



WEEK FOUR – JANUARY 2025 – PRETEEN

Bible Story: *Walking on Sunshine | Acts 16:16-40*

Key Question: *What brings you joy?*

Memory Verse: *“Be strong, all you who put your hope in the LORD. Never give up.” – Psalm 31:24 (NIRV)*

Basic Truth: *I can trust God no matter what*

Series Overview: With every season comes new and different challenges but also the chance to experience incredible joy. Just as seasons come and go, so do our emotions. And how we choose to handle those emotions can shape us and teach us a lot about how God cares for us. No matter what emotion we may be feeling or what we may face, because of Jesus, we can learn to trust that God knows how we feel. Jesus showed us how to face life with resilience, and because of it, we can trust God no matter what.

Bottom Line: **What brings you joy?** What’s your favorite thing about nature? Is it the sunrise, waterfalls, or maybe the fresh smell of grass? As much as those things may make you happy, there is true joy to be found. As preteens begin to think through this question, we hope they start thinking through the differences in happiness and joy and look to the One who gives true joy.

9:00 - 9:15| 11:00 – 11:15 | EARLY ARRIVERS ACTIVITY

Opening Small Group Activity

Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: whiteboard, dry-erase marker, prepared “Face Game” Activity Page, tape

What You Do:

- Welcome kids as they arrive.
- Invite any kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
- When enough kids arrive, gather them together so everyone is facing the whiteboard.
- Use the dry-erase marker to outline a large head shape on the whiteboard.
- Lay the facial pieces from the “Face Game” Activity Page on the floor in front of the whiteboard.
- Choose a kid to go first and invite them to think of a particular feeling or emotion (*for example: happy, angry, frustrated, and so on*)
- Then, direct that kid to select pieces of the facial features and attach them to the whiteboard using tape.
- Explain to kids the features they choose should best reflect the feeling or emotion they’re thinking of.
- Allow the rest of the group to guess which feeling or emotion they portrayed. Whoever guesses correctly can take the next turn.
- Continue playing until everyone has had a turn or as time allows.

What You Say:

“Today, we’ll discover who can help you and me from falling apart when we feel angry. Let’s go to Large Group to hear more!”

9:15 - 9:50 | 11:20 – 11:50 | LARGE GROUP

Large Group Overview: We close out the month in Acts 16:16-40. While Paul and Silas were preaching the message of Jesus, they were arrested and thrown into prison! All seemed hopeless, but instead of complaining and giving up, they sang songs and worshipped God.

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

Bible Story Extension

[Talk About God | Bible Story Review]

Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: Prepared paper circles, “Collect the Rays” Activity Page, glue sticks

What You Do:

- Divide the group into two teams and invite teams to sit together.
- Hand each team a prepared circle cut out.
- Explain that teams will work together to answer trivia questions.
- Each time a team answers a question correctly, they will receive a ray from the “Collect the Rays” Activity Page.
- Tell teams that each time they receive a ray, they should glue it onto their circle cutout.
- Choose a team to go first by asking whose birthday is in the summer. Let the team with the first kid to raise their hand go first.

- Take turns asking questions to the two teams from the list below:
 - What book of the Bible did today's story come from? (*Acts*)
 - Who were many of the earliest churches started by? (*Paul*)
 - What was the name of the town where Paul and Silas went in today's story? (*Philippi*)
 - True or False: There were a lot of people living in Philippi who already believed in Jesus. (*False*)
 - What was unique about the girl who was following Paul and Silas? (*She was being controlled by a spirit who was not from God.*)
 - How did Paul react to the girl? (*He asked God to send the bad spirit away, and she was healed.*)
 - How did the businessmen react to what Paul did? (*They got angry and took Paul and Silas to the authorities.*)
 - What was the punishment given to Paul and Silas? (*To be beaten and thrown in prison.*)
 - Once Paul and Silas were in jail how did they react? (*They chose to focus on praying and worshiping God.*)
 - What happened at the prison, shortly after Paul and Silas were singing? (*An earthquake! Everyone's chains came loose, and the doors flew open.*)
 - How did the jailer react to the earthquake? (*He assumed all the prisoners would escape and was worried he would be punished for that. He was prepared to harm himself.*)
 - How did Paul react when he saw what the jailer was about to do? (*He told the jailer not to harm himself and assured him that none of them had chosen to escape.*)
 - What happened in the jailer's life as a result of watching Paul handle the hardships he had faced? (*He and his family all believed in the good news of Jesus and were baptized.*)
 - What ended up happening with Paul and Silas? (*They were released from their punishment and went on telling people about Jesus.*)
 - Bonus: What is our bottom line from today's story? (*God can help you choose joy.*)
 - Bonus: What is our key question from today's story? (*What brings you joy?*)

- Bonus: What is the definition of resilience? (*Getting back up when something gets you down.*)
- The game ends when a team has collected and glued all the rays onto the circle to create a sun.
- Ask the following questions for discussion:
 - How do you think Paul and Silas felt when they were beaten and put in prison for helping others?
 - When you are treated unfairly, how do you usually respond?
 - How can our response shine the light of Jesus to others?
- Explain that Paul and Silas had every reason to feel angry for how they were treated. Instead of retaliating, they chose to pray and worship God. Because of their actions, others were able to see the light of Jesus and believe in Him. Our choice to have joy can do the same with people in our lives.

Make It Personal With Prayer

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

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

What You Need: “Resilience Journal 4” Activity Page, pens or pencils, coloring supplies, hole punch, extra Resilience journals from previous weeks

What You Do:

- Invite kids to sit in a circle in your group space.
- Give any kids who weren’t present the weeks prior an extra resilience journal.
- Hand every kid a copy of the “Resilience Journal 4” Activity Page and a pen or pencil.
- Any kids who were present last week and still have their journals will only need journal 4.
- Place the coloring supplies, hole punch, and stickers (optional) in the center of the circle!
- Explain to kids they will be adding a page to the journals they made in the first week.

- If there are kids who were not there for Weeks 1, 2, or 3 provide them with one of the extra journals assembled.
- Remind kids that keeping a prayer journal can help us organize our thoughts and prayers.
- Explain that choosing joy won't always be easy, but when we spend with God, God can help us choose joy!
- Show kids how to punch holes in the “Resilience Journal 4” page.
- Model how to untie the binding string, open the journal, and place the new page with the other pages.
- Then, tell the kids to thread the string through the holes again, tying a bow to secure the pages.
- Give kids a few minutes of quiet time to use coloring supplies to decorate and write on the new page.
- Point to the pages on the right side, and let the kids know there are extra pages that they can use at home to share how they're feeling with God and ask God for help.
- *Note: If you've been keeping kids' journals at church all month long, let them take theirs home this week.*
- Say a prayer for the entire group.