



ELEMENTARY

JUNE 2024

FOR LEADERS ONLY

GOD VIEW: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN JOY AND GOD'S CHARACTER, AS SHOWN THROUGH GOD'S BIG STORY

Choose joy! This may be a commonly used phrase you've heard, but what does it *actually* mean? Joy is more than being excited about the good things that happen to us. Joy is an attitude—a decision to trust God no matter what is going on in our lives. From the very beginning, God had a plan for the world. As we dive into the Bible, we'll discover God's plan for us and how God has been at work through it all. When we see and celebrate what God is doing, we can find true joy!

CORE INSIGHT: The theological foundation for JOY

Faith in God's Son. I believe in Jesus and will continually trust Him even when life doesn't make sense.

Jesus never promises that life will be easy or perfect, even when we follow Him. Though we may experience hurt and see pain all around us, God is still at work. Because of Jesus, we can experience a relationship with God and learn how to trust God no matter what.

JOY is choosing to celebrate what God is doing.

HEADS UP: IDEAS TO KEEP IN MIND AS YOU TALK ABOUT JOY WITH KIDS

As you talk about joy this month, keep in mind that kids are concrete thinkers and need a solid starting point before they dive into bigger concepts and ideas. Kids may naturally equate joy with their circumstances or with their possessions . . . which can cause those who don't have as much to feel out of place or feel badly about themselves and their family. This is an opportunity to help kids see how joy is about more than the things we have. Explain how you can have joy whether you're having a good day or a bad day because God gave us Jesus. Guide the conversation to help kids find joy because of what God has done in their lives or in the life of someone they know.

Be sensitive to those kids or volunteers in your environment who may be experiencing more acute mental health-related illnesses. Clinical depression, anxiety, or PTSD will make it more difficult for people to experience joy or identify how God is at work. Enter those conversations with a posture of listening and encouragement. Don't rush in and try to fix anything with a quick answer or Bible verse. Connect with families impacted in this way and find out the best way you can help. And if your environment turns out to be the first point of contact for this family's experience, be sure to have a plan to connect that family to the help they need to ensure the child's safety.



WEEK
ONE
JUNE 2024

LARGE GROUP
K-3

GETTING READY

HERE'S EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO GET READY FOR THIS WEEK

WEEK 1

We start the month with **Luke 15:1-7**, where we find Jesus telling a parable about a shepherd who goes to find his lost sheep. Jesus explains that the shepherd cares so much about the missing sheep that he leaves the other 99 sheep to go look for it. After the shepherd finds his sheep, he invites his friends to help him celebrate!

Bottom Line: **We can have joy because of Jesus.** In Jesus' story, the shepherd is full of joy when he finds his lost sheep. He rejoices with his friends. When we recognize that we are like the lost sheep, we can have joy because we know that God sent Jesus to rescue us! And this joy isn't just something we keep to ourselves. We can share the good news about Jesus and celebrate when others put their faith in Him too.

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Lost and Found
The Story of the Lost Sheep Luke
15:1-7

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

We can have joy because of Jesus.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

**"A cheerful heart makes
you healthy. But a broken
spirit dries you up."**
Proverbs 17:22, NIV

MONTHLY VIRTUE

**Joy—Choosing to celebrate
what God is doing**

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.

Host

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Host
- Small Group Leaders
- Dog ears headband (adult size)
- Half pool noodle to represent a "dog bone"
- Plush sheep (from the Bible Story)

MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS:

- Upbeat music to use as kids enter and exit the room

LARGE GROUP VISUALS:

- Theme Slide
- Virtue Slide
- Bottom Line Slide
- Memory Verse Slide

3. BIBLE STORY

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Storyteller
- Bible
- \$1 bill
- \$5 bill
- Plush sheep
- Props, pictures, and/or video to illustrate the personal story (see "What You Do")

LARGE GROUP VISUALS:

- Theme Background Slide
- Bottom Line Slide
- Optional: pictures, and/or video to illustrate the personal story (not provided)



25 MINUTES 10 MINUTES

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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 KIDS ENTER.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

Host enters.

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME

OPENER

HOST: "Hi, everyone! My name is *(your name)* and I'm so glad you're here with us today at *[name of your environment]*. It's summer, and it's time to celebrate. It's time to Start the Party!

"We're celebrating the good news that God sent Jesus to be our Savior. That's always a reason we can have joy!

SLIDE: VIRTUE

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME TRANSITION TO VIRTUE

"Joy is **choosing to celebrate what God is doing.**

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): VIRTUE TRANSITION TO THEME

"God is always working in our lives and in the lives of the people around us. When we notice what God has done in the past . . . what God is doing today . . . and what God will do in the future, that will help us find true joy that nothing can take away.

"Right now I have the JOY of teaching you how to play a fun party game! This is one of my favorites. It's called 'Doggie, Doggie, Where's Your Bone?' I'll need one Small Group Leader to be our first contestant.

Choose one leader to go first.

"For the first round, *[leader's name]* will be the doggie.

Give the dog ears headband to the leader to put on.



