



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.

TODAY'S SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

WEEK 2

Key Question: **How can you remember to be joyful?** There's nothing better than getting together with other people and celebrating everything that God has done—in your life and in the lives of the people around you. We hope this question allows kids to share ideas and think about ways they can make joy a part of their everyday lives.

In week 2, we see how God set aside times and rhythms for the Israelite people to reflect on and remember everything God had done for them. In **Deuteronomy 16:13-17**, we read about one celebration in particular called the Feast of Booths. We see in Scripture how God's people celebrated this feast on several important occasions throughout their history.

Bottom Line: **Make a habit of choosing joy.** Whether it's a birthday party, slumber party, or festive holiday, kids love celebrating with their family and friends! Just as those celebrations are a part of our everyday rhythm, we hope that kids will learn how to find moments of celebration throughout their lives that will help them remember what God has done for them.

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

I Heard It Through the Grapevine
Wedding at Cana
John 2:1-11

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

Who are the people
who help you find joy?

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Jesus showed us how to have joy.

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.

Host

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Host
- 1 Kid Volunteer

LARGE GROUP VISUALS:

- Theme Slide
- "This or That: Party Edition" Title Slide
- "This or That: Party Edition" Game Slides 1-7

3. COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Communicator
- Bible
- Table or rolling cart
- Large prop box containing:
 - Large clear punch bowl full of water
 - Small clear container of bleach
 - Small clear container of iodine (First aid antiseptic)
 - 6 Clear glass jars
 - 6 Different colored drink mix powders
 - Paper towels
 - 1 Small clear cup (Optional)
 - Punch Ladle (Optional)
 - Apron (Optional)
 - Tarp (Optional)

MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS:

- Upbeat game music
- Upbeat music to use as kids exit the room

LARGE GROUP VISUALS:

- Theme Background Slide
- Key Question Slide
- Theme

Start the Party

Celebrate the Good News

WEEK
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LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

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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 (Wimbledon, Summer Olympics), holiday (4th of July), movie opening (Despicable Me 4, Mufasa: The Lion King), 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: "Welcome, one and all, to the biggest and best party around! It's the only way we do things here at [Name of Environment]!"

"How many of you enjoy a good party? (Allow response) Yeah, of course! Almost everybody loves a good party—the eats, the beats, and the treats.

"But how many of you like actually planning a party? (Allow response) Wow, nice! Lots of you like planning things—or maybe you're not thinking about what all goes into getting things ready for a party.

"If you think about the job, you'll quickly understand that party planning could be one of the most difficult jobs on the entire planet—mostly because there might be a lot of choices to make . . . Pizza or nachos? Soda or punch? Donuts or cupcakes? Vanilla cake or chocolate cake? Laser tag or arcade? Video-game-themed party or glow-in-the-dark party? Roller skates or ice skates? The list of choices could be endless!



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

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

“To help us with this, I need a volunteer. Let’s play a game I like to call ‘This or That: Party Edition!’

SLIDE: “THIS OR THAT: PARTY EDITION”

Choose a volunteer to come to the stage. Host directs the volunteer to center stage with their back to the audience facing a TV or projector screen.

“Welcome, [Name of Volunteer], glad to have your help this morning! On our screen you will see two options. Both will add fun and excitement to any party, but I’d like you to try to pick what you think is the best option. Think carefully because your choice decides the fate of the whole group behind you!

“The whole group, without you seeing, will pick as well! *(To the Large Group)* Everyone hop to your feet! You’ll pick which option by pointing left or right, toward the choice on the screen.

“If [Name of Volunteer] picks the same as you, you stay in the game! If you pick the opposite, you’ll have a seat. Simple, right? Let’s get this ‘This or That: Party Edition’ started!

AUDIO: UPBEAT GAME MUSIC

SLIDES: THIS OR THAT GAME SLIDES 1-7

Play the game. Go through each slide, having kids who don’t pick the same as the volunteer sit down.

Continue until you declare a winner, and lead applause for the winner and the volunteer.

“Party planning could end up being the hardest job ever—but if I ever need a party planner, I feel confident [Name of Volunteer] would do a spectacular job! One more hand for our volunteer and our winner!

“Everyone get back on your feet and welcome everybody’s favorite Worship Leader, [Name of Worship Leader], to the stage!”

Host exits as Worship Leader enters.



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10 MINUTES

WORSHIP

Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.

WORSHIP LEADER: “Hi, everyone! I am so ready to sing joyfully with you today to give praise to God. Together, let’s make a move and help each other find the joy that Jesus gives. Sing this with me.

AUDIO: “MAKE A MOVE” / TRACK 1 FROM MAKE A MOVE

OPTIONAL VIDEO: “MAKE A MOVE” LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

“That’s so good! Step by step, day by day, we will make a move for God. Before we continue in worship, let’s watch this.

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

“This next song is called ‘I’ve Got Joy.’ No matter what happens in life, we can find joy inside because we know that God is with us. Everybody say, ‘I’ve got joy.’ (Get a reaction. Repeat as needed.) It sounds like you’re ready! Let’s sing it.

AUDIO: “I’VE GOT JOY” / TRACK 6 FROM START THE PARTY

OPTIONAL VIDEO: “I’VE GOT JOY” LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

“God loves and cares for each one of us—and that can bring us joy! As David wrote in Psalm 31:7: *‘I will be glad and full of joy because you love me.’* (NirV) Today, you’re singing in worship to the One who created you. God made you and knows everything about you. God’s love is amazing! Let’s honor God together, with joy, as we sing this.”

AUDIO: “HOW AMAZING” / TRACK 6 FROM EVERYTHING TO ME

OPTIONAL VIDEO: “HOW AMAZING” LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

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COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator enters with the large prop box as the Worship Leader exits.

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: "Welcome, everyone! Thanks for joining me today! I'd like to start things off a bit differently if that's okay. I'm in the mood for some fun. How about another game? Who's with me?"

"To start, I want to do a simple party game called 'Crazy Face,' where everybody in this room needs to find a partner.

Have the entire room, including Small Group Leaders, find a partner.

"This game is simple. To be really good at 'Crazy Face,' you need the ability to make a really funny face, like a fish or duck or silly clown. Whatever face you pick, make it crazy! Go ahead and practice a few.

Pause a moment for kids to make some insane faces.

"Yep. I know I picked the right game for this group. *(beat)* Everyone go ahead and stand back-to-back with your partner. On the count of three, you will quickly turn around and show each other your crazy faces. If your partner laughs or smiles or even smirks at your face, you get a point! If you laugh, they get the point! Your goal is to *not* react to your partner's crazy face. Make sense? Any questions? Great! Let's play 'Crazy Face'!"

AUDIO: UPBEAT GAME MUSIC

Play the game.

Remind kids to quickly come up with their crazy faces before they turn around. After a few rounds, mix it up by having kids switch partners.

Continue for three rounds or more, and then direct kids to return to their seats.

"I never knew this room was full of so many people who could make wild faces! Great job, everyone! Let's have a show of hands. How many of you ended the game with one or more points? *(Allow response)* Congrats! How many ended up with zero points because you kept turning around and laughing? *(Allow response)* Honestly, I didn't even keep track of points because you all looked so ridiculous."

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: "Thanks for playing and for making me laugh! God has created so many amazing things we get to experience every day, including laughter. Whenever I'm having a bad day—and I'm guessing this is true for you, too—it can completely turn around with a joke, a funny story, or even a crazy face.

"It's no secret that life can be difficult. It downright stinks some days, doesn't it? We experience sadness, anger, hurt, and disappointment. There can be days when our best friends hurt our feelings, a loved one gets severely ill, we fail a test, we lose the game, or nothing we try works out the way we want it to.

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“Wouldn’t it be cool to always have someone around who makes you laugh? Someone to help turn the situation around? As soon as a negative experience arrives, they could enter the scene, cross their eyes, and completely change the story.

“Think about all the people you interact with regularly on an everyday basis. Who do you turn to when you’re just not feeling it? When your day is ruined? Even when all of the ice cream is gone? Or who *SHOULD* you turn to when life isn’t feeling so joyful?

“This is a question worth considering. And it’s a question people have been asking for a really long time—like thousands of years! Even the people who were around when Jesus walked the earth wondered about questions like these. Thankfully, they learned some things along the way, and God inspired them to write those experiences down so we could learn from them, too. Let’s jump in.”

