



WEEK ONE – JUNE 2024 – KINDER/FIRST

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

Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: Butcher paper; black marker; washable markers

What You Do:

- Welcome kids by name as they arrive with a fist bump or high five
- Use a thick, black marker to write the word “JOY” in large block letters in the center of the butcher paper.
- Instruct the kids to sit around the butcher paper.
- Point out the word “JOY” on the butcher paper.
- Say: “Joy is choosing to celebrate what God is doing.”
- Set out the washable markers.
- Encourage the kids to draw or write what brings them joy around the outside of the butcher paper in front of them.
- Help kids come up with ideas by asking things like:
 - What makes you happy every time you see it?
 - Who can cheer you up on a bad day?
 - When was the last time you felt like celebrating?
- As the kids finish, invite them to share what they wrote about or drew.
- Set the butcher paper aside to use for prayer later.

What You Say:

“Friends, I LOVE all the things on our joy banner. There are so many reasons to have joy. Thanks for sharing. *[Transition]* **In our Bible Story today, we’ll learn how we can have joy no matter what.**”

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

Jesus + Joy!

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Explore: an activity that extends learning through hands on experimentation and discovery

What You Need: “Jesus + Joy Cards” Activity Page; Prepared Envelopes

What You Do:

- Instruct the kids to sit in a circle.
- Direct the kids to close and cover their eyes.
- Quickly hide the prepared envelopes around your group space.
- After you’ve hidden the envelopes, direct the kids to open their eyes.
- Tap each kid’s head as you count off 1 and 2 around the circle.
- Encourage the kids to remember their number.
- Guide the kids to look around the group space to find one envelope with the number they’ve been assigned.
 - So all the “1” kids will look for envelopes with the number one written on it, while all the “2” kids will look for envelopes with the number two written on it.

- Direct all of the kids with the “1” envelopes to sit in a circle together, and all of the kids with the “2” envelopes to sit in a different circle together.
- Once every kid has an envelope and is sitting with their group, lead the kids to open their envelopes together. Read the words aloud.
- Say: “Real joy comes from knowing Jesus. God is always working in the world around us. When we look for what God is doing, then we can celebrate and have joy!”
- After reading the section below, collect all the cards.
- Save the “JESUS” cards for the Prayer activity.

What You Say:

“(to group 2) ‘Hold up the cards that say, ‘Jesus!’ Great job! Jesus loves us and came to make a way for us to have a relationship with God forever. (to group 1) Hold up the cards that say, ‘Joy!’ Great job! Knowing how much Jesus loves us should bring us . . . ‘JOY!’ We can also look for ways that God is working in the world around us and celebrate those things too.

“Like when a friend is sick, and you pray, and they feel better. Or when your mom is worried about her job and then she finds a new one. Or when you come to church and worship with your friends. God is always working and moving. God hears every prayer and cares about us! We can have joy when we pay attention to the ways God is working in the world around us.

*“When you hear your word, I want you to hold up your card. Remember, [**Bottom Line**] we can have (to group 1) **JOY because of** (to group 2) **JESUS**. Let’s do that again. Remember to hold up your card when you hear the word on it! Remember, [**Bottom Line**] we can have (to group 1) **JOY because of** (to group 2) **JESUS**. Way to go, friends!”*

Pray + Dismiss

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

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

What You Need: Butcher paper from Opening Activity; “Jesus” cards from Jesus + Joy Activity

What You Do:

- Lay the butcher paper page from the Opening Activity in the center of your small group area.
- Instruct the kids to sit around the butcher paper.
- Give some of the kids the “JESUS” cards.
- Say: “The things you’ve drawn can bring us joy sometimes.”
- Encourage kids with the cards to lay them over their drawings along the outside of the page.
- Say: “But following Jesus brings us real joy ALL the time.”
- Close the group in prayer.

What You Say:

“God, thank You for loving us and for proving that love by sending Your only Son Jesus for us! We know that Jesus came to teach us about You, to show us how to live, and to give His life so we could have a relationship with You forever. Help us to put our trust in Jesus because He is the reason for joy, always. We love You and it’s in Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.”

As adults arrive to pick up, make sure to hand out this month’s Parent Cue card!