

Today's Suggested Schedule—June 2024, Week 5

Today's Bible Story: Reason to Believe (God Will Give Us Joy) • *Habakkuk 3:17-18*

Today's Bottom Line: There's always a reason to celebrate.

Monthly Memory Verse: *A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.* Proverbs 17:22 (ESV)

Monthly Virtue: Joy—choosing to celebrate what God is doing

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Acknowledge any hard things you're facing, then reflect on how God sent Jesus. Ask God to help you find joy in what God has done. Pray that your kids will understand or catch a glimpse of what it may look like in their lives to see joy even when they're experiencing things or situations in which it may be difficult to do so.

Check out our Pinterest page here <https://bit.ly/447HSZi> for a visual on some of the activities.

LARGE GROUP (35 minutes)

STORY: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways

WORSHIP: Inviting People to Respond to God

Welcome/Opener

Worship

Bible Story

Bottom Line

Prayer

Closer

SMALL GROUP (25 minutes)

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect

Story Exploration

Bible Story Review: Habakkuk Finds Joy

Application Activity: Joy Collage

Memory Verse Activity: Illustrated Memory Verse

Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

HOME: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)

Devotionals for Kids

Parent Cue App

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Use this if kids have questions about following Jesus.

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word gospel. Clarify that the word gospel means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

- **A – ADMIT** to God that you are a sinner. Repent, turning away from your sin. (*Romans 3:23, Acts 3:19, 1 John 1:9*)
- **B – BELIEVE** that Jesus is God's son and receive God's gift of forgiveness from sin. (*Acts 16:31; Acts 4:12; John 14:6, Ephesians 2:8-9*)
- **C – CONFESS** your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (*Romans 10:9-10,13*)

If a child has expressed interest in following Jesus, please let the parents know so they can be a part of the conversation that their child is having about faith.

What Now?

If you put your trust in Jesus Christ and believe in Him as the One who forgives your sins and makes it possible for you to know God, we are so proud of you! There is no greater single decision that you could make.

We believe that baptism is an important next step for you. Baptism is your way of telling your friends and family, “Hey, I'm a follower of Jesus!” If you're interested in learning more or participating in baptism, talk to a staff member about the next steps you should take.

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)

Story Exploration

Finding joy and peace in God doesn't mean ignoring our problems or pretending they don't exist. It means trusting that God is bigger than our problems and that He is with us through every challenge. Just like Habakkuk, we can choose to rejoice in God and find our strength in Him, even when life is tough.

Verse Breakdown

Habakkuk 3:17 - Paints a picture of complete devastation. For people in Habakkuk's time, no figs, grapes, olives, food, sheep, or cattle meant total economic collapse and starvation.

Habakkuk 3:18 - Despite all the bad things happening, Habakkuk chooses to rejoice in God. He decides to find his joy in God rather than in his circumstances.

Key Point: Habakkuk's choice to rejoice shows that true joy and peace come from our relationship with God, not from our external circumstances.

Other verses to support Habakkuk 3:17-18

- **Psalm 23:4** - This verse highlights the comfort and presence of God during difficult and dark times, much like Habakkuk's trust in God's salvation despite dire circumstances.
- **Psalm 46:1-3** - This psalm emphasizes God as a refuge and strength in the face of chaos and turmoil, echoing the trust and rejoicing in God found in Habakkuk's declaration.
- **Isaiah 61:10** - Relation to Habakkuk 3:17-18: Isaiah expresses joy in God's salvation and righteousness, similar to how Habakkuk finds joy and strength in God despite the lack of material blessings.
- **Lamentations 3:22-23** - Lamentations speaks to God's steadfast love and faithfulness, providing hope and a reason for rejoicing even in the midst of suffering and loss.
- **Matthew 6:31-33** - Jesus encourages believers to trust in God's provision and prioritize their relationship with Him, aligning with Habakkuk's choice to rejoice in God despite the lack of physical resources.
- **Romans 8:28** - This verse reassures believers that God works through all circumstances for their good, much like Habakkuk's trust in God's overarching plan despite the apparent desolation.
- **Philippians 4:4-7** - Paul urges believers to find joy in the Lord always and to bring their concerns to God in prayer, paralleling Habakkuk's decision to rejoice in God and find joy in His presence despite difficulties.
- **2 Corinthians 4:16-18** - Paul encourages focusing on the eternal and unseen, finding hope and renewal in God's promises despite present difficulties, much like Habakkuk's choice to look beyond the current hardships and find joy in God.
- **James 1:2-4** - James speaks to finding joy in trials because they develop perseverance and maturity, resonating with Habakkuk's message of rejoicing in God even in the face of adversity.

