



**ELEMENTARY**

JUNE 2024

## FOR LEADERS ONLY

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### **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.



## GETTING READY

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

### WEEK 2

In week 2, we see how God set aside times and rhythms for the Israelite people to reflect on and remember everything God had done for them. In **Deuteronomy 16:13-17**, we read about one celebration in particular called the Feast of Booths. We see in Scripture how God's people celebrated this feast on several important occasions throughout their history.

Bottom Line: **Make a habit of choosing joy.** Whether it's a birthday party, slumber party, or festive holiday, kids love celebrating with their family and friends! Just as those celebrations are a part of our everyday rhythm, we hope that kids will learn how to find moments of celebration throughout their lives that will help them remember what God has done for them.

### TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

**Over and Over**  
Feast of Booths  
Deuteronomy 16:13-17

### TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

**Make a habit of choosing joy.**

### 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 need to make the wise choice.**

### Host

#### WHAT YOU NEED:

- Host
- Two Small Group Leaders
- Two easel pads (on stands), each with several blank pages
- Two thick markers
- Two chairs
- Index cards with words written on them suggesting ideas for the leaders to draw (for example: dog, tree, football, shoe, house, video game controller, giraffe, party hat, cheeseburger, ice cream cone, beach umbrella, bicycle, roller skate, flashlight, donut, etc.)
- Call bell for the Host to ring
- Host's phone

#### MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS:

- Upbeat music to use as kids enter and exit the room
- Fun, instrumental music (suggestion: "Start the Party" instrumental)

### 3. BIBLE STORY

#### WHAT YOU NEED:

- Storyteller
- Bible
- Three large backdrops made with craft paper, attached to the wall in different parts of the room (use the Story Backdrop Examples LGV for inspiration):
  - Wilderness/desert scene
  - Temple scene
  - Rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem scene
- Shepherd's staff and (closed) picnic basket, set up in front of the wilderness scene
- Ark of the covenant prop, made with a box centered on two long PVC pipes, all spray-painted gold, set up in front of the temple scene
- Hard hat and tools, scroll, and box of tissues, set up in front of the temple scene

#### LARGE GROUP VISUALS:

- Theme Background Slide
- Bottom Line Slide
- Story Backdrop Examples (for reference)

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: "Hey, everybody! How's it going? If you're feeling good, give me a thumbs-up. (Demonstrate.) Awesome! Well, this day is about to get even better, because we have lots of fun planned. This whole summer, we're Starting the Party. We're talking about how we can live with 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

"If we take a look around, we'll be able to see lots of amazing things that God is doing—not only in our lives, but also in the lives of other people. We can see those good things and find joy. And joy is good for us! It's like 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, Nlrv)

SLIDE: THEME  
OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

"One of the things that makes me cheerful and joyful is playing a really fun party game. For this one, I'll need two Small Group Leaders to join me on stage.



25 MINUTES 10 MINUTES

*Bring up two Small Group Leaders and have each of them sit in front of an easel pad—with the easel pad facing the audience. Give each leader a thick marker.*

*(To the two leaders)* "Okay, leaders. This is a drawing game. I've got a stack of cards here for each of you.

*Give a stack of game cards to each leader. (There shouldn't be any repeats.)*

"When I say 'go,' you'll take turns drawing whatever is written on your top card. Meanwhile, everyone else (*reference the audience*) will try to guess what you're drawing. So [Leader #1], you'll draw first, while everyone tries to guess. Make sure you sit to the side so everyone can see what you're drawing. [Leader #2], you'll wait until we guess [Leader #1]'s drawing. Then, when you hear the bell (*ring the call bell*), you'll start drawing whatever is on YOUR card. Then we'll go back to [Leader #1], who will flip to a new page on her pad for her next drawing . . . and we'll keep going back and forth. Make sense?

"Oh—and here's the catch. You have to draw with your non-dominant hand. So, if you normally write with your right hand, you'll be drawing today with your left! If you normally write with your left hand, you'll draw with your right.

*(To audience)* "Let's see how many answers we can guess in one minute. Do you think we can get more than five? Let's find out. Here we go!"

