



WEEK
TWO
JULY 2023

LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

Sermon Outline

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Joyful Noise

Paul and Silas Are Thrown into Prison Acts 16:16-40

GOD VIEW:

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN FAITH AND GOD'S CHARACTER, AS SHOWN THROUGH GOD'S BIG STORY
FAITH IS TRUSTING IN WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE BECAUSE OF WHAT YOU CAN SEE.

WEEK 2

Key Question: What brings you joy? It's easy to think that joy is the same thing as happiness, especially when you're a preteen. As we think about the things that really bring us joy, we start to realize that joy isn't dependent upon our circumstances. Even when we're feeling down, when we put our faith in God, our perspective can change. Joy is a choice to be content and trust that no matter what is happening, God is with us and is what's best for us.

In week 2, we catch up with Paul in Acts 16:16-40.

Paul and his traveling companion, Silas, were arrested for causing a commotion while trying to help a person in need. In jail, they could have given up their calling to share Jesus' love with others. However, even in the middle of this difficult situation, they showed the power of faith and ended up showing joy! They sang worship songs to God, right there in prison. After an earthquake, the Holy Spirit gave them the right words at the right time to help the jailer and his family start a relationship with Jesus.

Bottom Line: God can help you find joy. We might not ever face a challenge like Paul and Silas experienced, but throughout life we'll understand that things can sometimes get tough. From not making the team to struggling in a class at school, kids of all ages struggle with what it means to have joy during difficult situations.

Through this lesson, we pray that kids will start to discover that joy isn't something that they need to figure out on their own. They can trust God to help them choose joy no matter what.

This message should be 15- 20 mins. More time for small group is key.

Open up with a story about best gift you have ever had or excited about.

Landing: "How do you feel when you get a gift? How does this change the way you think about God as the gift-giver? Or you as the gift-receiver? Before you head out, let's pray and ask for help to understand God's grace more and more today. Let's pray."

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

What brings you joy?

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

God can help you find joy.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

"God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn't come from anything you do. It is God's gift." Ephesians 2:8, NIV



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PRELUDE **SOCIAL** **STORY** **WORSHIP** **GROUPS** **HOME**

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Joyful Noise
Paul and Silas Are
Thrown into Prison
Acts 16:16-40

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

What brings you joy?

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

God can help you find joy.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

**"God's grace has saved you
because of your faith in Christ.
Your salvation doesn't come from
anything you do. It is God's gift."**
Ephesians 2:8, NIV

MONTHLY VIRTUE

**Faith—Trusting in what
you can't see because of
what you can see**

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.

LARGE GROUP

ENGAGE KIDS' HEARTS THROUGH A DYNAMIC AND INTERACTIVE BIBLE STORY, WORSHIP, AND PRAYER EXPERIENCE IN A LARGE GROUP SETTING.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS STUDENTS ENTER.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

Host enters . . .

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN (30- OR 60-SECOND VERSION)

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME

WELCOME

Host has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to [Name of Environment]. Host is relatable and inviting. Host can talk about something that happened culturally throughout the week like a big sports game, movie opening, a viral video on YouTube, etc. Host tells them how excited he or she is that they're there and briefly runs through what they can expect. This is especially helpful for first-time guests to make them feel like they know what's happening.

OPENER

HOST: "Welcome back, everyone! We're off to a fantastic start this month, and today we're continuing with the movement mayhem. I know it's probably been a while, but has anyone played 'Tag' before?"

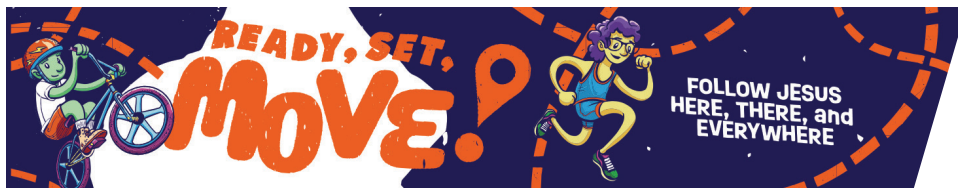
Pause while kids answer.

"Of course you have! I know, it might not feel like a normal game you all play anymore—I get it. But here at [Name of Environment] we don't do anything normal anyway. We've got a game called 'Bacon Tag Ball!'"

SLIDE: "BACON TAG BALL"

"It's a bit like 'Tag,' a bit like 'Steal the Bacon,' a bit like 'Dodgeball,' and a whole lot of fun! Who's ready?"

Host leads everyone to the playing area (See What You Do) and divides the group into two teams.



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“In our Game Arena, we have several places of interest. First are the two Ball Containers on either side of the room—that’s where you’ll be stealing things from your opponent. Second are the Safe Zones, the hula hoops scattered around on the ground. Third is the Center Line, dividing up the two teams.

“When I say GO, teams will run across the centerline and attempt to grab a ball out of the opposing team’s Ball Container. If you are inside a hula hoop, you are in the Safe Zone, and can’t be tagged. Your goal is to grab a ball, run it back safely across the line without getting tagged, and put it in your container. You can only carry one ball at a time.

“If you get tagged, you must drop the ball where you get tagged and head to jail. Balls can be picked up off the ground from the opposing team’s area and brought to your container. Every time you successfully get a ball into your container, you also free a prisoner who’s been caught.

“A few rules—because I can already see the wheels turning in your code-breaking heads! You cannot move the hula hoops. Some of you might think you could just pick up a hula hoop and carry it with you, thus putting you in a permanent Safe Zone. Clever . . . but totally illegal. Hula hoops stay on the ground.

“Also, you can’t throw the balls to your side. You might think you could snag a ball from your opponent’s Ball Container and then chuck it to your side before getting tagged. Also clever . . . but also totally illegal. Balls must be carried, and only one at a time per person.

“Last rule—I just might yell ‘Jail break’ from time to time, freeing everyone trapped in Jail! Let’s get ready to play ‘Bacon Tag Ball.’ On your marks, get set, go!

AUDIO: FUN BACKGROUND MUSIC

Play the game for a specific amount of time – 2 to 3 minutes. Once time has expired, declare a winner by counting up the number of balls in the containers. Most balls wins!

If you have too many kids for your playing area, consider breaking into multiple teams and playing several rounds.

(After the game) “Wow. . . I’m sweating, and I didn’t even play! You all did amazing. Let’s keep things moving and stand up to worship together!”



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WORSHIP

Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.

WORSHIP LEADER: "Hello, friends! Everybody, I want you to take a breath in . . . and let it out. *(Pause for response.)* Let's do that one more time. Breathe in . . . and out. Did you know we can praise God with every breath we're given? It's true! We can worship God when we sing, and also with the way we live our lives each day. Let's have some fun singing this one.

AUDIO: "AT THE TOP OF MY LUNGS" / TRACK 1 FROM AT THE TOP OF MY LUNGS

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "AT THE TOP OF MY LUNGS" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

"Yeah! God, You are everything! We are so thankful for Your love. Everyone, before we continue in worship, let's watch this.

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): LIVE LOUD VIDEO FROM GET REEL

"Raise your hand if you're feeling alive today. *(Get a reaction.)* One of the lines in this next song says, 'I came alive when You found me.' When we come to know Jesus, we come alive! We are filled with His joy—and, well, there's nothing like it. Let's put our faith in action today as we get ready to MOVE and sing praise for God's love. Here we go!

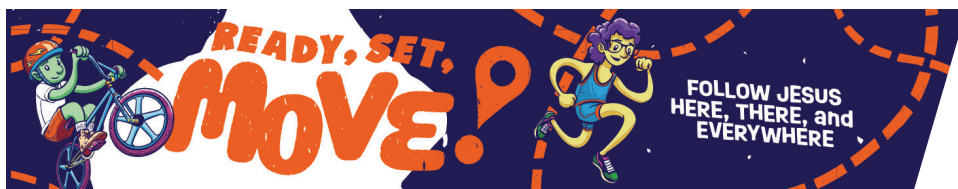
AUDIO: "MOVIN' ME" / TRACK 6 FROM READY, SET, MOVE!

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "MOVIN' ME" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

"God made us to worship. We can choose to give God praise like we were created to do. As we read in Psalm 33:21-22: 'Our hearts are full of joy because of him. We trust in him, because he is holy. Lord, may your faithful love be with us. We put our hope in you.' *(NlrV)* Let's choose to put our hope in God today as we worship. Let's sing this together."

AUDIO: "WHAT I CHOOSE" / TRACK 8 FROM MAKE A MOVE

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "WHAT I CHOOSE" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO



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COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: "I have to say—'Bacon Tag Ball,' other than being brilliantly named, looked like a ton of fun. How was it for all of you?"

Pause while kids answer.

"It got me thinking about some of the crazy, made-up games I played as a kid. Those were times that I really enjoyed myself, just hanging and goofing around with my friends! They were some of the most fun times in my whole life, for sure.

Share a personal story similar to the one below about you and your friends growing up. Kids love hearing about when their leaders were kids, so talk about a particularly fun, joyful time.

"There was this one time we were all hanging out on a cold, rainy afternoon. We were so bored! We couldn't really go outside. Nothing was on TV. And none of us wanted to play any of the games I had on the shelf, but then suddenly one of the guys spoke up. He wondered what would happen if we took a few of them, combined the game pieces and game boards, and reimagine a brand NEW game with all of them. Our Monop-Sorry-Risk was a game to behold. Super confusing? Maybe. Super funny? Absolutely! From making up the rules to playing the game as we figured out how it work made for a really great afternoon together. We had so much fun!"

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: "I'm guessing you all have stories like that, where you forget about what time it was, ran around the neighborhood, and had a blast—those times when it's super easy to be full of joy, right?"

"On the flip side, I'm sure that you all have stories when life didn't seem so joyful. Maybe you were sick in bed, or maybe your friends weren't being the nicest. Life gets difficult sometimes, right? It's not all fun and games and sunshine and summer; sometimes life is way, way harder than we would like.

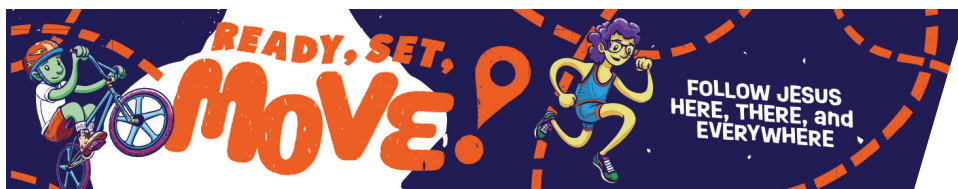
"In those times, where do you find the joy? How do you stay joyful even when the things around you are totally not? What do you do when trying to act joyful feels kind of fake?"

"Great questions. Thankfully, we've got somewhere to look for the answers. Kids, the Bible has a ton of wisdom in it. It's the kind of wisdom that you can actually take and apply to your own lives. All of the things people wrote in the Bible, even though it was thousands of years ago, can help us figure things out today. Let's take a look!

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: "So over the past few months, we've been working our way through some major stories throughout the entire Bible. *(Hold up Bible.)*

If you're using a Bible timeline on your wall, you can reference it here as you recap.



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"We saw how God created everything. We saw how God had a plan to bless the world through Abraham's family. And when the time was right, God sent Jesus to be our Savior.

"Jesus walked and talked with people. He died on the cross and then came back to life . . . and then He returned to heaven. Now we're in the book of Acts (*hold up Bible*), where we can read about the early Jesus-followers and see how the church began to grow.

"The book of Acts was written by the same guy who wrote the gospel of Luke. His name was . . . yes, LUKE! He tells us what happened with these followers after Jesus went back to heaven. You see, Jesus left His followers with a mission. He gave them the incredible task of carrying His message to everyone, everywhere. He put His Spirit inside of His followers to help with this great mission. Because of the incredible work of the disciples—later known as apostles—following God's Spirit, everybody would know about Jesus.