* 1. Habakkuk Finds Joy

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

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

What You Need: Marked Bible, “Habakkuk Finds Joy” Activity Page, prepared paper, and markers

What You Do:

- Gather the kids to review the Bible Story using the following key points:
 - Habakkuk was a prophet, someone who listened to God and told people what God was saying.
 - Habakkuk lived in Jerusalem during a really difficult time: enemies were closing in on them, people had forgotten about God, they were fighting each other, and treating others unfairly.
 - Habakkuk called out to God. (*Read Habakkuk 3:2 from the marked Bible.*)
 - Habakkuk had a conversation with God and Habakkuk wrote it all down.
 - God answered Habakkuk and told him life was going to get harder before it got better.
 - Habakkuk chose to have joy because he knew that God had done great things in the past.
- Say: “Habakkuk had a choice! He couldn’t change what was happening around him, but he **COULD** choose to trust God because God had done great things in the past.”
- Give each kid one of the cards from the “Habakkuk Finds Joy” Activity Page.
 - Identify each picture as you hand each card out.
- As you read a passage from today’s Bible Story, instruct the kids to listen for the word they are holding. As they hear their word, instruct them to stand up and hold their card up.
- Read Habakkuk 3:17 to the group from the marked Bible.
 - Pause at any references to fig tree, grapes, olives, fields without food, sheep, or cattle and prompt kids to stand, as needed.
- Collect the cards from the “Habakkuk Finds Joy” Activity Page and set them aside for the Joy Collage activity.
- Give each kid one or two of the colored paper cards.
- Instruct the kids to draw a picture of something not so great that happened to them recently.
 - Encourage the kids to make more than one drawing if they choose.
 - Prompt them with leading questions if needed:
 - Did you lose something recently?
 - Have you ever gotten sick and had to cancel plans?
 - What is something that has made you sad, frustrated, or scared?
- Read Habakkuk 3:18 to the group from the marked Bible.
- Say: “Habakkuk chose to trust God, even when things were hard.”
- Let kids hold onto their drawings for the JOY Collage activity.

What You Say:

“Habakkuk was honest with God about the things that were going wrong. He didn’t just act like everything was okay. Even though Habakkuk may have been angry or upset, he chose to TRUST God. We all face hard things—like the pictures you drew on your cards. But even when things aren’t going our way, we can choose to focus on how Jesus made a way for us to have a relationship with God

forever. No matter what is happening around us, we can trust that God is always up to something good. That's why: **[Bottom Line] there's always a reason to celebrate.**"

[Make It Personal] (Share with the kids an age-appropriate example of something hard that you have recently faced. How did knowing that God loves you and is with you, help you find joy even in the midst of a difficult situation?)

* 2. JOY Collage

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Create: an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing

What You Need: Kids' drawings and "Habakkuk Finds Joy" cards from the Habakkuk Finds Joy Activity, butcher paper, black marker, and a glue stick

What You Do:

- Spread out a piece of butcher paper in the center of your group area.
- Write the word "JOY" in a large, outlined bubble or block letter in the center of the paper.
- Make sure kids have their drawings from the Habakkuk Finds Joy Activity.
- Give each kid a "Habakkuk Finds Joy" Activity Page card from the Habakkuk Finds Joy Activity.
- Encourage the kids to tear up their cards (both the ones they've drawn, and the Bible Story images) into small pieces.
- As kids are tearing the cards, use the glue stick to fill the inside of each letter on the butcher paper with glue.
- Ask kids finish tearing their cards, instruct them to fill up the letters of the word "JOY" with the torn pieces.
- Say: "No matter what happens—good or bad—we can still find JOY because God loves us, God is with us, and God sent Jesus to save us."
- Set the collage aside for the Prayer Activity.

What You Say:

"Friends, look at this beautiful collage you've made out of all these torn pieces. When hard things happen, it's easy to focus just on that hard thing. It's certainly okay to be sad and to tell God how you feel. But even when we're sad or frustrated, we can choose to trust God. The Bible is full of true stories about real people that show us we can trust God no matter what.

