



WEEK TWO – JUNE 2024 – PRETEEN

Bible Story: *Feast of Booths | Deuteronomy 16:13-17*

Key Question: *How can you remember to be joyful?*

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: **How can you remember to be joyful?** There’s nothing better than getting together with other people and celebrating everything that God has done—in your life and in the lives of the people around you. We hope this question allows kids to share ideas and think about ways they can make joy a part of their everyday lives.

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: Paper, Pens, “Guess the Party” Activity Page

What You Do:

- Welcome kids by name as they arrive with a fist bump or high five
- Give each kid a piece of paper and a pen.
- Give each kid one of the “Guess the Party” cards without letting others see what’s on it.
 - If you have more than 10 kids, pair some kids up to work together.
- Explain that each card contains a random, unique cause for celebration, and each kid is to plan a party to celebrate what’s on their card.
 - Direct kids to write down their party ideas for their assigned celebration on their papers.
 - Tell them to keep their party a secret as they work.
- Encourage kids to create their party list carefully because everything on their list will be a clue for others to guess what the party is for. They can share the name of the party at the top of their card, but all the other clues must come from their list of party plans.
- If needed, prompt ideas by suggesting kids consider the following:
 - What decorations would you use?
 - What food would you serve?
 - Who would you invite?
 - What party favors or gifts would you give?
 - Where would your party be located?
 - How would you tell guests to dress?
 - What gifts might they bring?

- When kids have completed a list of 5-10 ideas, let them take turns reading what they wrote while the others guess the party.

What You Say:

“We often create an event or celebration for something special that happened—maybe not a party for getting a haircut or finding your shoes but definitely for birthdays and important holidays. Celebrations give us a chance to look back and remember something we don’t ever want to forget. [Transition] Today, we’ll hear some interesting ways the Israelites celebrated and remembered the great things God had done for them.”

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

Large Group Overview: For Week 2, we see how God set aside times and rhythms for the Israelite people to reflect on and remember everything God had done for them. In **Deuteronomy 16:13-17**, we read about one celebration in particular called the Feast of Booths. We see in Scripture how God’s people celebrated this feast on several important occasions throughout their history.

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 are some things you know about God’s character that you can celebrate right now?
 - What can you do to help you remember what God has done in your life?
 - When things don’t turn out as you had hoped, why can you still celebrate?
 - Describe a celebration you could have to show thanks to God.

Verses To Take With You

[Hear From God | Memory Verse Activity]

Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment

What You Need: Bibles

What You Do:

- Give each kid a Bible and direct them to look up Philippians 4:4 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.
- Ask kids whether they think it’s possible to ALWAYS rejoice or be joyful in the Lord. Challenge them to explain why or why not.

- Point out that having an attitude of thankfulness—at all times—will help us be joyful in the Lord at all times.
- Ask kids if they know what a time capsule is. (*A container that holds present day items, such as photos, letters, or anything else that is a reminder of what is happening in our lives or in the world right now. It's typically hidden away for our future selves or someone else to find and open.*)
- Invite kids to brainstorm what they would put in a time capsule that, if discovered in a year or so, would reveal what God is doing in their lives right now that they can praise and celebrate. If kids need a few ideas to get them started, share what you would put in your time capsule then stir their imagination with the prompts below.
 - What is important to you right now? What could you put in your time capsule to remind you of that?
 - What's a favorite Bible verse you have? What could you put in your time capsule to remind you of it?
 - What would you write in a THANK YOU letter to Jesus today?
 - Who are the people in your life you are most grateful for? What's something you could put in your time capsule that represents those people?
 - What trips, activities, events, or experiences have you experienced recently? What could you put in your time capsule to remind you of those fun times?
 - How has God answered a prayer, provided, cared for, encouraged, or helped you in some way? What could you put in your time capsule to remind you of that?
- Challenge kids to consider creating an actual time capsule this week by using a shoe box or other container. They might hide it in the back of their closet, garage, or other place where it might not be found for a while. Tell them to be sure to include a note with the date and purpose of the time capsule. When someone finds it or they rediscover it, they can celebrate what God has done in their life.

Make It Personal With Prayer

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

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

What You Need: Bible

What You Do:

- Read Proverbs 17:22 from the Bible aloud to the group.
- Invite kids to say the first part of the verse together then pause to allow them a moment to reflect and pray as they focus on ways they've seen God's care and love for them this week.
- Invite kids to say the second part of the verse. Remind them that building the habit of choosing joy is most difficult when things are not going our way. That's when we need to stop and remember what God has done for us.
- Encourage kids to ask God to help them with a situation they are facing that is troubling them right now and making it hard for them to feel joyful.
- Invite kids who are willing to do so to pray out loud while encouraging the others to pray silently. Remind them that God hears our prayers whether we speak them out loud or in our thoughts.
- Close by praying for each of the kids to build the habit of being joyful and find ways to celebrate Jesus this week.