



WEEK THREE – JUNE 2024 – PRETEEN

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

Key Question: *What is something that took longer than you wanted it to?*

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 is something that took longer than you wanted it to?** Joy is something that we choose every single day. And we can still choose joy even when the things we hope for end up taking longer than we would like or expect. As preteens think through this question, they can begin to see that no matter how long the journey might be, they can still choose joy along the way.

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: Marbles; forks

What You Do:

- Welcome kids by name as they arrive with a fist bump or high five
- Give each kid a marble and a fork.
- Instruct kids to try to use the fork to scoop up the marble with the following guidelines:
 - They can only use their hand that is holding the fork.
 - Once the marble is on the fork, they must balance it there for 3 seconds.
 - The first kid to do this is the winner. (This is a difficult challenge that they will most likely not be able to do.)
- After kids have made several unsuccessful attempts, allow them to use a wall or other flat surface to nudge the fork up against to scoop the marble. (This will still be a challenge but should make it possible.)
- Give the group some time to complete this challenge then congratulate them for not giving up.

What You Say:

“During this game, I could hear sounds of excitement as some of you accomplished a tricky challenge. It reminds me of the way God wants us to find joy each step of the way—in the small, everyday things as well as the huge, amazing things.

[Transition] Today in Large Group, we’ll hear about how God’s people found joy during each step of a project that was even harder and took a lot longer than balancing a marble on a fork.”

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’s your favorite way to celebrate and worship God?
 - If someone said to you, “I don’t have anything to be joyful about,” what would you say to help them realize that they do?
 - What is something that took longer than you wanted it to? How might it help in those situations to celebrate small steps of progress along the way and thank God for them?

Take a Snapshot

[Live for God | Application Activity]

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

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- Direct the group to sit in a circle.
- Share one of the following prompts and challenge kids to go around the circle taking turns to respond:
 - Describe joy using 2 rhyming words.
 - Define joy using a word that begin with “H.”
 - Talk about joy using a sentence containing the word “anyone” in it.
 - Share a word that ends with “L” and reminds you of joy.
 - Name something that is the opposite of joy.
- When kids run out of ideas or repeat words, move on to another prompt from the list above.
- Ask kids questions or invite them to explain more about their responses throughout the game.
- ***[Make it Personal] Share your definition of joy and a way God helped you find it in a situation that took longer than you wanted.***