"Instead of focusing on what's going on right in front of us, we can look for JOY. We can remember that God loves us and that God sent Jesus to make a way for us to have a relationship with God forever. So when hard things happen, let's remember that there is ALWAYS joy to be found. Let's ask God to help us understand that **[Bottom Line] there's always a reason to celebrate.**"

3. Illustrated Memory Verse

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Explore: an activity that extends learning through hands on experimentation and discovery

What You Need: Bible marked at Proverbs 17:22, “Illustrated Memory Verse” Activity Page, and markers

What You Do:

- Invite a volunteer to open the Bible to Proverbs 17:22.
- Read the Memory Verse aloud to the kids. Invite them to repeat it after you.
- See if anyone would like to recite the Memory Verse from memory.
- Give each kid an “Illustrated Memory Verse” Activity Page.
- Set out the markers.
- Help kids write their names somewhere on the paper.
- Point out the blanks on the page.
- Read the verse, pausing at each blank to see if kids can recall the word.
- Encourage the kids to draw pictures to fill in the blanks. Suggestions below:
 - “heart” —draw a heart outline
 - “broken/crushed”—a broken toy, a stick broken into two pieces, a pile of blocks etc.
 - “up”—an arrow pointing up
- As the kids finish, instruct the kids to point to the words as you review the verse together a few more times.

What You Say:

“I love what you’ve drawn, friends! We can remember that no matter what happens, we can always find JOY because **[Bottom Line] there’s always a reason to celebrate.** When we ask God to help us have a cheerful heart, a heart that trusts God, it’s like medicine that makes us feel better!

“But the opposite is also true. If we only focus on something hard or frustrating, it’s like having a broken or crushed spirit that’s all dried up. Thankfully, God promises to help us. No matter what we’re feeling, we can think about all that God has done. We can remember that God sent Jesus, and we can remember **[Bottom Line] there’s always a reason to celebrate.**”

4. Pray and Dismiss

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

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

What You Say:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember?
- How do they help me trust and love God?

What You Need: Butcher paper from the JOY Collage Activity

What You Do:

- Lay the JOY Collage butcher paper in the center of your group area.
- Instruct the kids to form a tight circle around it.
- Lead the kids in a prayer, reminding them that no matter what happens, **[Bottom Line] there's always a reason to celebrate.**

What You Say:

"God, we love You. Thank You for reminding us that You are with us and that You sent Jesus because You love us. When hard or frustrating things happen, please help us to be like Habakkuk and choose to trust You. Remind us that we can have joy, no matter what because **[Bottom Line] there's always a reason to celebrate.** Thank You for Jesus. We love You and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage kids to point out the JOY collage and the torn pieces in the center. Give kids the opportunity to share how they can find JOY no matter what happens because **[Bottom Line] there's always a reason to celebrate.** Send kids home with their "Illustrated Memory Verse" Activity Page.

GETTING READY

Here's everything you need to know to get ready for this week.

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible Story applies to real-life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

(Choose as many of these activities as you like.)

** If you don't have time to do all these activities, be sure to do activity #1 & 2.*

*** 1. Habakkuk Finds Joy**

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

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

What You Need:

- Bible, one for each Small Group
 - Before group time, mark the Bible at the following passages: Habakkuk 3:2, Habakkuk 3:17, and Habakkuk 3:18.
- Print "Habakkuk Finds Joy" Activity Page on cardstock and cut apart, one card for each kid
- Markers, enough for a Small Group to share
- Colored paper, at least one paper for every three kids
- Before group time:
 - Cut each page of colored paper into six cards.
 - Cut enough cards for each kid to have at least two.

*** 2. JOY Collage**

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Create: an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing

What You Need:

- Kids' drawings from the Habakkuk Finds Joy Activity
- "Habakkuk Finds Joy" Activity Page cards from the Habakkuk Finds Joy Activity
- Butcher paper, one 6'-8' piece for each Small Group
- Black marker, one for each Small Group
- Glue stick, one for each Small Group

3. Illustrated Memory Verse

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Explore: an activity that extends learning through hands on experimentation and discovery

What You Need:

- Bible marked at Proverbs 17:22
- Print "Illustrated Memory Verse" Activity Page on paper, one for each kid
- Markers, enough for a Small Group to share

4. Pray and Dismiss

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

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

What You Need:

- Butcher paper from the JOY Collage Activity

HOME: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

- Print on cardstock or email this week's devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resources: **Parent Cue app**