



WEEK FOUR – JULY 2024 – PRETEEN

Bible Story: *Heaven / Revelation 21:22:1-5*

Key Question: *What's the best party you can imagine?*

Memory Verse: *“Always be joyful because you belong to the Lord. I will say it again. Be joyful!” - Philippians 4:4*

Virtue: *Joy – Choosing to celebrate what God is doing*

Basic Truth: *I should treat others the way I want to be treated.*

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's the best party you can imagine?** Think back to the first time you got a good grade on a project you had been working on for months or getting your first car or even turning the next big significant age. Each of those times probably felt really good, maybe even better than the last! Yet even then, this question allows preteens to begin to think about Heaven and how much more amazing it will be.

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: N/A

What You Do:

- Welcome kids by name as they arrive with a fist bump or high five
- Ask kids to sit in a circle.
- Assign three kids in the circle each of the following roles: Beginning, Middle, and Ending.
- Explain that they are going to work together to make a story!
 - First, “Beginning” will set the stage for the story by making up and introducing characters, setting, and the beginning of the plot.
 - Next, “Middle” will pick up where “Beginning” left off by adding a problem or conflict to the story.
 - Finally, “Ending” will continue where “Middle” left off and bring the story to a conclusion.
- Stories can be as random and silly as kids want to make them!
- Choose another team of three kids to tell a new story.
- Continue creating stories as time allows.

What You Say:

“You were all very creative with your stories! Just like every story has a beginning, middle, and ending, God’s story does, too! [Transition] Today, we’ll discover more about the middle and ending of God’s story and how we can celebrate through all of it.”

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

Large Group Overview: We wrap up the month with the biggest celebration ever in Revelation 21, 22:1-5. John received visions from God about all the things that would one day come, some of which was easier to understand than others. However, John did write that one day there will be no more pain and sadness, and that God will live with us forever.

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 the best party you can imagine?
 - Which part of John's description of heaven is most exciting to you?
 - How can you celebrate what God will do?
 - Why is it sometimes challenging to focus on what God *will* do, rather than focusing on what God is doing now?

Make It Personal With Prayer

[Pray To God | Prayer Activity]

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

What You Need: Dry erase board, dry erase marker

What You Do:

- Direct kids to sit so they are facing the dry erase board.
- Draw 3 equal columns on the board.
 - At the top of the column on the left, write the letter, “J.”
 - At the top of the middle column, write the letter, “O.”
 - At the top of the column on the right, write the letter, “Y.”
- Ask kids to think of things they can celebrate when it comes to Jesus. As kids take turns sharing, write those things down in the “J” column (for *JESUS*).
- Ask kids to think of things they can celebrate when it comes to other people in their lives. As kids take turns sharing, write those things down in the “O” column (for *OTHERS*).
- Ask kids to think of things they can celebrate when it comes to themselves. As kids take turns sharing, write those things down in the “Y” column (for *YOU*).
- After everyone has had time to share, remind kids that we have so many reasons to celebrate what God is doing now in our lives as well as what God will do in the future. When we spend time praying, we should make sure to not always only ask for things. Instead, we can take time to celebrate and tell God how thankful we are for all that God does for us!
- Lead the group in a time of prayer. Explain that you will say something to open up the prayer time. Then kids will have a chance to say something they’d like to celebrate about God. This could be one of the things they mentioned from the list. After kids have had time to say something, you can bring the prayer to a close.