

Today's Suggested Schedule—June 2024, Week 2

Today's Bible Story: Over and Over (Feast of Booths) • *Deuteronomy 16:13-17*

Today's Bottom Line: Make a habit of choosing joy.

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 need to make the wise choice.

Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Thank God for loving us and making a way to fill our lives with joy despite what we face. Ask God to help the kids of your group to look to the things God has done as sources of joy, even when they don't feel it.

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: Journey Through God's Big Story

Application Activity: Celebrate Your Journey Timeline

Memory Verse Activity: Joyful 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.

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

This passage is part of the instructions given to the Israelites by Moses. It focuses on the celebration of the Festival of Tabernacles (or Booths), also known as Sukkot, which is a time of thanksgiving and joy. The Festival of Tabernacles was a time for the Israelites to remember their journey through the wilderness and to thank God for the harvest and His provision.

Key Themes and Related Bible Verses

Celebration and Joy:

Verse 14: "Be joyful at your festival—you, your sons and daughters..."

Related Verses:

- Psalm 118:24: "This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."
Application: Each day is a gift from God, and we are called to find joy in it, just as the Israelites found joy in their festivals.
- Philippians 4:4: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"
Application: Joy is a central theme in the Christian life. We are encouraged to rejoice always, not just during special festivals.

Community:

Verse 14: The festival includes not just the family but also servants, Levites, foreigners, the fatherless, and widows.

Related Verses:

- Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."
Application: The inclusion of everyone in the Festival of Tabernacles reflects the New Testament teaching that in Christ, all barriers are broken down and everyone is included.
- James 1:27: "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."
Application: The command to include the fatherless and widows in the festival aligns with the biblical mandate to care for those who are vulnerable and in need.

Recognizing God's Blessings:

Verse 15: "For the LORD your God will bless you in all your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your joy will be complete."

Related Verses:

- James 1:17: "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."
Application: Recognizing that all blessings come from God helps us to be grateful and joyful.
- Psalm 103:2: "Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits."
Application: Remembering and acknowledging God's blessings should lead us to praise and joy.

Giving Back to God:

Verses 16-17: People are instructed to bring gifts in proportion to how God has blessed them.

Related Verses:

- 2 Corinthians 9:7: "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not

reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

Application: Giving back to God should be done cheerfully and in proportion to our blessings, just as the Israelites were instructed.

- Proverbs 3:9-10: "Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."

Application: Honoring God with our resources leads to further blessings, emphasizing the principle of giving from what we have been blessed with.

Discussion Questions

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

Ask:

- What are some things you know about God's character that you can celebrate right now?
- What can you do to help you remember what God has done in your life?
- When things don't turn out as you had hoped, why can you still celebrate?
- Describe a celebration you could have to show thanks to God.
- If you don't follow Jesus, it will be hard to be thankful for what God has done. Think about your relationship with Jesus. Do you have one? Do you have any questions about following Jesus?

1. Journey Through God's Big Story

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

What You Need: “Station Pictures” Activity Page, “Clues and Questions” Activity Page, party horns, and painter’s tape

What You Do:

- Using the tape, post the “Station Pictures” Activity Pages in random order around your group space, creating nine stations.
 - If wall space is not an option, spread the pictures from the “Station Pictures” Activity Page on the floor.
- Instruct the kids to gather in the center.
- Give each kid a party horn.
- Instruct the kids not to use the party horns yet.
- Read the first clue from the “Clues and Questions” Activity Page.
- Direct the kids to move near the picture that best describes that clue.
- Once kids have moved, reveal the correct station picture by standing near it.
- Invite any kids who chose a different station to move to the correct one.
- Read the review question associated with the first clue.
- Choose one kid to answer the review question.
 - Or allow kids to talk to each other to agree on an answer.
 - Allow the kids to try again if they don’t answer correctly the first time.
- After the group answers the question correctly, direct them to blow their party horn to celebrate.
- Instruct kids to go back to the center before reading the next clue.
- Repeat until you’ve moved through each clue and answered all the review questions.

What You Say:

“Great job remembering so much of God’s Big Story! When the Israelites remembered to follow God’s directions for celebrating, I bet their hearts were bursting with joy because they remembered all the awesome things God had done for them. Even when things got tough—like when the Israelites came back home after a long, difficult time—God didn’t want them to forget to celebrate. God had instructed them to celebrate the Feast of Booths, and they did! They built little shelters and camped out, shared delicious meals, and remembered how God kept all of the promises to protect and provide.

“And when Jesus came, He took it one step further. Just as God had provided food and water in the wilderness, now God had sent Jesus to offer ‘living water’—a way to live forever with God. It was the most joyful news the Israelites had ever received, and it’s still the most joyful news that we can celebrate today. God loves us and wants our lives to be full of joy no matter what we face. Celebrating can make us strong, just like the Israelites. So, let’s **[Bottom Line] make a habit of choosing joy** and celebrate the amazing things God does in our lives!”

[Make It Personal] (Share how you’re trying to develop a habit of choosing joy every day no matter what the circumstance. How does having a relationship with Jesus help you choose joy? How does choosing joy help you gain a different perspective?)

2. Celebrate Your Journey Timeline

[Live for God | Application Activity]

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

What You Need: “Milestone” Activity Page, and opaque bag

What You Do:

- Place all of the cards from the “Milestone” Activity Page in the bag.
- Choose one kid to reach in the bag and remove one of the cards from the “Milestone” Activity Page.
- Instruct the kid who chose the card to discreetly look at the picture and text on the card.
- Invite the kid to stand in the front of the group and act out the milestone depicted on their card.
- Encourage the rest of the group to guess the milestone.
- Once the kids correctly guess, ask anyone from the group to share a brief story or memory related to that milestone (if they have one).
- Repeat so that each kid gets a turn to choose and act out one of the cards.