**AUDIO: FUN INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC (SUGGESTION: "START THE PARTY" INSTRUMENTAL)**  
**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN (60-SECOND VERSION)**

*If you're not using an on-screen countdown, set a timer on your phone for 60 seconds.*

*Comment on the action and make sure the leaders alternate who's drawing. Ring the bell each time the kids guess the correct answer, and keep track of how many they've guessed by calling out the total each time. If they get stuck and can't guess a specific answer, you can let them pass and move on to the next one.*

*Thank the leaders and dismiss them to their seats.*

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP**

"That was amazing! I'm so impressed by our leaders and their artistic ability—even with their off hand. Let's keep the fun and joy going now as we sing and worship God. Everyone on your feet!"



10 MINUTES

## WORSHIP

*Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.*

**WORSHIP LEADER:** "I can't wait to sing God's praise with all of you today. I love what it says in Psalm 47:1: 'Clap your hands, all you nations. Shout to God with cries of joy.' (NirV) That's what we're about to do right here, together! But before we get started, let's watch this.

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

"Joy is always a part of a celebration. When there's a party, there are happy people having fun. That's definitely true for us today. We get to be filled with joy as we worship God and celebrate the good news about Jesus. Let's start the party and sing!

**AUDIO:** ["START THE PARTY" / TRACK 1 FROM START THE PARTY](#)

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

"That was fun! Nice singing, everyone. I love how when we choose to worship God, our hearts find joy. And, of course, worship isn't just about singing. We can worship God by loving others and treating them with kindness and compassion. We can live ALL of our lives for God. Let's sing about that now."

**AUDIO:** ["MY LIFE FOR YOU" / TRACK 9 FROM MY LIFE FOR YOU](#)

**OPTIONAL VIDEO:** ["MY LIFE FOR YOU" 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! Today we’re looking at a habit of joy and celebration that God set up for the Israelite people. (*Hold up Bible.*)

“When we look back to the very beginning, we see how God created the world—including people. Sadly, people turned away from God, and the world was broken. But even then, God had a plan to fix what was broken and bring us back into relationship.

“God chose a man named Abraham and promised to bless the whole world through his family. That family, the Israelites, continued to grow in number. For a long time, they were enslaved in Egypt . . . but God rescued them and led them to freedom.

### THE WILDERNESS

*Move to the area of the room with the wilderness backdrop. Pick up the staff and hold it up like you’re traveling.*

**STORYTELLER:** “While God’s people were wandering in the wilderness, God gave them laws to follow. These laws were meant to keep the people safe and keep them connected to God.

“After 40 years, the Israelites were finally about to enter the land God had promised to them. Moses, their leader, knew that in the new land, God’s people would be surrounded by people who didn’t follow God’s ways. So Moses took time to remind the Israelites of what God had said and done while they were in the wilderness . . . and to share some important things that God wanted them to know. This speech is what became most of the book of Deuteronomy in the Bible.

“In the words God gave Moses, God told the Israelites to plan some feasts and festivals throughout the year. Some of these feasts and festivals were somber, but some were big parties! Among other things, these feasts and festivals would be a way to help God’s people remember what God had done for them.

*Set down the staff and pick up the picnic basket.*

“One of these special festivals—one of the huge celebrations—was to take place at the harvest time each year. As Moses told the people:

*With your other hand, open the Bible to Deuteronomy 16:13-14 (NirV) and read.*

*“Gather the grain from your threshing floors. Take the fresh wine from your winepresses. Then celebrate the Feast of Booths for seven days. Be filled with joy at your feast.” (NirV)*

“God told the people to celebrate for a whole WEEK! This was a way for the Israelites to get in the habit of stopping and looking around to see God’s goodness. God wanted them to share this experience with each other. God knew that it would bring them joy!



25 MINUTES

## THE TEMPLE

*Move to the area of the room with the temple backdrop.*

**STORYTELLER:** *(Hold up Bible.)* "As we travel through God's story written in the Bible, we can see that the Israelites didn't always celebrate these feasts the way God had told them to. But every time they did, it helped them remember all that God had done.

"In the time of Solomon, the third king of Israel, the entire nation gathered together to celebrate the Feast of Booths—like God had told them to, long before. They brought the ark of the covenant into the newly built temple.

*Hold up the ark of the covenant prop.*

"Now, when I say 'ark,' I don't mean a big boat, like Noah's Ark. The ark of the covenant was a wooden box covered in gold. This is just a simple box that we've painted to look a little bit like the ark. But the real ark was very beautiful and very special to the Israelites because God was somehow present with the people through it.

"When the people brought the ark into the temple, King Solomon was full of joy! He prayed:

*Set down the ark prop. Open the Bible to 1 Kings 8:23 (NirV) and read.*

*"Lord, you are the God of Israel. There is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below. You keep the covenant you made with us. You show us your love. You do that when we follow you with all our hearts."* (NirV)

"In this case, the people celebrated for two whole weeks! And because they remembered all that God had done for them, their hearts were full of joy.

## GOD'S LAWS

*Move to the area of the room with the rebuilding of the wall backdrop.*

**STORYTELLER:** "After King Solomon's reign was over, the kingdom split in two. Israel and Judah were led by many kings. A few of these kings were wise and listened to God . . . but most of them forgot about God. Eventually, the kingdoms were attacked. The people were scattered or captured and taken to foreign lands.

"But after a long time, a group of people were allowed to return to their homeland of Jerusalem. They got to work rebuilding the temple and the city walls.

*Hold up the tools and put on the hard hat.*

"After the city walls were rebuilt, the people gathered together to listen to the priest Ezra.

*Set down the hard hat and tools and pick up the scroll.*

"Ezra read God's laws to them for the first time in many years. As the people listened, they realized that they had been ignoring what God had told them to do. They were so upset that they started to cry.

"But Ezra, another leader named Nehemiah, and the Levite teachers told the people not to be sad.



25 MINUTES

*Set down the scroll and hold up the box of tissues.*

“They told the people to honor God instead. Nehemiah spoke up and said:

*Set down the box of tissues. Open the Bible to Nehemiah 8:10 (NIRV) and read.*

*“Go and enjoy some good food and sweet drinks. Send some of it to people who don’t have any. This day is holy to our Lord. So don’t be sad. The joy of the Lord makes you strong.” (NIRV)*

“The Israelites went on to celebrate by building booths, or tents. For a whole week, the people camped out in these shelters and shared joyful meals together.

*Walk back to the stage.*

### WRAPPING UP THE STORY

**STORYTELLER:** “God’s people continued to celebrate the Feast of Booths. In fact, hundreds of years later, when Jesus arrived, they were still celebrating every single year. One time, on the last day of the festival, Jesus entered the courtyard of the temple to teach. He said:

*Open the Bible to John 7:37-38 (NIRV) and read.*

*“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Does anyone believe in me? Then, just as Scripture says, rivers of living water will flow from inside them.” (NIRV)*

“The Feast of Booths had always been a joyful time for the Israelites to remember how God provided for their needs. But Jesus took it one step further. Just as God had provided food and water in the wilderness, now God had sent Jesus to offer what He called ‘living water’ through the Holy Spirit . . . and a way to life forever with God. It was the most joyful news the Israelites had ever received. AND it’s still the most joyful news we can celebrate today!

“It’s important that we get in the habit of celebrating what God has done. That’s what the Israelites celebrated together in many different parts of God’s story. *(Hold up Bible.)* We can choose joy by celebrating how God is working in our lives . . . and in the lives of the people around us.

**SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE**

“Let’s **make a habit of choosing joy.**

“Will you pray with me?”

**SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND**

### PRAY

**STORYTELLER:** “Dear God, thank You for the reminder that You’ve given us so many reasons to have joy. You set up ways for Your people to find joy by celebrating what You had done in their lives. Please show us how we can also make a habit of choosing joy today. Help us to see how You’re working in our lives in so many amazing ways. When we’re tempted to complain or when things don’t go the way we expect, help us to **[Basic Truth] make the wise choice** and choose joy! We love You and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”





25 MINUTES

## CLOSER

*Host enters as Storyteller exits.*

**HOST:** “I love to celebrate—and it’s cool to think that celebrating is important to God too. God actually WANTS us to celebrate! We can see that in the way God set up times of the year, like the Feast of Booths, when the people could stop and find joy in the way God was working in their lives.

“So let’s think about what that means for us today.

**SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE**

“How can we **make a habit of choosing joy?**

“We can look around and focus on things in our lives that are gifts from God—like people we love, or our favorite things that make life so good. We can think about the fact that God is always there to help us when we go through difficult times. We can remember that God will make everything right in the end—even the things that just don’t seem to make sense right now. We can simply take a moment to stop our busy lives and tell God ‘thank You.’

“We can find joy when we remind ourselves how much God loves us. God made a way for us to have a forever relationship because of what Jesus did for us on the cross. God wants our lives to be full of joy!

“What do you think? What are some habits we can put into place that will help us choose joy? Talk about it with your small group and see what kind of ideas you can come up with together. I’ll see you next time!”

*Dismiss kids to their small groups.*

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

**SLIDE: THEME**

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP**