

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. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Reflect on how your life has become joyful from following Jesus. Ask God to help the kids in your group to be open to discovering how Jesus rescues us and invites us to follow Him.

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.

1. EARLY ARRIVER

WHAT YOU NEED: Offering container, "Pennants" Activity Page, string, hole punch, stickers, and markers

WHAT YOU DO:

- Greet each kid by name as they arrive.
- Invite any kid who has brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
- As kids arrive, ask: "What makes the best party ever?"
- When enough kids have arrived, give each kid a pennant from the "Pennants" Activity Page.
 - *NOTE: If you have fewer kids in your Small Group, give each kid more than one pennant.*
- Set out the stickers and markers.
- Instruct kids to write their names in block or fancy letters on the pennants.
- Direct the kids to illustrate their favorite type of party or celebration on their pennant (birthdays, sleepovers, superhero theme, Christmas, etc.).
- As kids finish coloring and decorating, punch a hole on both corners of the pennant.
- String the decorated pennants together to create a party banner.
- If time allows, invite kids to share what they illustrated on their pennants.
- Keep the banner up in your small group area this month.
 - If meeting in a portable environment, save the banner to display each week, if possible.

CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT
25 MINUTES

MADE TO PLAY

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



1. JOY FINDER

[TALK ABOUT GOD | BIBLE STORY REVIEW]

WHAT YOU NEED: "Wolf with Lost Sheep Cards" Activity Page, and "Sheep Cards" Activity Page

WHAT YOU DO:

- Show the group the picture of the lost sheep with a bow around its neck from the "Wolf with Lost Sheep Cards" Activity Page.
 - Say: "Out of all the cards, there is only one sheep with a bow around its neck. That is the lost sheep."
- Shuffle all of the cards from the "Wolf with Lost Sheep Cards" Activity Page and the "Sheep Cards" Activity Page together.
- Lay the cards out, face down, in a 3 x 6 grid pattern.
- Instruct the kids to form a circle around the grid of cards.
- Choose one kid to go first.
- Instruct the kid who is going first to turn over one card.
 - If a sheep without a bow is turned over, direct the kid to leave the card face up.
 - Choose a kid to go next.
 - Instruct the next kid to flip over a card.
 - If a card with a wolf is turned over, turn all the cards back over, shuffle them, and lay them out in a new grid pattern to start a new game.
 - If the lost sheep (with the bow) is turned over, instruct the kid to shout, "Found!"
 - Direct the rest of the group to respond by shouting, "Joy!"
 - Declare the game to be over.
- Shuffle cards and start new rounds as time and interest allow.

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WHAT YOU SAY:

"Every time we 'found' the lost sheep, what did we shout? (*Invite responses.*) That's right! 'Joy!' It was like throwing a big celebration because we found the lost sheep!

"In our story today, Jesus was hanging out with some people who others didn't like. Jesus shared this incredible story about the lost sheep to help them understand that He came for EVERYONE. Why is this such good news for you and me? (*Invite responses.*)

"Just like the lost sheep in the story, God has done some big things to rescue you and me. Let's face it, we can't be perfect all the time. The good news is there is no mess or trouble we can get into that's too deep or too awful for Jesus. He is always there to help us. Because of Jesus, we can have a relationship with God that will last forever. And that is a reason to celebrate! **We can have joy because of Jesus.**"



CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT
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(1. JOY FINDER, CONTINUED)

[Make It Personal] (Tell the kids about how you decided to make Jesus your Savior. How did it change your life? How does following Jesus bring you joy?)

NOTE: Be sensitive to kids who might have questions about following Jesus. Follow your church's policy for having conversations with kids about salvation. Involve families with this discussion or decisions as well.

CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT
25 MINUTES

MADE TO MOVE

an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body



3. VERSE IN MOTION

[HEAR FROM GOD | MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY]

WHAT YOU NEED: Bibles, and "Verse Motions" Activity Page

WHAT YOU DO:

- Make sure each kid has a Bible.
- Together, look up Proverbs 17:22 using the Bible Navigation Tips below.

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Lost and Found

The Story of the Lost Sheep
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***Finding verses with 2nd and 3rd graders:** Guide them to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. (Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like.) When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find Proverbs in the list under "Old Testament." When the kids find Proverbs, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find Proverbs. Help the kids find the page. When they find Proverbs, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 17. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 22 in chapter 17.*

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

We can have joy because of Jesus.

- Choose a kid who would like to read the verse aloud.
- Read the verse together several times.
- Use the "Verse Motions" Activity Page to demonstrate the hand motions.
- Encourage kids to copy your motions while reciting the verse.
- If time allows, ask the kids to pair up and recite the verse to each other with motions.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

"A cheerful heart makes you healthy. But a broken spirit dries you up."
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WHAT YOU SAY:

"What are some things that make you laugh? (Invite responses.) King Solomon, the author of this verse, was telling us that God created us to feel joy and laughter. Why do people take medicine? (Invite responses.) Yes! Medicine helps people feel better when they're sick. In the same way, joy and laughter can keep our minds and bodies healthy and happy!

MONTHLY VIRTUE

Joy—Choosing to celebrate what God is doing

"When we truly understand what God has done for us, it's a reason to have joy! We can find joy in thanking Jesus for the times that He's rescued us and for the times He will rescue us again. We can't help but feel super-joyful because we know we're loved and taken care of. **We can have joy because of Jesus.**"

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.

CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT
25 MINUTES

MADE TO REFLECT
an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application



4. PRAY AND DISMISS
[PRAY TO GOD | PRAYER ACTIVITY]

WHAT YOU NEED: Prepared "Joy Journal" Activity Page, markers, and pencils

WHAT YOU DO:

- Give each kid a prepared "Joy Journal" Activity Page and a pencil.
- Instruct the kids to write their names on the cover in the blank provided.
- Set out the markers.
- Instruct the kids to color the cover of their "Joy Journal."
- When kids have finished coloring, direct them to turn to the next page.
- Read the Bottom Line, and invite the kids to recite it with you a few times.
 - **We can have joy because of Jesus.**
- Read the prompt in the "Joy Journal" to the group: "Draw a picture of something that brings you joy!"
- Invite kids to share what brings them joy.
- Instruct kids to draw a picture of the people, places, actions, or things that bring them joy in the space provided.
 - It could be a favorite activity, such as: going to church, spending time with a friend, reading a book, talking to God, seeing family happy, or anything else!
- Inform the group that they will be drawing in their "Joy Journal" all month, and that you will hold on to them until the end of the month.
- Collect the journals and store them for the following weeks.
- Close the group time in prayer.

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NOTE: Kids will be adding to their journals each week this month. Be prepared to collect and store the journals each week. Prepare extra copies for kids not present this week. If preferred, don't staple the pages—send individual pages home each week.

WHAT YOU SAY:
"Dear God, thank You for being a good Shepherd, always watching over us. We know that when we go the wrong way, You come looking for us with love and joy in Your heart. Thank You for sending Jesus. Even when we make mistakes or feel lost, thank You that Jesus is there to guide us back to You. Help us to trust that **we can have joy because of Jesus.** We love You and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up the kids, encourage them to share the verse using any of the hand motions you came up with.