



WEEK FIVE – JUNE 2024 – PRETEEN

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

Key Question: *What can you celebrate today?*

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 can you celebrate today? This question can help preteens reframe their circumstances and look at their world a little differently. It can help them discover ways that God is working in their lives in ways they maybe hadn’t noticed before. We hope that our kids will discover that they always have the best reason to celebrate because of their faith in God—even if nothing else in their lives seem to be going right.

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

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: Sticky Notes; pen; ball

What You Do:

- Welcome kids by name as they arrive with a fist bump or high five
- Direct the kids to form a circle.
- Write a number between 1–100 on a sticky note without the kids seeing.
- Ask each kid to share a number between 1–100.
- Show them the number you wrote on the sticky note. The kid who came the closest takes the first turn in a guessing game.
- Explain the guessing game to the group as described below:
 - You will choose one kid (“the guesser”) to sit in the middle of the circle.
 - You will call out a topic. (See below for suggestions.)
 - You will give the kids forming the circle a balloon to pass around.
 - The “guesser” will name as many things as they can think of related to that topic in the time it takes the ball to go around the circle twice (*adjust based on the size of your group*).
 - For example: If the topic is candy, they might say “chocolate, M&Ms, jellybeans, Skittles®,” etc.
 - You’ll keep track of the number of items named, write that number on a sticky note, and give it to that kid as their score.
- After each round, choose another kid to be in the middle using the same selection method as earlier. (Kids who have already taken a turn do not choose a number.)
- Repeat so everyone gets a chance to be in the middle. The kid who lists the most items wins.

- Let kids choose a topic or use ones from the list below:
 - Fruit
 - Sports
 - Items found in a backpack
 - Types of trees
 - Animals on a farm
 - Flavors of ice cream
 - Pizza toppings
 - Things found in a kitchen
 - Party supplies
 - Furniture
 - Things that are soft
 - Things that are loud

What You Say:

“Those were a random selection of topics, but everyone did a great job coming up with different things for each one. [Transition] Today we’ll hear about a situation that seemed hopeless, but a random selection of things turned into a joyful reminder. Figs, cattle, and olives probably sound like random reasons, but let’s head to Large Group to find out more!”

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

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:
 - If Habakkuk visited our Small Group today, what do you think he would tell us about joy?
 - When you realize that you can't control a situation and make it go the way you want, how does that make you feel? What are some good things that can come out of realizing we are not in control of some things? What CAN we control?
 - Even though as followers of Jesus we know God is in control and that we can trust God, why is it so hard to believe that sometimes?

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; party hats; permanent markers; pens; sticky notes

What You Do:

- Ask kids to get into pairs.
- Give each kid a party hat and a permanent marker.

- Explain that when we're going through a tough time, we sometimes *react* with unhelpful thoughts or attitudes rather than *responding* in a way that's helpful. What we think about can either steal our joy or help us focus on what's true and right.
- Give kids time to share with their partners what some of those unhelpful thoughts might be then write them on their party hat. For example:
 - I'm all alone in this.
 - It seems like God is not with me.
 - This is too hard.
 - No one else has ever been through something like this.
 - I'm too afraid.
 - I'm stuck. Nothing will ever change.
 - My way is better than God's.
- Give each pair a Bible. Direct them to look up and read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 using the Navigation Tip 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.
- Give each kid 4 sticky notes and a pen.
- Say 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 together.
- Ask kids to divide the verses into four parts then write each portion on a separate sticky note.
- Ask:
 - How does 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 suggest we respond in a difficult situation?
 - Which of the actions described in the verse is one you need to work on most?

- What would be different if instead of *reacting* to a situation you chose to *respond* with the ideas described in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18?
- Instruct the kids to place the sticky notes on their party hats to cover the reactions they wrote earlier. Prompt them to choose the portion of the verse they feel would be the best response to the negative reaction or thoughts they wrote on the hat.
- Say the verse together and remind kids that we can't always control what might happen to us. But we CAN control how we respond. We can admit how hard those things are, but then we can choose to remember how God has helped us in the past, and that we can truly trust God no matter what.