"One of those followers was a man named Paul. We've spent some time learning about him these past couple months—it's the same guy who was knocked to the ground by a blinding light on the road to Damascus! Paul was a little bit late to the party I'd say, but after God got a hold of his life, he accepted the incredible task of carrying the message of Jesus all over the Roman Empire.

"Paul was a busy guy. Check out this map showing just some of Paul's travels!

SLIDE: MAP OF PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

"On one of his journeys, Paul was traveling with a friend and fellow Jesus follower named Silas along with his friend, Luke. One night, Paul had a vision that he should go to a region called Macedonia (*Point on map*). Believing this vision was from God, Paul left the next day for Macedonia.

"Before we go any further, I could use a volunteer or two. Who's up for doing a bit of acting?"

Choose a volunteer to be Silas and another to be Paul. Give each volunteer a basic tunic to put on.

"Everyone, meet Paul. And this is Silas. Say: 'Hi, Paul. Hi, Silas.' (*to the volunteers*) Both of you have a pretty long journey ahead of you. Here, I packed your bags.

Hand each volunteer a duffle bag or backpack.

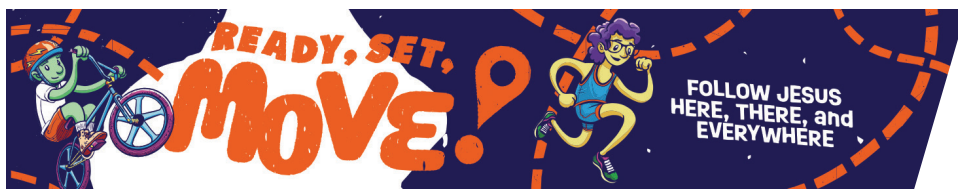
"In Macedonia there was a very important city called Philippi. Philippi was a major trade city where people from all over the world would come to the marketplace to buy and sell goods from that area of the world. After his vision, Paul and Silas went to Philippi to share the message of Jesus.

Lead Paul and Silas comically around the stage for a few moments, then stop.

"Here we are! Philippi! Beautiful, right? What do you think?"

Allow the volunteers to answer.

"Paul and Silas went to a river outside the city gates and started right away telling people about Jesus, about how



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amazing He is.

Encourage the volunteers to do this to a few others in the Large Group.

“Immediately they were successful. People began to believe and follow Jesus—including a woman named Lydia who offered them a place to stay.

“This is when things get a little bit . . . well . . . strange. One day, while Paul and Silas were headed to a place to pray (*Communicator walks them around*), they were followed by a servant girl.

Host walks out.

A female Small Group Leader enters and begins following Paul and Silas around very close and awkwardly. She’s also carrying a megaphone.

“Now, this wasn’t just any normal girl. Luke tells us that she was controlled by a spirit that didn’t come from God. Today, we might say she was possessed.

“For several days, the girl followed Paul and Silas around. She was shouting,

Open the Bible to Acts 16:17 (NIRV) and read.

“‘These men serve the Most High God. They are telling you how to be saved.’

The Small Group Leader mimics how Paul and Silas are walking, chanting this over and over into the megaphone.

The Small Group Leader keeps repeating it.

“(to the Small Group Leader) Hey! Can you stop this?”

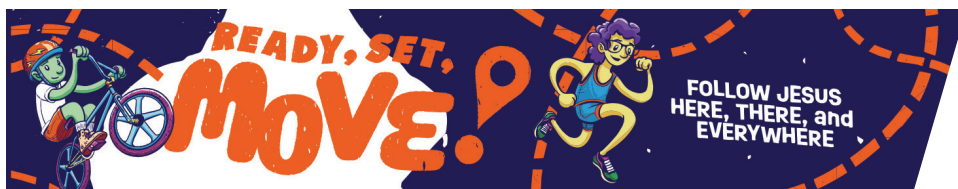
She stops, eyes wide and nodding.

“You might be saying, ‘She wasn’t wrong. They were there to tell people how to be saved.’ You’re right. They were servants of God. And they were telling people how to be saved. But having a possessed girl as your spokesperson hurts the message a bit, doesn’t it? It would be like having somebody outside a vegetarian restaurant trying to get people to come in and eat, all the while they are chowing down on a ribeye steak. It is a bit contradicting.

