



**ELEMENTARY**

JULY 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.



WEEK  
**ONE**  
JULY 2024

LARGE GROUP  
**K-3**

PRELUDE      SOCIAL      STORY      WORSHIP      GROUPS      HOME

## LG Guide WK 1

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

### WEEK 1

We start the month in **Luke 2:8-20**. While shepherds were watching over their flock, an angel suddenly appeared, bringing great news: Jesus was born! The shepherds rushed off to see Him, telling everyone about Him afterward. Everyone who heard the news was amazed and filled with joy!

Bottom Line: **Jesus brings joy to the world.** We kick off the month with a Christmas party! Christmas may feel like the most natural time of year to celebrate the birth of Jesus, but we can celebrate Jesus any time of the year! Jesus was a gift that brought joy to everyone who heard the news and can still bring us joy even today

### 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.**

### 1. Host

#### WHAT YOU NEED:

- Host
- Two kids and their Small Group Leaders
- Two tables
- Four large bowls
- Lots of full-size, individually wrapped candy canes
- Garland
- Masking or gaffer's tape
- Host's phone

### 2. WORSHIP

#### WHAT YOU NEED:

- Worship Leader(s)

### 3. BIBLE STORY

#### WHAT YOU NEED:

- Storyteller
- Several kid volunteers
- Bible
- Prop box containing:
  - Mary costume (could be a simple bathrobe)
  - Joseph costume (could be a simple bathrobe)
  - Stick horse
  - Manger (or a cardboard box with the outline of a manger drawn on the side)
  - Baby doll, wrapped in a blanket
  - Three shepherd costumes (could be simple robes or staffs)
  - Three plush sheep
  - Angel costume (could be a white robe and/or a halo headband)

#### LARGE GROUP VISUALS:

- Theme Background Slide
- Bottom Line Slide



WEEK  
**ONE**  
JULY 2024

LARGE GROUP  
**K-3**

**PRELUDE**      **SOCIAL**      **STORY**      **WORSHIP**      **GROUPS**      **HOME**

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

### 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.

## 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 CHRISTMAS 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! My name is [your name] and I'm so glad you're here at [name of your environment]. We're doing something kind of different today—we're celebrating Christmas in July! Because, well, what better way to talk about joy?"

**SLIDE: VIRTUE**

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME TRANSITION TO VIRTUE**

"Joy is about **choosing to celebrate what God is doing.**

**SLIDE: THEME**

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): VIRTUE TRANSITION TO THEME**

"I don't know about you, but I think Christmas is the most joyful time of the year. At Christmastime, we celebrate the good news that God sent Jesus to be our Savior!

"There are so many ways to celebrate Christmas, but one of my favorites is eating yummy Christmas treats! Shout out some of your favorite Christmas goodies. (Pause for responses.) Yum. Those are all really great! Personally, I really love candy canes. And I've got a fun candy cane game for us to play.

"I'll need two of you to be our contestants—one from each side of the room. And each contestant can bring up their Small Group Leader. Raise your hand if you want to play!

*Bring up two kids who have their hands raised, and have each kid bring up their leader. Have the contestants stand next to the table with the two bowls full of candy canes.*



**PRELUDE**      **SOCIAL**      **STORY**      **WORSHIP**      **GROUPS**      **HOME**

15 MINUTES      6 MINUTES

**"Candy Cane Catch"**

Supplies needed: garland & candy canes

String garland up between two chairs with the seat facing out to create a clothesline-type effect. Give each player a handful (or small bowlful) of candy canes.

Have the player stand on the chair and drop candy canes, attempting to have them hang on the garland. You can have another player on the opposite chair playing at the same time. You can either give the point to the person who hangs a candy cane first or see who can hang the most in one minute.

*(To audience)* "Everyone, be sure to cheer for your team. Let's get started. On your mark, get set, go!"

**AUDIO: FUN CHRISTMAS MUSIC**  
**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN (60-SECOND VERSION)**

*If you're not using an on-screen countdown min do multiple rounds*

*Comment on the action as the kids and leaders play the game. When time's up, count how many candy canes are in each team's second bowl. Congratulate the winning team and acknowledge both teams' efforts. Dismiss the contestants to their seats.*

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

"Wow! What a minty good time! I love celebrating Christmas with fun party games. We've got some worship songs to sing today. They might not be Christmas songs . . . but they're definitely full of joy! Everyone get up on your feet and get ready to sing."

**WORSHIP**

*Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.*

**WORSHIP LEADER:** "Hello, friends! I'm so excited for this time to worship God with all of you. Get on your feet because Jesus is the reason we can have joy. He is always with us. Let's sing!"

Worship songs for today: All In Seu & Never gonna Stop Singing

After worship Song:  
Thank you all for worshipping with me today. Lets Pray God thank you for today thank you that you are the reason for joy please help us praise you every day in Jesus name. Amen

You all can grab a seat.



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! It's great to be here with you to talk about the Christmas story . . . in July! How fun! As we tell the story, I think you'll see why the birth of Jesus was all about joy.

"When we look at God's Big Story in the Bible (*hold up Bible*), we see how God had a plan to bless the whole world through Abraham's family. Abraham's family grew and became a nation called the Israelites. Sadly, the people kept turning away from God. Eventually, they were attacked by other nations. But God still had a good plan!

"God spoke through people called prophets who shared messages from God. These prophets explained that, when the time was right, God would send a Rescuer. Hundreds of years passed. But then, God sent an angel to a young woman named Mary. The angel told Mary that she would give birth to God's very own Son, Jesus.

"Now, before we get too far into the story, I'm wondering if you'd be willing to help me. I may ask some of you to be actors, and some of you to help with sound effects and other parts of the story. Sound good? (*Pause for responses.*) Okay, great! First up, I'll need two of you to play Joseph and Mary. Raise your hand if you'd like to do it.

*Choose two kids to play Joseph and Mary. Give them costumes to wear, and hand the stick horse to the girl playing Mary.*

### JESUS IS BORN

**STORYTELLER:** "If you've heard this story before, then you can help me tell it. Mary and Joseph traveled to the town of . . . (*Pause for response.*) Yes, Bethlehem. Do any of you know WHY they went to Bethlehem? (*Pause for response.*) Right. They went to Bethlehem because the Roman government wanted to count all of the people, so everyone had to go to their hometown.

*(To the two kids)* "Joseph and Mary, let me see you point and say, 'To Bethlehem!'"

**KIDS (AS JOSEPH AND MARY):** (*Pointing*) "To Bethlehem!"

**STORYTELLER:** "Great! (*To audience*) Okay, everyone, use your feet to make the sounds of footsteps.

*Motion to the audience like you're an orchestra conductor, cueing them to start and then stop the "sound effects."*

"Good job! Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem, but there was a problem. What was it? (*Pause for responses.*) That's right. The city was so crowded that they couldn't find a room anywhere.

*(To the two kids)* "Joseph and Mary, let me see you do this.

*Demonstrate an exaggerated shrug, and get the two kids to copy you.*



PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

25 MINUTES

"They ended up in a place where the animals stayed.

*Cue the two kids to walk over to the side of the stage. Place the manger (or cardboard box) next to them. Take the stick horse from "Mary."*

(To audience) "Okay, when I count to three, everyone make your very best barnyard animal sounds. One, two, three!

*Like before, motion to the audience like you're an orchestra conductor, cueing them to start and then stop the animal sounds.*

"While they were there, surrounded by all those animals, Mary had her Baby.

*Give the baby doll to "Mary" to hold.*

"Okay, I need one person to make the sound of a baby crying. Raise your hand . . .

*Point to a kid who's raising their hand and let them make the "sound effect."*

"Great! God's Son was born, and they named Him Jesus. This was the most incredible news ever . . . but no one else knew about it yet.

**GOOD NEWS**

**STORYTELLER:** "Just outside of town, a group of shepherds were taking care of their sheep. Let's see . . . Raise your hand if you want to play a shepherd.

*Choose three kids to be shepherds. Bring them on stage and give them costumes to wear and plush sheep to hold. Have them stand on the opposite side of the stage from "Joseph" and "Mary."*

"Okay, everyone. Our shepherds are in place. Let's hear what those sheep sounded like!

*Like before, motion to the audience like you're an orchestra conductor, cueing them to start and then stop the sheep sounds.*

"Very good! So, the shepherds were just out there taking care of their sheep. And suddenly, an angel appeared! Raise your hand if you want to play the angel.

*Choose a kid to be the angel. Bring them on stage (in the center) and give them a costume to wear.*

"The shepherds were terrified! (To the 'shepherds') Shepherds, let me see your terrified faces! (Pause for responses.)

"But the angel said this.

*Raise up both hands and cue the kid playing the angel to do the same thing (and hold the pose). Then open the Bible to Luke 2:10-12 (NirV) and read.*



25 MINUTES

“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news. It will bring great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord. Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.” (NirV)

“Then a large group of angels appeared, praising God and saying:

*Open the Bible to Luke 2:14 (NirV) and read.*

“May glory be given to God in the highest heaven!  
And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!” (NirV)

“Everyone, stand up and say, ‘Glory to God!’”

**AUDIENCE:** “Glory to God!”

**STORYTELLER:** “One more time: ‘Glory to God!’”

**AUDIENCE:** “Glory to God!”

**RUN AND SEE**

**STORYTELLER:** “Then the angels left. Everyone, you can have a seat—(to the kid playing the angel) and you can go back to your seat, [kid’s name].

*The kids sit down, leaving just the shepherds on one side of the stage, and Mary and Joseph on the other.*

“The shepherds didn’t waste any time. They hurried to Bethlehem! (To the shepherds) Let’s see you hurry, shepherds!

*Jog in place to demonstrate, then cue the shepherds to jog over to Mary and Joseph.*

“When the shepherds arrived, it was just like the angel told them it would be. They found Mary and Joseph, and the Baby lying in the manger. After the shepherds had seen Jesus, they were SO excited. They hurried out into the streets of Bethlehem and told everyone that the Savior had been born. (To the shepherds) Shepherds, you can head out into the streets of Bethlehem (reference the audience) and shout, ‘The Savior is born!’ Go!”

**KIDS (AS SHEPHERDS):** “The Savior is born!”

**STORYTELLER:** “Great. Now everybody say it.”

**AUDIENCE:** “The Savior is born!”

*Walk over to Mary and Joseph.*

**STORYTELLER:** “Here’s how Mary reacted to everything that had happened.

*Open the Bible to Luke 2:19 (NirV) and read.*



25 MINUTES

Mary kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. She thought about them over and over. (NirV)

“After the shepherds had told everyone about Jesus, they went back to their fields, praising God all the way.

“Thank you all for your help telling this story! (To the remaining actors) You all can go back to your seats.

*Send all the actors back to their seats.*

### WRAPPING UP THE STORY

**STORYTELLER:** “Now, I know there’s a pretty good chance you’ve heard that story before. But I love to hear it again and again—even when it isn’t Christmastime!

“One thing that I really love about the story is the way God chose to share the good news with the world. God chose ordinary shepherds to carry the most important message ever! And the shepherds were so filled with JOY that they shared the good news about Jesus with everyone they met.

“Jesus’ birth is ALWAYS worth celebrating . . .

**SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE**

“ . . . because **Jesus brings joy to the world.**

“Let’s pray and thank God for sending Jesus for us.”

**SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND**

### PRAY

**STORYTELLER:** “Dear God, thank You for sending JOY into the world when You sent Your Son, Jesus! Jesus brought joy to the world then, and Jesus brings joy to our world today. Help us to carry that joy and share it with others. Please remind us to live with joy, no matter what is happening around us, because we know how much You love us. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”





25 MINUTES

## CLOSER

*Host enters as Storyteller exits.*

**HOST:** “Raise your hand if you played one of the shepherds in the story. *(Pause for response.)* Thanks! You can put your hands down. *(To everyone)* If you think about it, the shepherds were just living their everyday lives out in the fields . . . but then, ANGELS showed up to tell them about Jesus! At last, the Savior had been born.

“The shepherds were so amazed and so full of joy to see Jesus that they went out telling everyone they knew about Him. Jesus definitely brought joy to their world. That was true back then, it’s true today, and it will always be true:

**SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE**

**“Jesus brings joy to the world.**

“When Jesus came into the world, He filled the world with JOY! Jesus is still bringing joy to our world today—and just like the shepherds, we can share that good news with everyone.

“When things happen in our lives that don’t feel very joyful, we can think about what God did for us by sending Jesus to be our Savior. We can remember that **[Basic Truth] we can trust God no matter what.** We can think about the way Jesus lived, and the way He showed us how to love the people around us. When we remember that Jesus came to bring love, joy, and forgiveness into the world, we can find lots of opportunities to spread that joy to others.

“Our Memory Verse for this month comes from Paul’s letter to the Philippians. Paul wanted to remind the believers who lived there to be joyful because of Jesus. Here it is—Philippians 4:4:

**SLIDE: MEMORY VERSE**

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

“Let’s say that together.”

**HOST AND KIDS:** *Always be joyful because you belong to the Lord. I will say it again. Be joyful! (Philippians 4:4, NIV)*

**HOST:** “Great job! We can always find joy because of what Jesus has done for us. You can head to Small Group and talk about that some more. I’ll see you later!”

*Dismiss kids to their small groups.*

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

**SLIDE: THEME**

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