What You Say:

“Great job acting out and guessing all those things! Does anyone realize what all of those cards had in common? (*Invite responses.*) They represent different milestones we’ve learned to do, or maybe are still waiting to learn to do. I’m impressed with all the amazing things you’ve learned to do!

“But let’s be real—learning some of these things were more difficult than others, right? Did anyone run into some challenges or setbacks along the way? (*Invite responses.*) How did you conquer those obstacles? (*Invite responses.*)

“When you’re in the middle of learning something new and it feels like you’re struggling, it’s not always easy to feel joyful, right? But guess what? That’s when we can remember to celebrate along the way. We’ve already learned and achieved things that we do every day. Just imagine the endless possibilities ahead. As you grow older, you will learn to do so many new things—like driving a car!

“When we hit the pause button to remember and find joy in all the incredible things God has done and is doing in our lives, it helps us remember that God is always by our side helping us do new things and overcome obstacles. So, let’s **[Bottom Line]** make a habit of choosing joy every day.”

3. Joyful Verse

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

What You Need: Bibles, and “Verse Actions” Activity Page

What You Do:

- Make sure each kid has a Bible.
- Together, look up Proverbs 17:22 using the Bible Navigation tips below.

Finding verses with 2nd and 3rd graders: Guide them to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. (Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like.) When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find Proverbs in the list under “Old Testament.” When the kids find Proverbs, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find Proverbs. Help the kids find the page. When they find Proverbs, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 17. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 22 in chapter 17.

- Read through the verse a few times together as a group.
- Instruct the kids to pair up.
- Give each pair a card from the “Verse Actions” Activity Page.
 - If there are more kids than cards, do groups of three instead of pairs of two.
- Instruct the pairs to practice reciting the verse using the celebration directions on their card.
 - Allow the kids to use their Bibles to remember the verse as they are practicing their celebration directions.
- After kids have finished practicing, invite the pairs to take turns reciting the verse in front of the group with the celebration direction on their card.
 - Allow the pairs to use their Bibles if needed.
- After each pair reads the verse in the celebratory way, invite the rest of the group to echo the verse and actions that they just observed.
- Repeat until each pair has reviewed the verse.

What You Say:

“That was amazing! King Solomon, the author of this verse, was telling us that being happy is like good medicine for our hearts. It means when we choose to be joyful, it can make us feel better inside. So, when we **[Bottom Line] make a habit of choosing joy**, it’s like taking good medicine for our hearts every day!”

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?
- How does this story help me to live on mission?

What You Need: Prepared "Joy Journal" Activity Pages from previous week; additional prepared, blank "Joy Journal" Activity Pages; markers; and pencils

What You Do:

- Give each kid their "Joy Journal" from last week.
- Set out the pencils.
- Give blank "Joy Journal" Activity Pages to any kids who you don't have a journal for.
 - Encourage them to write their names on the front cover.
- Direct the kids to turn to page 3.
- Read the Bottom Line, and invite the kids to recite it with you a few times.
 - **[Bottom Line] Make a habit of choosing joy.**
- Read the prompt to the group: "Draw a picture that shows a habit you want to develop that can bring you joy."
- Invite kids to share habits that can make them feel joyful.
 - For example: Reading a favorite book, spending more time at church, spending time with family, playing a favorite game, etc.
- Set out the markers.
- Instruct kids to draw the habit they want to develop in the space provided.
- If time allows, give kids who were not present for previous weeks some time to draw something that brings them joy—from the previous pages in the "Joy Journal."
- Collect the journals and store them for the following weeks.
- Close your group time in prayer.

NOTE: Kids will be adding to their journals each week this month. Be prepared to collect and store them each week. Prepare extra copies for kids not present in previous weeks. If preferred, don't staple the pages—send individual pages home each week.

What You Say:

"Dear God, thank You for the big story You're telling—where we can see times of celebrations. Help us choose joy every day. When things are hard, help us to remember You are with us and find joy in that. Thank You for teaching us that celebrating is not just for special times, but something we can do every day. It's medicine to our bodies! That is why we want to **[Bottom Line] make a habit of choosing joy.** We love You and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to share the Memory Verse in the style of one of the celebration directions from earlier.

GETTING READY

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

SOCIAL: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (15 Minutes)

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today's story.

(Choose one or both of these activities.)

1. Early Arriver

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

What You Need:

- Offering container

2. Opening Activity

Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need:

- Print "Riddles" Activity Page on paper, one for each Small Group

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.*

*** 1. Journey Through God's Big Story**

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

What You Need:

- Print "Station Pictures" Activity Page on paper, one set for each Small Group
- Print "Clues and Questions" Activity Page on paper, one for each Small Group
- Party horns, one for each kid
- Painter's tape, one roll for each Small Group

2. Celebrate Your Journey Timeline

[Live for God | Application Activity]

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

What You Need:

- Print "Milestone" Activity Page on cardstock and cut apart, one set for each Small Group
- Opaque bag, one for each Small Group

3. Joyful Verse

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

What You Need:

- Bibles, one for each kid
- Print "Verse Actions" Activity Page on paper and cut apart, one set for each Small Group

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:

- Prepared “Joy Journals” from previous week
- Print additional “Joy Journal” Activity Pages on paper, cut apart, and staple pages together in order, one for each kid not present last week
- Markers, enough for a Small Group to share
- Pencils, one for each kid
- *NOTE: Kids will be adding to their journals each week this month. Be prepared to collect and store them each week. Prepare extra copies for kids not present in previous weeks. If preferred, don't staple the pages—send individual pages home each week.*

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**