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: “After Jesus was born, little is known about His middle-school childhood. There’s a story about Jesus at the temple when He was twelve, but there’s not much about teen Jesus. And while we don’t have an account of Jesus’ younger years, we can guess that because He was a human just like us, He had a lot to learn. Luke wrote that as Jesus grew up, He became stronger, wiser, and more pleasing to God and people.

“But let’s check out some of what we do know about Jesus. The New Testament gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—primarily talk about Jesus’ life when He was an adult.

“Early in His adult life, Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River by His cousin, John. Following this, Jesus began to invite people to be His followers or disciples. In addition, Jesus began to teach in various towns, hillsides, and houses.

Move next to the large, clear container of water, set on a table, at center stage.

“At the time of our story, weddings were a big deal. These celebrations often lasted a whole week, and it was not uncommon to invite the entire town. Culturally, it was rude to turn down an invitation to celebrate the marriage of a couple. So not only was the party long, loud, and full of food and dancing, but often they were overflowing with people. To accommodate so many guests, careful planning was needed to ensure smooth festivities and adequate refreshments. Take this bowl of water, for example. The festivities would’ve included things to drink for the guests, and in Jesus’ day, the wedding parties almost always had wine to drink.

Take the pre-set container of iodine and pour it into the water.

“There! Wine!

“Now, in John chapter 2, we learn about a time Jesus attended a wedding in the village of Cana. This was early in His ministry, and few people knew about Him—who He was, or what He could do. Jesus and His disciples were attending a wedding, and some time into the wedding celebration, a problem arose.

“Jesus’ mom pulled Him aside and told Him the wine was all gone.

Pour the small container of bleach into the water bowl—it should turn the liquid clear.

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"To run out of wine at a wedding would have been embarrassing and looked poorly on the host families. The bride and groom would have been humiliated. Because she knew Jesus was special, Mary was hoping He could help solve the problem. Even though Jesus was not yet ready to reveal to the world just how special He was, Mary was insistent that He help.

"Nearby sat six large, empty, stone jars.

Indicate to clear glass jars (with unseen drink mix powder, different colors, pre-set in the bottom) set out on the table.

"Each could hold between twenty and thirty gallons of water that were used for ceremonial washing. Jesus instructed the servants to fill the jars with water . . . or at least what started out as water.

"When they did this, and when the person in charge of the dinner tasted it, it wasn't water anymore.

Pour the water into each jar. The water should instantly change color inside the jars. Continue talking as you finish all six jars.

"As the man tasted the drink, it was no longer water. Rather, the man tasted wine! The wedding party was saved, and the wine was some of the best wine the wedding party had ever tasted. It tasted so good, in fact, that people accused the groom of holding out on them, saving the best wine until last!

"It truly was a miracle—and the first miracle of many that Jesus would perform in His lifetime."

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: "On that day, Jesus performed His very first miracle. Instead of standing back and doing nothing, Jesus turned water into the best wine—which allowed the family and friends to continue to enjoy each other's company. The bride and groom were saved from major embarrassment and could continue their celebration.

"In a moment when the party could have ended, at a time when things could've gone in a really bad direction, Jesus stepped in. His actions changed the mood.

"Jesus did this kind of thing all the time. He shared joy with others throughout His life. Likewise, each one of us could look to share joy with others in the small things—especially when it looks like things are about to take a turn for the worse. You can step in. You can be the change everyone needs!"

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: "If you stop and think about it, many people have taken time to share joy with you in your lifetime. Parents, friends, teachers, pastors, family, lots of people.

"But maybe, just maybe, the one who can bring joy to others is you. You can be the person to change someone's day, to lighten a mood, to crack a smile.

"I know you have some great examples of people who have brought you joy, just like Jesus did for this wedding party. As we get ready to head to our Small Groups, think about this:



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25 MINUTES

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

“Who are the people who help you find joy?” Whether you have only one good example or a long list of coaches, teachers, uncles, teammates, bring those names with you to your Small Groups. We can't wait to have you discuss those who help you find joy and how Jesus has shown us how to have joy. Before we head to Small Groups, let's pray and thank God for Jesus and the joy He brings to each of us.

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