



PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

PROVIDING TIME FOR FUN INTERACTION
15 MINUTES

MADE TO CONNECT

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



Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Thank God for the promise fulfilled through sending Jesus. Pray that you'll be able to help your few see that they can choose joy in any situation because God is at work.

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Repeat the Sounding Joy

Jesus Is Born
Luke 2:1-7

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

**You can have joy
because God sent Jesus.**

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

**"A child will be born to us.
A son will be given to us."**
Isaiah 9:6a, NIV

MONTHLY VIRTUE

**Christmas—Celebrating Jesus,
God's greatest gift**

BASIC TRUTH

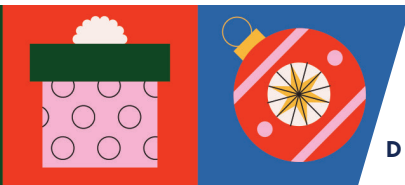
I can trust God no matter what.

1. EARLY ARRIVER

WHAT YOU NEED: "Christmas Words" Activity Page, offering container, and gift bag

WHAT YOU DO:

- Greet kids by name as they arrive.
- Invite kids who brought an offering to put it in the offering container.
- Divide the group into two teams.
- Place the cards from the "Christmas Words" Activity Page inside the gift bag.
- Tell the kids the cards have words associated with Christmas on them.
- Instruct the teams to take turns sending one kid, the prompter, to the front.
- Direct the prompter to draw a card, read it silently, and try to make their teammates guess the word by using only a password—a ONE word hint.
 - For example, if the word is "tree," the prompter can say the word "ornaments."
- Set a 30-second timer for each round.
- Play until every kid has had a chance to be the prompter, or until you've gone through all of the cards.



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CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT
25 MINUTES

MADE TO IMAGINE

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



*2. CHOOSING JOY

[LIVE FOR GOD | APPLICATION ACTIVITY]

WHAT YOU NEED: "Situation Cards" Activity Page, butcher paper, markers, and painter's tape

WHAT YOU DO:

- Instruct the kids to get into pairs.
- Give each pair a "Situation Cards" Activity Page card and markers.
- Set out the butcher paper.
- Instruct each pair to illustrate their assigned scenario on a section of the butcher paper.
- After the pairs have completed their drawings, invite them, one pair at a time, to briefly present their situations to the entire group.
- After each team has explained their drawings, together, brainstorm ways God can help them have joy in those situations.
- Invite the teams to draw how they would choose to turn their difficult situation into joy.
- Tape up the butcher paper in the environment so it's visible during "Pray and Dismiss."

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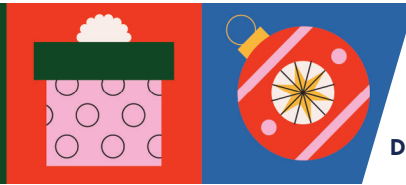
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WHAT YOU SAY:

"Wow, you did an amazing job! You showed how important it is to choose joy, even when things don't go your way. Now, let's think about some exciting things coming up in the next two weeks. (*Pause for response.*) Those sound really fun! Remember, choosing joy even if things don't happen as we expect is so important.

"Maybe you're excited about a delicious Christmas dinner with your family or a special toy you hope to get. But sometimes, unexpected things can happen. For example, the car might break down on the way to Grandma's house, and you end up having fast food instead of the Christmas dinner you wanted. Instead of feeling sad, you can choose to be joyful by enjoying the time with your family in a different way. Or maybe your parents couldn't buy the toy you wished for. Instead of feeling upset, you can choose to be happy because the toy you have allows you to have fun with your sibling.

"These unexpected things can make us feel sad and spoil our Christmas, but we can choose to remember what joy is all about. Joy is finding a way to be happy even when things don't go our way. Sometimes, we focus too much on ourselves—how we feel, what we want, and getting our own way. Let's remember that God is always at work! When you remember that **you can have joy because God sent Jesus**, your circumstances become less important and you can focus on finding joy in every situation."



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MADE TO PLAY

an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group



3. CAROLING THE MEMORY VERSE [HEAR FROM GOD | MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY]

WHAT YOU NEED: Bible marked at Isaiah 9:6

WHAT YOU DO:

- Select a volunteer to open the Bible to Isaiah 9:6.
- Read the verse aloud for review.
- Lead the kids to sing the words of the memory verse to the melody of Christmas songs.
- Lead the singing and invite kids to repeat each line after you.
- Song suggestions: "O Christmas Tree," "Jingle Bells," "Joy to the World"
- If time allows, let the kids suggest their favorite Christmas songs and see if you can sing the words of the verse to those tunes.

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Repeat the Sounding Joy

Jesus Is Born
Luke 2:1-7

WHAT YOU SAY:

"There are so many beautiful songs to sing at Christmas! The best songs are the songs about Jesus. He's the real reason we celebrate! Isaiah spoke these words for God as a promise that Jesus, God's Son, would be sent for everyone. That's why we celebrate! This year, as you celebrate and take part in all your favorite Christmas traditions, stop and remember what it's really all about! God gave us Jesus! God sent Jesus for you. God sent Jesus for me! **You can have joy because God sent Jesus.**"

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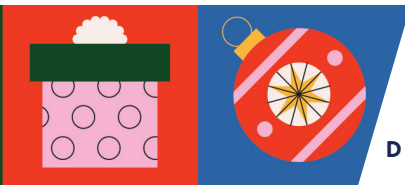
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MADE TO CREATE

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



4. PRAY AND DISMISS

[PRAY TO GOD | PRAYER ACTIVITY]

WHAT YOU NEED: "Advent Ornament" Activity Page that kids started in the previous weeks (extras for kids not present); and markers or colored pencils

WHAT YOU DO:

- Direct the kids to form a circle.
- Set out the markers.
- Give kids their "Advent Ornament" Activity Page that they worked on the previous week.
- Give any kids who did not start an ornament in Week 1 or 2 a blank "Advent Ornament" Activity Page and encourage them to write their names on the back of the triangle.
- Point out the gingerbread man.
- Invite the kids to recite the Bottom Line with you a few times, putting extra emphasis on "Joy." **You can have joy because God sent Jesus.**
- Inform the group that they will be coloring a different word on the ornament every week. They will have the opportunity to assemble the ornament and take it home next week.
- Discuss what "Joy" means, and instruct the kids to color the word joy and the section with the gingerbread man.
 - For example: Joy means finding a way to be happy even when things don't go your way. Joy is when you can't have your favorite dessert, but you still find a way to be happy because you get to spend time with your best friend. We can choose joy in a difficult situation because we can trust that God is still at work.
- Briefly recite the Bottom Lines from the previous two weeks. **You can have hope because God is faithful. You can have peace because God has a plan.**
 - If time allows, encourage the kids who may have missed previous weeks to color the words "Hope" and "Peace" on their ornaments.
- Collect the ornaments and store them for next week.
- Close your group time in prayer.

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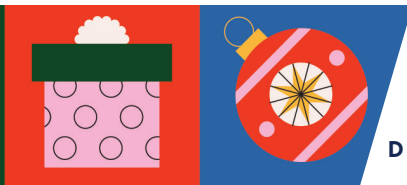
WHAT YOU SAY:

"We can be confident that God is a promise keeper. One of the BEST promises God has made and kept is sending Jesus. **You can have joy because God sent Jesus.** Even when things are hard, even when we're discouraged or unsure of how things will turn out, and even when it seems like there is NO reason to be happy, we can still have joy. God is with us and sent the Holy Spirit to live with us - helping us find ways to be joyful in every circumstance. That is something to be thankful for! Let's pray.

"Dear God, thank You for reminding us today that Mary and Joseph found a way to be happy, even when things did not go their way. That's what joy is! Thank You

DECK THE HALLS

COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS



WEEK
THREE
DECEMBER 2023

SMALL GROUP
2-3

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(4. PRAY AND DISMISS, CONTINUED)

for keeping Your promise to send Your Son. Because of Jesus, our broken relationship with You can be restored, and one day You will make everything right again. Please help us always remember to have joy because You sent Jesus. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to show them the butcher paper with their drawings and explain how they can still have joy in the middle of that messy situation.