



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.



GETTING READY

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

WEEK 5

We finish the month in **Habakkuk 3:17-18**. Habakkuk wrote these words as God's people were about to be taken captive. Everything was going wrong in Habakkuk's world . . . but still, he chose to trust God and choose joy. Habakkuk ultimately found joy because of God's faithfulness and love that nothing could take away.

Bottom Line: **There's always a reason to celebrate.** Even when we face tough challenges in life, we can celebrate because we know that God sent Jesus to be our Savior. That doesn't make our current troubles any less difficult. But it does mean that we can find peace and joy in the midst of them. We can find joy in knowing that God is ALWAYS up to something good—even when we can't see it.

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Reason to Believe
God Will Give Us Joy
Habakkuk 3:17-18

Host

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Host
- Coin (to flip for heads and tails)

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

There's always a reason to celebrate.

MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS:

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

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

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

3. BIBLE STORY

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Storyteller
- Bible
- Prop box that's easy to carry, such as a plastic bin with wheels, containing:
 - Binoculars (plastic toy ones are fine)
 - Posterboard with praying hands symbols (drawn in marker)
 - Wall clock
 - "Fig tree," i.e. a fig house plant in a sturdy container (or you could use a real or toy fig, or a package of Fig Newtons™)
 - Faux bunch of grapes
 - Plastic bottle of olive oil
 - Empty basket
 - Plush sheep (can be the same one from week 1)
 - Plush cow
 - Trifold presentation board with the printed emojis attached (see "What You Do")
- Story Emojis, printed from the LG Assets PDF
- Glue stick

MONTHLY VIRTUE

Joy—Choosing to celebrate what God is doing

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.

LARGE GROUP VISUALS:

- Theme Background Slide
- Bottom Line Slide
- Virtue Slide
- Story Emojis (printable)

25 MINUTES 10 MINUTES

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Reason to Believe
God Will Give Us Joy
Habakkuk 3:17-18

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

There's always a reason to celebrate.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

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

MONTHLY VIRTUE

Joy—Choosing to celebrate what God is doing

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 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, friends! I'm so happy to see your smiling faces! If you're happy to be here too, say 'Wooohooo!' (Pause for response.) I love it! Now it really feels like a party.

"All summer long we're finding out how we can live with joy. See, joy isn't just about being happy because something good happened to you.

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

"In the good times AND the tough times, we can find joy when we pay attention to the way God is working in the world around us. We can find joy when we remember how much God loves us, and how God sent Jesus to be our Savior. That's ALWAYS something to celebrate!

"I've got another joyful party game for us to play today. This one is called 'Heads or Tails.' Everyone stand up on your feet.

"Here's how you play. For each round of the game, you'll decide if you want to be heads or tails. If you choose heads, put both hands on your head like this. (Demonstrate.) Or if you choose tails, put both hands on your 'tail' like this. (Demonstrate by putting both hands on your lower back.)



“Once you’ve made your choice, you freeze! Then we’ll flip a coin. If it’s heads, everyone who chose heads is still in, and everyone who chose tails is out. And if it’s tails, everyone who chose tails is still in, and everyone who chose heads is out. We’ll keep going until we have one champion!

“We’ll play a few practice rounds until everybody gets the hang of it. Are you ready? Let’s go!

AUDIO: FUN, INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC (SUGGESTION: “START THE PARTY” INSTRUMENTAL)

Play a few practice rounds in which no one gets out. Then let everyone know when the game actually starts. Have the kids who are out sit down. Keep playing until you get down to one winner (or a few winners).

“That was really fun! Thanks for playing along. You can all stand back up now, because everyone is back in again. It’s time for us to sing and worship God!”



10 MINUTES

WORSHIP

Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.

WORSHIP LEADER: “Hi, everyone! It’s always so good when we lift our voices and worship God together. This time isn’t about us at all. It’s about us giving God honor and praise. This song says, ‘Every day, I will sing Your praise.’ Are you ready to sing it? *(Pause for response.)* Great! Let’s go!

AUDIO: “SING YOUR PRAISE” / TRACK 2 FROM MY LIFE FOR YOU

OPTIONAL VIDEO: “SING YOUR PRAISE” LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

“We always have a reason to celebrate what God has done . . . and what God is doing in our lives right now. As we read in Psalm 89:15-16: ‘Blessed are those who have learned to shout praise to you. Lord, they live in the light of your kindness. All day long they are full of joy because of who you are. They celebrate the fact that you do what is right.’ (NirV) I love that part—‘All day long they are full of joy because of who you are.’ We are full of joy because of Who God is and what God has done for us. Let’s MOVE, sing, and worship God together.”

AUDIO: “MOVIN’ ME” / TRACK 6 FROM READY, SET, MOVE!

OPTIONAL VIDEO: “MOVIN’ ME” 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! As you know, we're talking about joy this summer . . . and joy is about more than just feeling happy.

SLIDE: VIRTUE

"We find joy when we **choose to celebrate what God is doing.**

"We can find joy because we know how much God loves us, and we see how God is working in the world around us. Those things can bring us joy deep down inside . . . whether things are going great in our lives . . . or even when nothing seems to be going our way at all.

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

"Today we'll look at a short passage from the Bible that explains where our joy comes from. We find this passage in a book called Habakkuk, which is near the very end of the Old Testament. (*Hold up Bible.*) This book contains the words of a man named Habakkuk, who was a prophet. Prophets are people who listened to God and spoke what God said to others. The prophets lived and worked throughout the history of God's people.

HABAKKUK PRAYS

STORYTELLER: "Habakkuk lived in the city of Jerusalem during a very difficult time. God's people lived in two separate kingdoms at this time, called Israel and Judah. The northern kingdom of Israel had already been conquered by other nations. The southern kingdom of Judah was still free, but barely. Enemies were closing in on all sides.

Walk into the audience, carrying the prop box. Hand the pair of binoculars to a kid. Cue the kid to stand, hold the binoculars up to their eyes, and look around the room.

Make sure the kid knows to stay standing before you move on.

"Everywhere Habakkuk looked, he saw things going wrong and falling apart. Even in his own country, people had forgotten God. They were fighting with each other and treating others unfairly.

"So what did Habakkuk do?

Walk over to a different kid and hand them the praying hands poster. Cue the kid to stand and hold up the poster so everyone can see it.

"He prayed to God. (*Hold up Bible.*) And as we read here in the Bible, God answered! God told Habakkuk it was true that the Babylonians were coming to attack . . . and unfortunately, hard times were still to come. But Habakkuk trusted in God and believed that God was with the Israelite people.



25 MINUTES

"In fact, we can read Habakkuk's prayer right here in the Bible. (Hold up Bible.)

Open the Bible to Habakkuk 3:2 (NIRV) and read.

*Lord, I know how famous you are.
I have great respect for you
because of your mighty acts.
Do them again for us.
Make them known in our time. (NIRV)*

"Habakkuk remembered how God had worked in the lives of the Israelites throughout history.

Walk over to a different kid and hand them the clock. Cue the kid to stand and hold up the clock so everyone can see it.

"He trusted that God could bring good out of hard things. He chose to trust that God could make all things right in the end.

CHOOSE JOY

STORYTELLER: "Even in the middle of a very difficult situation, Habakkuk chose to have joy. He understood that his joy didn't come from the things that happened to him. His joy came from his relationship with God.

"He said:

Open the Bible to Habakkuk 3:17-18 (NIRV) and read.

Note: During this next section, try to move quickly as you pass out the items to the kids. Use hand motions to cue them to stand and hold up their items, but do so wordlessly so that you keep the continuity of the passage.

The fig trees might not bud.

Hand the "fig tree" (house plant) to a kid. Cue them to stand and hold it up.

The vines might not produce any grapes.

Hand the faux bunch of grapes to a kid. Cue them to stand and hold it up.

The olive crop might fail.

Hand the bottle of olive oil to a kid. Cue them to stand and hold it up.

The fields might not produce any food.

Hand the empty basket to a kid. Cue them to stand and hold it up, then turn it upside down.

There might not be any sheep in the pens.



PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

Hand the plush sheep to a kid. Cue them to stand and hold it up.

There might not be any cattle in the barns.

Hand the plush cow to a kid. Cue them to stand and hold it up.

*But I will still be glad
because of what the Lord has done.
God my Savior fills me with joy. (NirV)*

“Let me read that last part again.

*But I will still be glad
because of what the Lord has done.
God my Savior fills me with joy. (NirV)*

WE CAN CHOOSE JOY TOO

STORYTELLER: “Now, there’s something you need to understand about why Habakkuk mentioned examples like these. (Reference the crop/animal props that you just passed out.) In Habakkuk’s time, the Israelites were mostly farmers. They NEEDED things like figs . . . grapes . . . olives . . . and animals to survive. They either ate what they grew—or what someone nearby grew. So they knew how awful it would be if the crops failed and they didn’t have the food they needed.

“Listen again.

Open the Bible to Habakkuk 3:17-18 (NirV) and read. Gesture to each of the prop items that the kids are holding up as you mention them.

*The fig trees might not bud.
The vines might not produce any grapes.
The olive crop might fail.
The fields might not produce any food.
There might not be any sheep in the pens.
There might not be any cattle in the barns.*

“But still, Habakkuk said he would be glad. Why? (Pause for response.) Right. He chose to celebrate because he knew that God is good. He chose to remember the good things God had done.

“He said:

God my Savior fills me with joy. (NirV)

“I wonder if you’ve ever felt like Habakkuk did—like things just weren’t working out the way you hoped. I know I’ve felt that way before. And that can be really difficult. It can be hard to find joy when something is going wrong.



25 MINUTES

Hold up the closed trifold presentation board. The flaps should be folded in so that the emoji faces on the outside are visible.

“But that’s the amazing thing about the kind of joy God gives us. We can be sad, angry, or upset on the outside . . .

Hand the trifold board to a kid.

“ . . . but still feel filled up with God’s love and peace on the inside!

Cue the kid to open up the side flaps to reveal the heart emojis on the inside.

“You might not be able to control the bad thing that’s happened. But you CAN control how you respond. If you focus only on what’s wrong, it’s easy to feel hopeless and overwhelmed. But you can choose to take your focus off your problems—even though they’re real and important—and look to God.

Walk over to the kid who’s holding up the praying hands poster.

“You can talk to God about how you’re feeling. You can remember how God has helped you in the past. And you can choose to trust that God is in control.

“Then you can say, like Habakkuk did:

Open the Bible to Habakkuk 3:18 (NirV) and read.

*But I will still be glad
because of what the Lord has done.
God my Savior fills me with joy. (NirV)*

“Thanks for your help, everyone! If you’re holding a prop, you can put it back in the box now.

Collect the props from the kids. Move onto the stage as you wrap up.

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: “Habakkuk was able to say that he could be glad because of what God had done . . . and that God was the One Who had filled him with joy. That’s a pretty remarkable thing for someone to say when they’re going through a hard time!

“When we face challenges in life, we can choose to trust God . . . like Habakkuk did. We can remember how much God loves us. We can remember how Jesus died on the cross for our sins so we can live forever with God. And that’s something to celebrate no matter what is happening around us.

“That doesn’t mean that our troubles aren’t difficult. But it does mean that we can find peace and joy in the midst of them. When we put our trust in God, we know this:

SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE



25 MINUTES

“There’s always a reason to celebrate.

“Let’s pray and ask God to help us find joy.”

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

PRAY

STORYTELLER: “Dear God, thank You for these amazing words that Habakkuk shared. They remind us that our joy doesn’t come from things that happen to us. Our TRUE joy comes from You. When things are hard, please help us to remember that You love us, that You’re with us, and that You’ve promised to make everything right in the end. We are so glad to know that **[Basic Truth] we can trust you no matter what!** We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”



25 MINUTES

CLOSER

Host enters as Storyteller exits.

HOST: “Wow. Habakkuk’s words that we heard today are really powerful, aren’t they? I mean, it’s one thing to say that you’re full of joy because life is going great. But Habakkuk was going through a really hard time. There were a lot of bad things happening around him. Still, he chose to trust God—and that’s how he found joy!

“When things don’t go our way . . . when things don’t work out like we hoped they would . . . or when we feel afraid or disappointed . . . we can remember that we’re never really alone. God sent Jesus for us. Jesus made a way for us to live forever with God. And God’s Holy Spirit can help us live each day with joy. That’s true whether things are going great, or not great at all.

SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE

“There’s always a reason to celebrate.

“Think about all that Jesus experienced in His life. Even He went through really hard things here on this Earth . . . and still, He chose to trust God.

“We can find reasons to celebrate when we read the Bible and see how God has been faithful and good all throughout history. We can also think back to times when we’ve seen God’s goodness in our own lives.

Share an age-appropriate personal story of a time when you were going through difficult challenges, but God still helped you find joy.

“We can find joy when we look at what God has done in the past . . . when we pay attention to what God is doing right now . . . and when we remember that God will make everything right in the end.

“I bet you can think of some reasons to celebrate what God has done. You can head to Small Group now and talk about it with your friends. Have fun!”

Dismiss kids to their small groups.

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

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP