



WEEK ONE – JUNE 2024 – SECOND/THIRD

Bible Story: *The Story of the Lost Sheep | Luke 15:1-7*

Bottom Line: *We can have joy because of Jesus*

Memory Verse: *“A cheerful heart makes you healthy. But a broken spirit dries you up.” – Proverbs 17:22*

Virtue: *Joy – Choosing to celebrate what God is doing*

Basic Truth: *I can trust God no matter what*

Series Overview: 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!

Bottom Line: We can have joy because of Jesus. In Jesus’ story, the shepherd is full of joy when he finds his lost sheep. He rejoices with his friends. When we recognize that we are like the lost sheep, we can have joy because we know that God sent Jesus to rescue us! And this joy isn’t just something we keep to ourselves. We can share the good news about Jesus and celebrate when others put their faith in Him too.

9:05 - 9:20 | 11:05 – 11:20 | EARLY ARRIVERS ACTIVITY

Opening Small Group Activity

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

What You Need: Prepared tape with smiley face drawn

What You Do:

- Welcome kids by name as they arrive with a fist bump or high five
 - *NOTE: If you have not already done so, discreetly adhere a piece of tape with a smiley face drawn on it to the bottom of your shoe.*
- Instruct the kids to stand in a circle, facing outward.
- Direct the kids to link elbows so every kid has both elbows linked with the kids beside them.
 - Do not join the linked circle.
- Instruct the kids to work together to look for a picture of a joyful face you have hidden.
- Every few seconds, say “hot” if the group is close to the hidden face, and “cold” if they’re far away from the face.
- Allow the kids to move around to search, but instruct them that they must move as one group, keeping their arms linked.
- Celebrate when the kids find the joyful face.

What You Say:

““Finding the hidden ‘joyful’ face wasn't easy, was it? *[Transition]* **Let's go to Large Group to hear a story about something that was lost and was not so easy to find**

9:20 - 9:50 | 11:20 – 11:50 | LARGE GROUP

Large Group Overview: We start the month with **Luke 15:1-7**, where we find Jesus telling a parable about a shepherd who goes to find his lost sheep. Jesus explains that the shepherd cares so much about the missing sheep that he leaves the other 99 sheep to go look for it. After the shepherd finds his sheep, he invites his friends to help him celebrate!

9:50 – 10:10 | 11:50 – 12:10 | SMALL GROUP

Joy Finder

[Talk About God | Bible Story Review]

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

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.

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! **[Bottom Line] We can have joy because of Jesus.**”*

[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?)

Verse in Motion

[Hear From God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

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.
 - ***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. 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.

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!”

*“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. **[Bottom Line] We can have joy because of Jesus.**”*

“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! **[Bottom Line] We can have joy because of Jesus.**”*

[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?)

Pray + Dismiss

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

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.
 - **[Bottom Line] 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.
 - *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 **[Bottom Line] 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. + to make sure to hand out this month’s Parent Cue card!