



WEEK FIVE – JUNE 2024 – KINDER/FIRST

Bible Story: *God Will Give Us Joy | Habakkuk 3:17-18*

Bottom Line: *There's always a reason to celebrate*

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: **There's always a reason to celebrate.** Even when we face tough challenges in life, we can celebrate because we know that God sent Jesus to be our Savior. That doesn't make our current troubles any less difficult. But it does mean that we can find peace and joy in the midst of them. We can find joy in knowing that God is ALWAYS up to something good—even when we can't see it.

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

Opening Small Group Activity

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

What You Need: “JOY” Activity Page; scissors

What You Do:

- Welcome kids by name as they arrive with a fist bump or high five
- Without kids seeing it, cut apart the “JOY” Activity Page into several puzzle pieces of your choosing so each kid in the group will get one piece.
- If kids are still arriving, cut a few extra pieces.
- Give each kid one of the pieces.
- Talk about how each piece represents just one part of the picture.
- Ask: “What should you do with these pieces to have a complete picture?”
- Instruct the kids to work together to complete the puzzle.
- Once finished, point out the word “JOY” in the middle.

What You Say:

“Great job, friends! Each of these pieces was just one part of a bigger puzzle or picture. Sometimes it’s easier to focus only on what’s happening right in front of us, kind of like looking at one piece of the puzzle. But if we only do that and something bad happens, it can be hard to find joy. *[Transition]* **Today, we’ll hear about a man with a crazy-fun name who learned to trust God and find joy through some really tough stuff.**”

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

Large Group Overview: We finish the month in **Habakkuk 3:17-18**. Habakkuk wrote these words as God’s people were about to be taken captive. Everything was going wrong in Habakkuk’s world . . . but still, he chose to trust God and choose joy. Habakkuk ultimately found joy because of God’s faithfulness and love that nothing could take away.

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

Habakkuk Finds Joy

[Talk About God | Bible Story Review]

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

What You Need: “Habakkuk Finds Joy” Activity Page; Bible; Markers

What You Do:

- Gather the kids to review the Bible Story using the following key points:
 - Habakkuk was a prophet, someone who listened to God and told people what God was saying.
 - Habakkuk lived in Jerusalem during a really difficult time: enemies were closing in on them, people had forgotten about God, they were fighting each other, and treating others unfairly.
 - Habakkuk called out to God. (*Read Habakkuk 3:2 from the marked Bible.*)
 - Habakkuk had a conversation with God and Habakkuk wrote it all down.
 - God answered Habakkuk and told him life was going to get harder before it got better.

- Habakkuk chose to have joy because he knew that God had done great things in the past.
- Say: “Habakkuk had a choice! He couldn’t change what was happening around him, but he COULD choose to trust God because God had done great things in the past.”
- Give each kid one of the cards from the “Habakkuk Finds Joy” Activity Page.
 - Identify each picture as you hand each card out.
- As you read a passage from today’s Bible Story, instruct the kids to listen for the word they are holding. As they hear their word, instruct them to stand up and hold their card up.
- Read Habakkuk 3:17 to the group from the marked Bible.
 - Pause at any references to fig tree, grapes, olives, fields without food, sheep, or cattle and prompt kids to stand, as needed.
- Collect the cards from the “Habakkuk Finds Joy” Activity Page and set them aside for the Joy Collage activity.
- Give each kid one or two of the colored paper cards.
- Instruct the kids to draw a picture of something not so great that happened to them recently.
 - Encourage the kids to make more than one drawing if they choose.
 - Prompt them with leading questions if needed:
 - Did you lose something recently?
 - Have you ever gotten sick and had to cancel plans?
 - What is something that has made you sad, frustrated, or scared?
- Read Habakkuk 3:18 to the group from the marked Bible.
- Say: “Habakkuk chose to trust God, even when things were hard.”
- Let kids hold onto their drawings for the JOY Collage activity.

What You Say:

“Habakkuk was honest with God about the things that were going wrong. He didn’t just act like everything was okay. Even though Habakkuk may have been angry or upset, he chose to TRUST God.

*We all face hard things—like the pictures you drew on your cards. But even when things aren't going our way, we can choose to focus on how Jesus made a way for us to have a relationship with God forever. No matter what is happening around us, we can trust that God is always up to something good. That's why: **[Bottom Line]** there's always a reason to celebrate.”*

***[Make It Personal]** (Share with the kids an age-appropriate example of something hard that you have recently faced. How did knowing that God loves you and is with you, help you find joy even in the midst of a difficult situation?)*

JOY Collage

[Live For God| Application Activity]

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

What You Need: Kids' drawings and “Habakkuk Finds Joy” cards from the Habakkuk Finds Joy Activity, butcher paper, black marker, and a glue stick

What You Do:

- Spread out a piece of butcher paper in the center of your group area.
- Write the word “JOY” in a large, outlined bubble or block letter in the center of the paper.
- Make sure kids have their drawings from the Habakkuk Finds Joy Activity.
- Give each kid a “Habakkuk Finds Joy” Activity Page card from the Habakkuk Finds Joy Activity.
- Encourage the kids to tear up their cards (both the ones they've drawn, and the Bible Story images) into small pieces.
- As kids are tearing the cards, use the glue stick to fill the inside of each letter on the butcher paper with glue.
- Ask kids finish tearing their cards, instruct them to fill up the letters of the word “JOY” with the torn pieces.
- Say: “No matter what happens—good or bad—we can still find JOY because God loves us, God is with us, and God sent Jesus to save us.”

- Set the collage aside for the Prayer Activity.

What You Say:

“Friends, look at this beautiful collage you’ve made out of all these torn pieces. When hard things happen, it’s easy to focus just on that hard thing. It’s certainly okay to be sad and to tell God how you feel. But even when we’re sad or frustrated, we can choose to trust God. The Bible is full of true stories about real people that show us we can trust God no matter what.

*“Instead of focusing on what’s going on right in front of us, we can look for JOY. We can remember that God loves us and that God sent Jesus to make a way for us to have a relationship with God forever. So when hard things happen, let’s remember that there is ALWAYS joy to be found. Let’s ask God to help us understand that **[Bottom Line]** there’s always a reason to celebrate.”*