



WEEK  
**ONE**  
JULY 2024

SMALL GROUP  
**2-3**

PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

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. SLEEPING SHEEP**  
[TALK ABOUT GOD | BIBLE STORY REVIEW]  
WHAT YOU NEED: No supplies needed

**WHAT YOU DO:**

- Designate two kids in the group to be shepherds.
- Instruct the rest of the group to be sheep.
- Direct the sheep to lay on the ground and pretend like they're sleeping.
- Instruct the shepherds to walk around trying to "wake" the sleeping sheep by making them laugh.
- Encourage the shepherds to walk around the sleeping sheep while making silly faces, singing silly songs, or doing anything else safely to make the rest of the kids laugh.
- When a sleeping sheep "wakes" (or laughs), pause to ask them a Review Question from below.
- After the sheep has answered a Review Question, invite them to join the shepherd in trying to wake the other sheep.
  - *Note: If the shepherds are having no trouble waking the sheep, only allow 1-2 shepherds in play at a time.*
- The last sleepy sheep left is the winner!

**TODAY'S BIBLE STORY**

**Tidings of Comfort and Joy**  
Shepherds and Angels  
Luke 2:8-20

**TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE**

**Jesus brings joy to the world.**

**MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE**

**"Always be joyful because you belong to the Lord. I will say it again. Be joyful!"**  
Philippians 4:4, NIV

**MONTHLY VIRTUE**

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

**BASIC TRUTH**

**I can trust God no matter what.**

Review Questions:

1. Where did Mary and Joseph have to travel to and why? (*Bethlehem, to be counted*)
2. Since Bethlehem was crowded, where did Mary have to give birth to Jesus? (*in a place where the animals stayed*)
3. What kind of people were outside the town of Bethlehem and what kind of animals were they taking care of? (*shepherds and sheep*)
4. What surprising thing happened to those shepherds out in the field after Jesus was born? (*an angel appeared to them*)
5. What did the angel say to the shepherds? (*"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news. . . . Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord!"* —Luke 2:10-11, NIV)
6. How did the angel describe Baby Jesus so the shepherds would know what to look for? (*He would be wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.*)
7. What did the shepherds do after their angel visit? (*They visited Baby Jesus, and were filled with so much joy they told everyone about Him.*)
8. How can you share God's joy with others? (*Answers will vary. Repeat this question as needed.*)

**WHAT YOU SAY:**

"Maybe you have heard this story before—around Christmas time. It's normally when we talk about it, right? But we shouldn't sleep on this good news the rest of the year. The story of Jesus being born and the good news that **Jesus brings joy to the world** is something worth celebrating every day. Just like the shepherds



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### (1. SLEEPING SHEEP, CONTINUED)

were filled with joy when they heard about Jesus, we too can be filled with this same kind of joy everyday—even in the ordinary moments!" **[Make It Personal]** *(Share a story about how the joy of Jesus has changed you.)*



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### MADE TO CREATE

an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing



### 3. OH, JOY-FILLED TREE

[HEAR FROM GOD | MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY]

**WHAT YOU NEED:** Bibles, green party streamers, clear tape, index cards, and markers

**WHAT YOU DO:**

- Make sure each kid has a Bible.
- Together, look up this month’s Memory Verse using the Bible Navigation Tips below.

### TODAY’S BIBLE STORY

**Tidings of Comfort and Joy**  
Shepherds and Angels  
Luke 2:8-20

***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 Philippians in the list under “New Testament.” When the kids find Philippians, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find Philippians. Help the kids find the page. When they find Philippians, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 4. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 4 in chapter 4.*

### TODAY’S BOTTOM LINE

Jesus brings joy to the world.

- Choose one kid to read the verse aloud to the group.
- Invite other kids in the group to read the verse out loud.
- Divide the group into two teams.
- Direct both teams to gather together.
  - Each team will need at least one of the Bibles to use with their teammates.
- Give each team a roll of party streamers, a few index cards, a marker, and tape.
- Instruct the kids to work together with their team to copy each word of the Memory Verse from a Bible onto separate index cards.
  - Direct the kids to list the reference on one card too.
- When teams have finished writing out the Memory Verse, instruct them to shuffle their cards.
- Encourage each team to choose one kid to decorate—a kid on the team who will not mind the rest of the team wrapping them in streamers and taping the index cards to them.
- Once each team has chosen their kid to decorate, direct them to wrap that kid in streamers like a Christmas tree and tape the index cards with the Memory Verse on them in order from the top of the tree to the bottom.
- The first group to assemble their tree completely and correctly, wins!

### MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

“Always be joyful because you belong to the Lord. I will say it again. Be joyful!”  
Philippians 4:4, NIV

### MONTHLY VIRTUE

Joy—Choosing to celebrate what God is doing

### BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.

**WHAT YOU SAY:**

“It may be July, but you all still have the Christmas spirit when it comes to decorating! Solid work on your trees. Having a little holiday fun with you today has reminded me of the everyday opportunity we have to celebrate.

“Our verse tells us that because we belong to the Lord, we truly have a reason to always be joyful. This doesn’t mean we always have to be happy, or that we’re

START  
*the*  
PARTY

Celebrate the Good News

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### (3. OH, JOY-FILLED TREE, CONTINUED)

never disappointed when we're facing challenges. It means that even when we're down, we see that there is goodness to be grasped because of Jesus. There is always something to celebrate because **Jesus brings joy to the world."**



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**MADE TO REFLECT**

an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application



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**4. PRAY AND DISMISS**

[PRAY TO GOD | PRAYER ACTIVITY]

**WHAT YOU NEED:** Noisemakers from previous activities, ribbon or string, hole punch, and "Bottom Line Tag" Activity Page

**WHAT YOU DO:**

- Give kids their noisemakers from the Early Arriver and Opening Activity.
- Give each kid one strip from the "Bottom Line Tag" Activity Page and a piece of ribbon or string.
- Show kids how to punch a hole at the end of their "Bottom Line Tag" Activity Page strip, then pass the hole punch around for them to use.
- Direct kids to loop the ribbon or string through the hole on their "Bottom Line Tag" Activity Page strip and tie it around their noisemaker.
- Say: "No matter what you face this week, you can find something to celebrate."
- When the kids find something to celebrate, encourage them to sound off their noisemaker and remember the joy Jesus brings.
- Close your group time in prayer.

**WHAT YOU SAY:**

"God, thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus. Because **Jesus brings joy to the world**, we know that no matter what, we can choose to celebrate what You are doing in the midst of our every day. We are thankful that we can bring our everyday moments to You—our sadness, our frustrations, our anger, our happiness, our laughter, and even our hurt. We trust that no matter what our days look like, You are working out something good. And because of this truth, we can choose joy. We can choose to celebrate knowing You are always doing something good behind the scenes. We love You and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage kids to sound off their noisemakers one last time! Ask the question: "Who brings joy to the world?" After they share their answer, encourage kids to look for moments this week to share God's love and spread joy.