



PRETEEN

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.



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GETTING READY

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

WEEK 4

Key Question: When is it hard to find joy? Kids are facing a lot of hard things these days—so much so that it can be difficult for them to find joy. As our kids discover more about our true source of joy—our relationship with God—we hope that they'll begin to discover different ways to look for joy in what they see and experience each day.

In week 4, we take a look at some of David's Psalms—specifically, **Psalms 8, 16, and 19**. David wrote a lot about the things he observed in nature and the world around him that God had created. Through creation, we notice how God is at work—even if sometimes we struggle to see God's work in our own lives. Joy is all around us. We just have to look.

Bottom Line: Find joy in what you see around you. God has given us the amazing ability to use our senses so we can find joy through the beauty of God's creation. When kids tap into these senses, they can discover God in a whole new way. Even if not all of our senses work perfectly, we can find ways to see how God is at work in the world around us.

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Look Around
Joy in the Psalms
Psalms 8, 16, and 19

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

When is it hard to find joy?

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Find joy in what you see around you.

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
- Worship Leader or another adult volunteer
- Communicator or another adult volunteer
- 2 Small Group Leaders
- 2 kid volunteers
- 2 blindfolds
- 2 ridiculous costumes with random props
- Timer

MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS:

- Upbeat music to use as kids enter the room
- Upbeat game music
- Upbeat dance music

3. COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Communicator
- Bible
- Disco ball
- Lights (*To light up disco ball*)

MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS:

- Upbeat music to use as kids exit the room
- Upbeat dance music
- Bible Story Audio Tracks: (*purchase and/or create a playlist to play during story*)
 - "Signal to Noise" by Scott Buckley
 - "Sounds from Eating Grass in Pasture" by Sound Therapy Masters
 - "Journey to the Stars" by Savfk Music
 - "Alive" by Ikson
 - "Service Please" by Music Factory
 - "A Way to You" by Infraction
 - "Cooking Background Music" by Broken C
 - "Can't Sleep" by Infraction



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PRELUDE SOCIAL **STORY** WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

25 MINUTES 10 MINUTES

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

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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 STUDENTS ENTER.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

Host enters . . .

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN

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 (US Open, NBA Finals, Stanley Cup Finals), Juneteenth, movie opening (*Despicable Me 4*), 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: (to several kids) "Hi. Hello. How are you? It's good to see you. (pause) You know, I'm glad to move past the greeting to tell you how I'm really feeling. And if I can be honest, I'm hoping you're doing better than me.

"If you weren't here last week, we did a good bit of dancing in here. Locks were popped. Hips were shook. There were groups all over this room booging to all styles of music. So much so, anytime I heard music on the radio or in the store or at my house or in a restaurant, I felt like somebody somewhere was probably having a dance party. . . (dramatic pause, and overly upset) without ME!

Slump in a chair.

"This is the absolute worst feeling in the world. All week long I've had major FOMO—or fear of missing out—anytime I heard a bop. (pause) Which was practically all the time! Because of that, I find myself constantly looking over my shoulder to confirm I'm not missing out on a dance party.



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Suddenly look over your shoulder, then the other one, to confirm no dance party is happening behind you.

"Whew. No party. I'm good.

(standing) "I've been doing some thinking. Sure, it is important to develop your dancing skills. But it is *equally* important to be able to sense the party that could be happening right behind your back!

"Don't make that face. They're equally important. End of story.

"I'm determined to help a select few of you develop this intelligence right now! Would anybody like to work on this new skill in the form of a game? I call it . . . 'The Party Behind Me.' Who's up for it?

SLIDE: "THE PARTY BEHIND ME"

Invite two Small Group Leaders to come to the stage and have them each choose a kid from their Small Group to join them.

"Playing 'The Party Behind Me' is simple. There's a person . . . and a party behind them.

"Here's the set-up. We'll have one kid volunteer stand on the stage facing the crowd while wearing this.

Hand them a blindfold.

"Their Small Group Leader will stand in the audience. Behind the blindfolded kid will be a dance party, however crazy they want to get. The Small Group Leader will describe the scene to the blindfolded kid, and the blindfolded kid has to guess exactly what's happening!

"There's a catch, as there always is at [Name of Environment]. The Small Group Leader *cannot* use exact, specific, descriptive words.

"For example, if a dancing penguin wearing a Moses robe and carrying a Christmas tree walks out, the Small Group Leader can't say words like 'penguin,' or 'robe,' or 'Christmas Tree.' We've got a list of BuzzWords the leaders can't say that correspond with the parties. If the Small Group Leader accidentally says one of the BuzzWords, they lose a point!

"Make sense? Great! Both teams will be given 60 seconds for their turn. The team that describes their party scene the fastest will be crowned 'The Party Behind Me' Champion. If neither describes the scene fully, the closest guess wins. Let's get this party started!

AUDIO: UPBEAT GAME MUSIC

VIDEO: 60-SECOND COUNTDOWN

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): 60-COUNTDOWN

Check to see that the Worship Leader, Communicator, or any other volunteers you've prepped ahead of time are ready to go . . . and then play the game. Have one pair of Small Group Leader/ Blindfolded Volunteers go at a time.



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Have the BuzzWords cards corresponding to and in the order of the upcoming parties handy to give to the Small Group Leader.

If the blindfolded volunteer fails to guess the scene within the timeframe, determine how close and award points.

At the end of all the “parties,” count up the points and determine a winner—and applaud all volunteers involved!

“Of all the games we’ve played, I don’t think I ever expected to see [Name of Worship Leader] or [Name of Communicator] to dress like *that*. That was bonkers. Great job to both pairs, but an extra great job to ‘The Party Behind Me’ Champions! I want to celebrate our winning team. Let’s hear it for them, and to do so, everybody stand up on your feet for a fifteen 15-second dance party! Let’s go!

AUDIO: UPBEAT DANCE MUSIC

Lead the crazy dance for about 15 seconds. At the end of the 15 seconds, cut the music abruptly and have everyone remain standing.

“Now, let’s get ready to sing even louder to worship our amazing God who is always good to us!”

Host exits as Worship Leader enters the stage.



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10 MINUTES

WORSHIP

Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.

WORSHIP LEADER: “God is always good. That is always true! So as we live our lives, we can choose to sing God’s praise. We can do that with our words and actions, and the way we treat other people. This song is a fun one. It says, ‘Every day, I will sing Your praise.’ Let’s lift it up!

AUDIO: “SING YOUR PRAISE” / TRACK 2 FROM MY LIFE FOR YOU
OPTIONAL VIDEO: “SING YOUR PRAISE” LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

“That’s so good! God is faithful, each and every day. Before we continue in worship, check this out.

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

“We’ve been singing this song ‘Start the Party,’ and let me tell you—it’s full of joy! It’s a way we can celebrate the good news that God sent Jesus for us. Let’s choose today to have joy in our hearts. Move your feet, clap your hands, and sing along with us. Let’s have some fun and celebrate!

AUDIO: “START THE PARTY” / TRACK 1 FROM START THE PARTY
OPTIONAL VIDEO: “START THE PARTY” LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

“Oh, yeah. So fun! Listen to these words from Psalm 43:4: ‘I will go to God. He is my joy and my delight. God, you are my God.’ (NirV) God loves each of us so much. God created us and knows everything about us. We can believe that God is always with us. When we think about that, it can give us joy—the kind of joy that nothing can take away. Let’s sing this together.”

AUDIO: “YES I AM” / TRACK 5 FROM EVERYTHING TO ME
OPTIONAL VIDEO: “YES I AM” LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO



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COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator enters as Worship Leader exits.

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: “What’s up, everybody? Thank you for joining me today! I want to give a big shout out to [Name of Host]. Each week, he comes out here with enthusiasm, goofs around with you all, and leads this room so well. He’s amazing! This month, [Name of Host] has ended the Opening time celebrating the new champion with a 15-second dance party. I just love it!

“But let’s be honest, not everybody was participating in the dance party. Don’t get me wrong, most are moving around a bit, tapping a foot here and there . . . however, not everybody is *really* dancing like they mean it.

“Today, I am giving everybody a chance for a do-over. Spontaneous dance parties in life do not happen every day—except in here, where they seem to be happening every week. I would love for us to have another dance party where everybody is dancing with all their might as if nobody’s watching!

“Turn to your neighbor and say, ‘*This is your big moment, buddy!*’ (pause as they do this) Look at your other neighbor and say, ‘*Let’s start the party!*’ (pause again) Bring out the disco ball!”

AUDIO: UPBEAT DANCE MUSIC

Kill the lights, pump the music, and rock the disco ball for a solid minute. It should be the greatest dance party in the history of [Name of Environment]!

After about a minute or two, slow fade the music and have kids make their way back to their seats.

“Nice dancing, everybody! Turn to your Small Group Leaders and say, ‘You still got it!’ Small Group Leaders, turn to your kids and reply, ‘I know!’ (pause for a moment) Whew. Most days I do not have a dance party, much less two.”

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: “Typically, I reserve my dancing for all the big moments in life. You know, weddings, birthdays, when the Cubs won the World Series . . . big moments like that.

“Think about your own life for a second. Each of you has probably had big moments that make you want to jig, jive, and dance, right? When your parents surprise you with a puppy, when you found out you’re going on a big vacation, when you finally beat the last level you’ve been trying to do for like two weeks . . . winning the game, acing the test, killing the solo—the list of dance-worthy experiences could go on and on.

“These are moments worth celebrating! But I have a problem. They never last long. Each is a fleeting moment of happiness—not a long-lasting one. The happiness amassed from a great performance, good effort, or a great gift is short-lived. Life is made up of lots of small, less-exciting moments that don’t make us feel like dancing a lot of the time.

“Waking up early on summer break to go to the dentist isn’t dance-worthy. Mindlessly scrolling through random YouTube Shorts isn’t significant. Folding your clean clothes doesn’t make you want to bust out your best sprinkler moves. These all are just everyday occurrences that aren’t recorded permanently in our core memories.



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"If life isn't always a party, how can we find joy in the everyday moments? Is it possible to find contentment in the everyday things we see around us? Can joy be experienced in the things we take for granted every day? In school? In our families? In nature?"

"We'll explore these excellent questions today as we look at something found in a pretty special book in the Bible. The Bible is packed full of wisdom, and the people who wrote the Bible actually have a few things to say about finding joy—even in the small moments of life."

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: "Today, we will be looking at the book of Psalms, which is found in the Old Testament. A lot of the psalms were written by David, the man who slayed Goliath and later became a king."

AUDIO: "SIGNAL TO NOISE" BY SCOTT BUCKLEY

"For thousands of years, the book of Psalms was the main songbook of God's people, the Israelites. The individual songs, or psalms, were composed over many years. While some psalms are written to thank or praise God, others cry out to God in desperation. While scrolling through this book, we can also find nuggets of wisdom or honest confessions to God. The Psalms shine light on who God is, the incredible world God created, and how people can respond to it all. The three psalms we're exploring today were all written by David—who was a great writer and composer AND one of Israel's greatest kings."

Fade the music and start the next track.

AUDIO: "SOUNDS FROM EATING GRASS IN PASTURE" BY SOUND THERAPY MASTERS

"Long before David was a king, he was a shepherd. As such, there were many days David would be alone with his thoughts and the sheep. Days and nights would roll by with few distractions. The space allowed the young boy to notice the world around him that God created."

Fade the music and start the next track. Let this one play and build throughout the next section, while you read dramatically.

AUDIO: "JOURNEY TO THE STARS" BY SAVFK MUSIC

"Within the stillness of the day, David expressed praises like,

Open the Bible to Psalm 8:1 (NirV) and read.

"LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in the whole earth!"

*You have set your glory
in the heavens.*

"The trees, rocks, insects, and grass were all created from the imagination of God! David would have spent many sleepless nights protecting his flock. On clear nights, long before city lights obstructed the dark sky, David would have seen millions of stars and countless meteors! David also said this:



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Open the Bible to Psalm 8:3 (NIRV) and read.

"I think about the heavens.

I think about what your fingers have created.

I think about the moon and stars

that you have set in place.

"David knew all the shining and flickering beauty above his head, set in the blank inky sky, echoed God's greatness. I love when David said:

Open the Bible to Psalm 19:1-2 (NIRV) and read.

"The heavens tell about the glory of God.

The skies show that his hands created them.

Day after day they speak about it.

Night after night they make it known.

"The night sky shows a glimpse of God's power and size!

"Inspired, David continued to write.

Open the Bible to Psalm 19:4a-5 (NIRV) and read.

"God has set up a tent in the heavens for the sun.

The sun is like a groom leaving the room of his wedding night.

The sun is like a great runner who takes delight in running a race.

"Evidence of God was plain for David to see in the monotony of his every day! David learned about who God is by looking to the bright light nestled in the expansive sky.

"David learned to find joy in all of God's creation around him. And you can do that too! One of the best ways to find joy around you is to use your senses! They are an amazing gift from God.

Fade the music and start the next track.

AUDIO: "ALIVE" BY IKSON

"Consider your senses. God has given us various senses of sight, touch, taste, hearing, and smell.

"Start with sight. Let's pretend you're disappointed with your summer up to this point. You haven't gone to the park or seen your friends as much as you had hoped. Instead of looking down, dejected, look out your window and notice the clouds taking shape high in the sky. Birds fly here and there above the tall green oak trees. Each element of nature shows the majesty of our God. Take a minute and think about all the sights you see in a day.

Wait a few moments, then fade the music and start the next track.

AUDIO: "SERVICE PLEASE" BY MUSIC FACTORY



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“Next is your smell. All around us are smells. Although some scents should be avoided, others can move us in the fast lane to a great mood! Homemade cinnamon rolls. The salty air of the ocean. Fresh-cut grass. A bonfire on a summer’s night. Every single one of those smells and thousands more can bring you joy! Take a moment to think about all the smells you smell in a day.

Wait a few moments, then fade the music and start the next track.

AUDIO: “A WAY TO YOU” BY INFRACTION

“Have you ever considered the way touch can change your day? Sometimes my mood is set by how my clothes feel! Grass between your toes, the brisk shock of diving into a pool for the first time in the summer, a puppy licking your cheek, there are tons of ways that this sense of touch can bring you joy! Think about how many things you touch in a day . . . and the ones that bring joy into your life.

Wait a few moments, then fade the music and start the next track.

AUDIO: “COOKING BACKGROUND MUSIC” BY BROKEN C

“And taste! Oof, this might be my favorite. I love food. A homemade peach pie can dramatically change your opinion of any day. After a big game or exercise, a huge glass of water can give your mood a boost. Fresh brownies waiting for you when you come home can make anybody smile. A pizza, ice cream, a chip with just the right amount of salt on it—there are literally hundreds of ways taste can bring joy! Sit and think for a moment about all the joyful foods you’ve had!

Wait a few moments, then fade the music and start the next track.

AUDIO: “CAN’T SLEEP” BY INFRACTION

“And finally, there’s hearing. Have you noticed the music in the background? Has it made you feel certain ways when listening to it? Think about the things you hear. Joy can come from sounds all around you. The sound of a baby brother laughing, the rain pitter-pattering on the roof, or hearing skilled instrumentalists at work with their craft can all give you joy! Hearing your name called to win an award, the load screen music on your favorite game, or a specific ringtone you’ve picked for your best friend.

“Maybe there’s joy in the absence of sounds, too . . . if you need a quiet moment alone. Take a minute and think about all the sounds that bring you joy you hear in a day.

Wait a few moments, then fade the music.

“Through our senses, God has given us countless ways to discover joy each day. But it’s important to point out another source of joy—unique and wonderful people God made! David wrote:

Open the Bible to Psalm 8:4-6 (NirV) and read.

*“What are human beings that you think about them?
What is a son of man that you take care of him?
You have made them a little lower than the angels.
You placed on them a crown of glory and honor.*



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*You made human beings rule over everything your hands created.
You put everything under their control.*

"Friends, joy and wonder can be discovered in the people surrounding us. Each person is made and highly valued by God! Some are made with a sense of humor or deeply caring or a warm presence. People can help you find joy in a moment of need. The tight embrace of a dear friend, the smile from your mom, or just the presence of a cherished family member can both help you discover joy."

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: "Throughout many of the Psalms he wrote, David reminded us that joy can be found by looking around and really paying attention. God has given us our five senses, and God has placed people in our lives to help us find joy—even if life doesn't feel like a party."

Stage and room lights should be lowered. The disco ball should be displayed with lights directed at it shining disco lights all over the room. Communicator continues to talk.

"I love disco balls. They can take a single light source and reflect it all over a room using the mirrors. In doing so, many small things are highlighted at the same time. If we can pause for a moment, look around the room, and notice the different people or objects in this space being featured by the light."

"Every single day, we should walk through life with an imaginary disco ball that shines lights on the many, many things around us that can give joy. David found joy in the small things. Instead of searching for the giant party behind us, we can practice paying attention to the small joy-givers around us—to all the amazing things and people God created. When we do that, we start to see that even though life isn't easy, God is still at work."

"In Psalm 16, David wrote:

Open the Bible to Psalm 16:8a, 9a, 11a (NIRV) and read.

"I keep my eyes always on the LORD . . .

So my heart is glad. Joy is on my tongue . . .

You always show me the path of life.

You will fill me with joy when I am with you.

"The presence of God changes things! When we focus on the Lord's goodness, joy can always be found in all circumstances."

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: "Paying attention to the small things is not always easy. That's why we need to practice paying attention to the things we can see, hear, smell, touch, or taste. When we do, we can get out of our heads and find joy in what's around us."

"I want everybody to do something for me as we prepare for Small Groups. Consider this question:

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION



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“When is it hard to find joy?” Each of us faces frustrations or difficulties in life. Many times, these can hide our joy. In your life, when are the moments it’s hardest to find joy? As you think on that question, let’s pray together and then discuss this question with our Small Groups.

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