The Small Group Leader repeats chanting over and over into the megaphone.

“Anyhow, after several days of her yelling, Paul finally turned around and commanded the spirit to come out of the girl.”

Encourage the volunteer playing Paul to do this.



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FEMALE SMALL GROUP LEADER: *“(shaking her head) Whoa. I feel way better now. (looks at megaphone) Why am I holding this?”*

COMMUNICATOR: *“She was freed! (Takes away megaphone) Give her a round of applause, please!*

The Small Group Leader returns to her seat.

“While this was great for the girl . . . it turned out that it was bad for the men who were using her. The girl worked for some men who were making money off of her and her not-of-God spirit abilities. Paul basically just ruined their business.

Stand behind the volunteers playing Paul and Silas and grab their collars, bringing them onto the stage.

“The men were mad. They dragged Paul and Silas before a judge for their supposed crimes . . .

Host enters dressed as a judge.

“. . . and here was what the judge had to say.”

HOST: “Hear ye, hear ye! Because these two men caused irreparable harm to someone else’s business, I sentence them to prison!”

COMMUNICATOR: “Whoa! Prison? That seems a bit harsh, doesn’t it?”

HOST: “That’s not all! Before they get thrown in prison, I order them to be beaten with rods!”

COMMUNICATOR: *“(To volunteers) Don’t worry . . . we’ll skip that part.”*

Wrap both of the volunteers in gauze, comically around their heads and arms, to symbolize the beating.

Then, lead the volunteers to seats on the stage where they are put in fake handcuffs/stocks.

Open the Bible to Acts 16:23-24 (NirV) and read.

“‘They were whipped without mercy. Then they were thrown into prison. The jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. When he received these orders, he put Paul and Silas deep inside the prison. He fastened their feet so they couldn’t get away.’

“Wait a second. Why were Paul and Silas in Philippi in the first place?

Allow responses.

“Exactly right! They were there to share the message of Jesus! They were there for God and God’s mission. Do you



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think they might have felt totally frustrated and cheated? Like: 'God we're here doing Your work, and now look at us?' Thrown in a deep dark prison, I can't imagine they were happy about their situation. I mean, would you be?

Allow responses.

"Me either. However, the next part in this story is a bit strange. Listen.

Open the Bible to Acts 16:25 (NIRV) and read.

"About midnight Paul and Silas were praying. They were also singing hymns to God. The other prisoners were listening to them."

"Singing? Praying? As if they were living their normal lives, being happy and joyful? After getting totally beaten and thrown in prison? Does that seem strange to anyone else? I can hear them singing now . . .

Look at the volunteers expectantly.

"Their voices are so angelic and beautiful. Such joy. (sigh)"

Look at the volunteers again expectantly, maybe even giving a little "come on, you can do it" wave. If they sing, lead applause. If they don't, say:

"Well, they sounded amazing in the pre-show. (to Large Group) Singing, praying, praising God, and the other inmates were listening to them. And then all of the sudden . . . it happened.

Open the Bible to Acts 16:26 (NIRV) and read.

"Suddenly there was a powerful earthquake. It shook the prison from top to bottom. All at once the prison doors flew open. Everyone's chains came loose."

Stand behind Paul and Silas and shake their chairs. Have them throw their handcuffs off.

"When this happened, the jailor panicked, because he assumed the prisoners had all escaped!"

Host runs in dressed as the jailer.

HOST: "I'm in a panic! I'm completely panic-stricken! All the prisoners have escaped!"

Host runs off.

COMMUNICATOR: "And the jailor knew that he would be in BIG trouble and had some seriously negative thoughts about himself. But before he could act on them, Paul yelled out,
Open the Bible to Acts 16:28 (NIRV) and read.

"Don't harm yourself!" Paul shouted. "We are all here!"

Encourage the volunteer to repeat that.



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Open the Bible to Acts 16:29-30 (NirV) and read.

“The jailer called out for some lights. He rushed in, shaking with fear.”

Host runs in dressed as the jailer.

HOST: “I’m shaking with fear!”

COMMUNICATOR: “‘He fell down in front of Paul and Silas.’ (the Host does this) ‘He asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”’ (the Host does this as well)

“What a powerful question. And what happened next was amazing.

Open the Bible to Acts 16:31-34 (NirV) and read.

“They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus. Then you and everyone living in your house will be saved.” They spoke the word of the Lord to him. They also spoke to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night, the jailer took Paul and Silas and washed their wounds.’

The Host removes the gauze.

“‘Right away he and everyone who lived with him were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house. He set a meal in front of them.’

The Host hands the volunteers Fruit Snacks and a juice box.

“‘He and everyone who lived with him were filled with joy. They had become believers in God.’ (pause) Let’s give all of our volunteers a big hand!”

The volunteers, the Host, and the Small Group Leader all take a bow, then exit and take their seats.

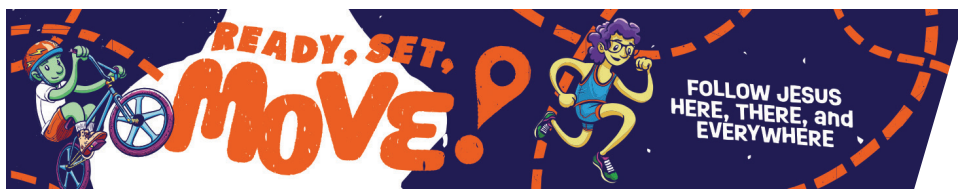
APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: “The next day, the judge let Paul and Silas go. They were free.

“If you had a chance to ask them about this whole ordeal, though, how many would bet they would wish that it had never happened? It was pretty shocking, right?”

“Now, I don’t know Paul and Silas personally—I’m not that old, contrary to popular belief—but judging by what I’ve read about them and this story in particular . . . I’d be willing to bet that they would say they were glad it happened.

“Glad to be beaten? Glad to be imprisoned? No. But think about why they were there—to spread the message of Jesus. Did they do that? Absolutely . . . maybe even to people they normally wouldn’t have been able to reach. When they were joyfully singing and praying and praising God in that prison, the entire prison was listening to Paul and Silas, watching them worship God even after being beaten. I’m sure that made an impression! And then when the earthquake happened, did you see who the jailer went to? Paul and Silas. After all of that, they had the



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opportunity to introduce the jailer and his entire household—family, servants, everyone—to Jesus.

“Let’s back up for a second. Imagine Paul and Silas having just been beaten and thrown in prison. Now imagine them in their cell complaining and whining about how unfair it is—and how this mission is just too hard, and they don’t want to do it anymore. Would that have changed things? It sure would have! But because their joy was not dependent on their circumstances—but rather dependent on the God who was above their circumstances, something really positive came out of a pretty dark situation.

SLIDE: GOD’S BIG STORY TIMELINE

SLIDE: WEEK 2 TIMELINE IMAGE

If you’re making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today’s timeline image on the clothesline.

“I’m guessing from time to time you all find yourselves in a spot where it has been hard to be joyful. It happens to me, too. It doesn’t have to be big things—like beatings and prisons and earthquakes—that threaten your joy. Maybe you have put in long hours of practice for that dance recital and you are starting to wonder if it is worth it, and it is hard to hold onto your joy. Or maybe you have been practicing really hard, but you are still not getting the playing time on the team you were hoping for. Maybe life just has got you beat down, one bad thing after another, and you can’t seem to get a break.

“When we are able to see beyond the circumstance itself and remember what gives us true and lasting joy, God can help us get through some of the most difficult times.”

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: “Today as you go to groups, think about this:

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

“What brings you joy?” Is it your circumstances or something else? And how does the joy that comes from God, give us what we need to make it through some pretty tough times? Before you head out, let’s pray and ask God to help us experience this kind of joy even today! Let’s pray!”

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, Communicator dismisses kids to Small Group.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS THE KIDS EXIT.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP