



## WEEK THREE – JUNE 2024 – SECOND/THIRD

**Bible Story:** *Ezra + Rebuilding of the Temple | Ezra 3:10-13*

**Bottom Line:** *Celebrate each step of the way*

**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 need to make the wise choice*

**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: Celebrate each step of the way.** Some tasks seem to take longer to complete than others. Whether kids are learning how to ride a bike, bake a cake, solve a math problem, or talk to new people, they learn that each step is important. The same thing is true about our relationship with God. We can choose to trust God and find joy, even when we can’t see the whole picture. We can celebrate how God is working in our lives with every step we take

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

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**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:** “Party Supplies” Activity Page

**What You Do:**

- Welcome kids by name as they arrive with a fist bump or high five
- Place the “Party Supplies” Activity Page cards in the bag.
- Invite one kid to go first.
- Instruct that kid to choose one card from the bag and discreetly look at it.
- Direct the kid who drew the card to stand in the front of the group and act out how the party supply depicted on their card is used.
- Encourage the rest of the group to guess the party supply.
- Repeat until each kid has had a turn to act out a party supply.

**What You Say:**

“That was fun! All these party supplies make a celebration fun and exciting! In today’s story, we’ll hear about some people who threw a big celebration.

**[Transition] Let’s head to Large Group to find out why!”**

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

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**Large Group Overview:** For Week 3, we head to Ezra 3:10-13. At the time, God’s people were living as captives in Persia, when the new king, Cyrus, allowed them to return home to Jerusalem. However, when they returned, everything was broken down and destroyed. The people got to work rebuilding the temple . . . but

before they got far, they stopped to worship God and celebrate the ways that God had helped them.

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

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**Celebration Shuffle**

**[Live for God | Application Activity]**

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

**What You Need:** “Signs” Activity Page, “Skills” Activity Page, and painter’s tape

**What You Do:**

- Use the tape to hang the three signs from the “Signs” Activity Page in different areas of the group area.
  - If hanging the signs up is not possible in your group space, spread the signs out on the floor instead.
- Direct the kids to gather in the middle of the group space.
- Review the three different areas—the words on the signs—with the kids:
  - “I am still learning how to do this.”
  - “I know how to do this.”
  - “I have never tried this.”
- One by one, read a statement from the “Skills” Activity Page.
- Instruct the kids to move to the sign that best describes their familiarity with that skill, to stand near that sign, then to celebrate with the other kids near them before returning to the middle for the next statement.
  - Encourage kids by explaining we all learn different things at different times, and it’s okay for them to choose any sign for each statement.
- After kids have arrived at their chosen signs, lead them into a celebration, regardless of the area they chose; kids can dance, high-five each other, etc.
- Direct kids to return to the middle of the space.

- Repeat for each statement.
- Encourage positive interactions and celebration dances throughout the game.

### **What You Say:**

*“It was so interesting to see all the different skills we have learned, are still leaning, or are waiting to learn! We’re all on this amazing journey of learning and growing, and it’s totally okay to be at different levels. Whether you landed in the ‘still learning’ zone, the ‘got this’ zone, or the ‘never tried this’ zone, you all were able to celebrate because, guess what? The truth is, we’ll never be completely finished in this lifetime with all the things we need and want to do. That’s why it’s so important to celebrate the baby steps along the way.*

*“Best of all, God is right there with us every step of the way. So, when we give thanks for all God has done and follow Jesus, God gives us joy through the Holy Spirit so we can **[Bottom Line] celebrate each step of the way.**”*

***[Make It Personal] (Share with the group any steps you have taken to improve or learn a new skill. Perhaps you’ve learned to play a new instrument or fix a car. Or maybe you’re trying to be a better listener. How does remembering how God has helped with the things you’ve learned so far give you the strength to take steps toward improving or learning something new?)***

### **Verse Tap**

#### **[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:** Bible; “Hopscotch Verse” Activity Pages, and floor tape

### **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 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 to the group.
- Invite others who would like to read the verse to the group.
- Instruct the kids to circle up.
- Select one kid to start the game.
- Instruct that kid to walk around the circle while tapping each kid’s head as they recite the words of the verse.
  - If they struggle to remember the words, encourage the group to recite the verse together, using their Bibles if needed.
- When the kid walking around the circle gets to the reference, instruct the kid they tap to get up and chase the tapper around the circle until one of them sits back down in the empty spot.
- Instruct the last kid standing to start a new round.
- Repeat as time and interest allow.

**What You Say:**

*“Let’s give a big cheer for ourselves to **[Bottom Line]** celebrate each step of the way towards memorizing this month’s Memory Verse! (Allow time for kids to cheer.) We’ve made big progress on learning this month’s Memory Verse. Celebrating our progress not only makes us happy inside, but it also makes our bodies strong—it’s like medicine for the body! So let’s learn to **[Bottom Line]** celebrate each step of the way when we do things!”*