



WEEK ONE – JUNE 2024 – PRETEEN

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

Key Question: *What does joy mean to you?*

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!

Key Question: What does joy mean to you? Preteens have greater access to technology than ever before. Because of this, they’re often bombarded with negative messages, and joy can seem hard to find. That’s why we’re starting the month by helping our preteens think about what joy is . . . and where true, lasting joy really comes from.

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

Opening Small Group Activity

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

What You Need: Washable ink pads, “100 Thumbs” Activity Page

What You Do:

- Welcome kids by name as they arrive with a fist bump or high five
- Give each kid a “100 Thumbs” Activity Page.
- Set out the ink pads for kids to share.
- Challenge kids to see who can be the first to fill each of the 100 squares with one fingerprint.

What You Say:

“*[Transition]* Let’s go hear a story Jesus told about something valuable that was lost and then found.”

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

Discussion Questions

[Talk About God | Bible Story Review]

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

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- ASK:
 - What does joy mean to you?
 - When you think of Jesus as your shepherd, what comes to mind?
 - What is something you can celebrate today?
 - Name some large and small ways God is at work around us. How does that help you to have joy?

Verses To Take With You

[Hear From God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

What You Need: Bibles, markers or colored pencils, “Verse Draw” Activity Page

What You Do:

- Give each kid a Bible and direct them to look up Proverbs 17:22 using the Bible Navigation Tips below.
 - ***Finding verses with 4th-5th graders:** Ask kids to tell you if the book of the Bible they’re looking for is in the Old Testament or New Testament. If it’s in the Old, instruct kids to flip slowly, starting at the*

front of the Bible and heading toward the back, until they find the book they're looking for. If it's in the New, instruct kids to start flipping from the back, going forward to find the book they're looking for. Once they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. First, have them find the chapter they're looking for. Then explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Tell kids to find the verse within the chapter they've already found.

- Read the verse to the group.
- Say the verse together by inviting half of the group to say the first part and the other half to say the second part.
- Ask:
 - A cheerful heart can't take away a sore throat or mend a broken arm, so in what ways does a joyful attitude make you healthy?
 - Describe someone who has a broken spirit.
 - How does a sad, discouraged attitude make someone feel dried up?
 - When have you felt both of the emotions mentioned in this verse?
 - What are some ways to turn a broken spirit into a cheerful heart?
- Give each kid a set of the cards from the “Verse Draw” Activity Page.
- Set out the markers or colored pencils.
- Instruct kids to draw a simple illustration on each card for that part of the verse.
- When finished, let kids share their illustrations and the meaning behind each one.
- Collect the cards then shuffle them together.
- Divide the group into two teams.
- Give each team an equal amount of the shuffled cards. It's okay if teams do not have complete pairs of each illustration.
- Tell teams to place their cards face down on the floor in no particular order.
- Explain that you will read one part of Proverbs 17:22, then, at your signal, one player on each team will race to turn over all the cards that illustrate that portion of the verse.
 - All the other cards should be returned to the face down position.

- Kids will look at the illustrations and the text on each card to make sure they are leaving the correct cards (the ones that correspond with the part of the verse you read) facing up.
- Collect the cards, reshuffle, then distribute again.
- Repeat the game several times until each kid has had a turn flipping the cards over.
- Give any of the kids who would like to an opportunity to say Proverbs 17:22 from memory.

Make It Personal With Prayer

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

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

What You Need: Pencils, “C3L3B®@T3! (CELEBRATE!)” Activity Page

What You Do:

- Give each kid a pencil and a “C3L3B®@T3! (CELEBRATE!)” Activity Page.
- Invite kids to try to read the phrases on the top of the Activity Page.
 - Point out that for the words to make sense, they had to look at the numbers and symbols in a different way.
 - Answers: Celebrate, I love Jesus!, You make me smile (happy), Jesus is my Shepherd, Start the party!
- Remind kids that followers of Jesus choose to look at life differently by looking for ways God is at work around us every day and to celebrate it.
- Ask kids to share ways they have seen God at work around them.
 - If needed, prompt ideas by suggesting they think about how God cares, protects, provides, answers their prayers, and teaches them.
 - Point them in the direction of things they are thankful for, then reflect on how that is evidence of God at work on their behalf.

- Direct kids' attention to the framed box on their Activity Page. Invite them to write a short phrase that expresses one of the ideas that was shared. Tell them to use numbers and symbols to replace some of the letters.
- As kids finish, tell them to trade papers with someone and see if they can read what each other wrote.
- Review some of the things kids wrote then take a moment to pray.
 - Invite any kids who are comfortable doing so to pray aloud as others pray silently.
- Close your group in prayer, thanking God for showing up in our lives and giving us so much to celebrate.

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