“He’ll stand with his back to the rest of you, and we’ll put this bone (*hold up the pool noodle*) on the floor behind him. Once he’s not looking, I’ll quietly choose someone to go and grab the bone, then go back to their seat and hide it behind their back. Then we’ll all say, ‘Doggie, doggie, where’s your bone? Somebody stole it from your home.’

“[Leader’s name] will then turn around, and he’ll have three guesses to figure out who took it! Are you ready to give it a try? (*To the leader*) Okay, [leader’s name]. You can now turn and face backward. (*To audience*) Raise your hand if you want to hide the bone!

Silently point to a kid to come up, pick up the pool noodle, and hide it behind their back.

“Ready, everyone?”

HOST AND KIDS: “Doggie, doggie, where’s your bone? Somebody stole it from your home.”

Give the leader three guesses to try to figure out who took their bone. Then let someone else wear the headband and be the “doggie.” Play as many rounds as time allows.

HOST: “That was so fun! Our leaders were good at finding the bone because they knew WHERE to look. They just had to look at your faces! Joy is kind of like that too. We can find true joy if we know where it comes from in the first place—from our relationship with God. What do you say we sing some songs and celebrate God right now? Stand up, everyone, so we can lift our voices and worship!”



10 MINUTES

WORSHIP

Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.

WORSHIP LEADER: “Hi, everyone! It’s great to be here with you as we worship God together. Before we get started, let’s watch this.

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

“We have a new song to teach you today. It’s called ‘Start the Party!’ It’s a fun way for us to celebrate what God did for us by sending Jesus. The love Jesus gives us fills us with JOY . . . and that’s definitely something to celebrate! Let’s sing, clap our hands, and dance. Sing along once you catch on. Let’s start the party!

AUDIO: [“START THE PARTY” / TRACK 1 FROM START THE PARTY](#)

OPTIONAL VIDEO: [“START THE PARTY” LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO](#)

“Oh, yeah—now that’s what I call a celebration! There is so much joy in this place. Joy isn’t based on the things that happen to us. Joy is something God’s Spirit creates IN us because we’re so grateful for what God has done. As we read in Psalm 71:23: *‘My lips will shout with joy when I sing praise to you. You have saved me.’* (NIRV) Let’s lift our voices and sing this from our hearts.”

AUDIO: [“I’M SO GRATEFUL” / TRACK 3 FROM MY LIFE FOR YOU](#)

OPTIONAL VIDEO: [“I’M SO GRATEFUL” LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO](#)



PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

BIBLE STORY

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Storyteller enters as Worship Leaders exit.

SETTING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: "Hi, everyone! Before we get into today's story, I've got a question for you.

Hold up a \$1 bill.

"If you had a dollar, and you lost it, how long do you think you'd look for it? *(Pause for response.)*

"Okay—but what if it was five dollars?

Hold up a \$5 bill.

"What if it was 20 dollars? What if it was a HUNDRED dollars? *(Pause for response.)*

"Do you think you'd keep looking longer for a lost 100-dollar bill than you would for a lost one-dollar bill? *(Pause for response.)* I think I would too. Why? Because a 100-dollar bill is a lot more valuable, right?

"Jesus once told a series of stories about important things that were lost. He told these stories because He wanted people to understand something important about God. And it also happens to be something that can bring a lot of JOY to our lives as well.

"We can find these stories that Jesus told in the book of Luke. *(Hold up Bible.)* Luke, the man who wrote this book, was a doctor who wrote about the things Jesus did and said. He wrote about how Jesus loved and cared for everyone—even people who had done wrong things.

ONE LOST SHEEP

STORYTELLER: "One day, some tax collectors and others had gathered to hear what Jesus had to say. During that time, tax collectors were not considered good guys. They were supposed to collect taxes from people for the enemy Romans, but they often took more than they were supposed to and kept the extra money for themselves. The religious leaders were upset that Jesus was willing to spend time with tax collectors and other people they thought of as sinners.

"So Jesus told three different stories to these religious leaders—one right after another. His first story, the one we're looking at today, was about sheep.

Hold up a plush sheep.

"Listen to what Jesus said.

Open the Bible to Luke 15:4-6 (NirV) and read.

"Suppose one of you has 100 sheep and loses one of them. Won't he leave the 99 in the open country? Won't he go and look for the one lost sheep until he finds it? When he finds it, he will joyfully put it on his shoulders and go home. Then he will call his friends and neighbors together. He will say, 'Be joyful with me. I have found my lost sheep.'" *(NirV)*



25 MINUTES

VALUABLE TO GOD

STORYTELLER: "Now, there was a bigger meaning to this story Jesus told. His story wasn't really about sheep.

Set the sheep down.

"It was about PEOPLE.

"The fact is, all of us mess up from time to time. Unfortunately, all of us have sinned. All of us have been like a lost sheep that wanders away from where we're supposed to be.

"But God doesn't let us stay lost. God comes to rescue us, just like the shepherd went out to rescue his lost sheep. God JOYFULLY brings us home. That's how much God loves us!

