, sit and read our Bible, and stand with others to sing and learn more about You. In Jesus' name, amen.”