"Listen to what Jesus said next. Remember, this was after He spoke about the shepherd who brought home his sheep and celebrated.

Open the Bible to Luke 15:7 (NirV) and read.

"I tell you, it will be the same in heaven. There will be great joy when one sinner turns away from sin. Yes, there will be more joy than for 99 godly people who do not need to turn away from their sins." (NirV)

"The religious leaders had built their lives around staying away from people who had done wrong things. But Jesus wanted to help them see that they were missing the point. ALL of us have done wrong things. But that doesn't change God's love for us. To God, each person is important, special, and valuable.

Hold up the \$5 bill.

"Earlier, when we talked about how long we would look for one dollar, five dollars, 20 dollars, or even 100 dollars, I noticed something . . . and maybe you did too. The more valuable something is, the more likely we are to keep looking. I'm more likely to give up if I've just lost a dollar. But if I've lost 100 dollars, you better believe I'll look all day if I have to!

"When Jesus told this story about the lost sheep, He was telling the religious leaders just how valuable people are to God—even people who mess up and make wrong choices.

SHARE A STORY

STORYTELLER: "Sometimes we're like a lost sheep. Sometimes we ignore God's wisdom and we try to do things on our own. When we do that, we usually end up lost and stuck. But we know that God still loves us and that God will come to rescue us . . . and that will bring us joy!

"There are also times when we can celebrate what God has done in someone else's life. Remember, in the story Jesus told, the shepherd said to his friends:

Open the Bible to Luke 15:6 (NirV) and read.

"Be joyful with me. I have found my lost sheep." (NirV)



25 MINUTES

“We can find joy when we see how God has helped someone else. When we look around, we can see lots of different ways that God is at work in the world. We get to celebrate those things and be joyful!

Take some time to tell a personal story. This could be your story, or the story of someone the kids know. It could be a recent baptism story, or a story of someone who has chosen to trust Jesus. This story should be about someone who felt like a lost sheep until they were rescued by God’s love and brought into community. The details of the story should be kid-appropriate and easy for a kid to understand.

You could summarize the story and show some props or pictures—or their baptism video, if you have it. You could even invite that person to Large Group and let them share a one- to two-minute version of their story themselves.

OPTIONAL: PICTURE(S) OR VIDEO TO ILLUSTRATE THE PERSONAL STORY

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: “Isn’t it amazing to think about how much God loves us? God rescues us, like a shepherd rescues a lost sheep. In fact, that’s why God sent Jesus—to rescue us. When Jesus died on the cross, He paid the price for the sins of the whole world . . . so that we can have a relationship with God that will last forever. And that is ALWAYS a reason we can have joy!

“The apostle Paul wrote that joy is something that God’s Spirit creates in us. When we choose to follow Jesus, God sends the Holy Spirit to live in us. Because we’ve been rescued by God, God’s Spirit brings us joy. And when we see how God has rescued other people around us, that can give us even MORE joy!

“God sent Jesus to be our Savior. That’s good news for everyone. Remember:

SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE

“We can have joy because of Jesus.

“Let’s pray and thank God for sending Jesus.”

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

PRAY

STORYTELLER: “Dear God, You bring us joy every day. You’ve shown us over and over again that **[Basic Truth] we can trust You no matter what.** Thank You so much for the joy we have in Jesus! This story Jesus told about the lost sheep shows us how valuable each person is to You. You sent Jesus to rescue us, because You LOVE us. Help us to remember that always—and to find joy in knowing how much we matter to You. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”



25 MINUTES

CLOSER

Host enters as Storyteller exits. Host holds up the stuffed sheep from the story.

HOST: "I just love the story Jesus told about the lost sheep! (Set the sheep down.) It reminds me just how much God loves us. God loved us enough to send Jesus to be our Savior!

"Here's what we need to remember today:

SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE

"We can have joy because of Jesus.

"In all the ups and downs of life, there's one thing that is always true—and that's our faith in Jesus. We know that Jesus came to show us the best way to live. And we know Jesus gave His life FOR us on the cross so that we can be forgiven. God sent Jesus to this world to rescue us . . . and to bring us home.

"Just like [name of the person who shared their story], each one of us can experience God's love and forgiveness for ourselves. If you've never put your trust in Jesus, you can talk to your parents or family members or your Small Group Leader about what it means to put your faith in Him and follow Him.

"There is nothing we could ever do to make God love us any less. There's no trouble we can get into that is beyond God's reach. God loves us and is always there for us. When we think about the things God has rescued us from, and the things God has rescued others from, we can find so much joy!

"I think it's pretty amazing how God created us to live with joy—as we read in our Memory Verse for this month, Proverbs 17:22.

SLIDE: MEMORY VERSE

*A cheerful heart makes you healthy.
But a broken spirit dries you up. (Proverbs 17:22, NIV)*

"I know I have a cheerful heart when I come to [name of your environment] because I get to hang out with all of you! And now you get to hang out with your small group and talk some more about the joy we have in Jesus. I'll see you later!"

Dismiss kids to their small groups.

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

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP