

Today's Suggested Schedule—June 2024, Week 2

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

Today's Key Question: How can you remember to be joyful?

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 (Communicator Script)

Key Question

Prayer

SMALL GROUP (25 minutes)

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect

Story Exploration

Application Activity: Take a Snapshot

Bible Story Review: Bible Story Extension and Discussion Questions

Memory Verse Activity: Verses to Take with You

Prayer Activity: Make it Personal with Prayer

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.

1. Take a Snapshot

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment

What You Need: Paper, pens or pencils, die

What You Do:

- Give each kid a piece of paper and a pen.
- Ask kids to make a list of 5-10 habits they feel are good choices and important to have.
- If kids need help coming up with ideas, invite them to take turns rolling a die then use the number designations below to prompt them with good habits connected to a specific category.
 - 1 = your relationship with God
 - 2 = the kids you hang out with
 - 3 = your attitude
 - 4 = your stuff (possessions)
 - 5 = your time
 - 6 = joy
- When everyone has a list completed, explain that when you say, "Let's party!" everyone will shout out something on their list—all at the same time.
- Pause and let kids tell what they heard.
- Repeat several times as kids choose different ideas from their lists.
- **[Make it Personal] Join in by compiling your own list and participating in the shout-out.**
- Ask:
 - Of all the habits we can build, why is choosing to be joyful so important?
 - How does a joyful attitude affect the other habits in our lives?
 - What are some things you do that will help you build the habit of choosing to be joyful?
 - How does having joy reflect your relationship with God?

2. Bible Story Extension

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

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

What You Need: Bible, die, toothpicks, mini marshmallows (or PlayDoh lumps for a non-food version), bandanas

What You Do:

- Remind kids that during the Feast of Booths, God's people would live in tent-type structures that were reminiscent of their days living in the wilderness after they left Egypt.
- Set out the die, marshmallows (or small PlayDoh lumps) and toothpicks.
- Form teams of 2-3 kids.
- Explain that they will be constructing a booth—or tent, but first they'll need to earn their building supplies.
- Ask a review question from the list below. After each question is discussed, let teams take turns rolling the die and collecting that number of toothpicks and marshmallows (or PlayDoh pieces).
- After all questions have been discussed, give each team a bandana (or piece of cloth similar in size).
- Direct teams to work together to build their booth—or—tent by:
 - Using toothpicks connected with marshmallows (or PlayDoh) to form the framework or structure.
 - Placing the bandana over the framework to create the tent covering.
- If teams end up needing more toothpicks or marshmallows, encourage them to modify their tent design to use the supplies they have.

Possible Review Questions (*Refer to Deuteronomy 16:13-17 if needed.*)

1. What was the main purpose of the Feast of Booths? (*God wanted the people to take time to look back and remember what God had done for them, to form the habit of being joyful*)
2. How long did the feast last? (*Usually seven days but in some cases two weeks*)
3. What were some of the events God didn't want the people to forget about? (*Delivering them from slavery in Egypt, providing food and water in the wilderness, protection from their enemies, etc.*)
4. God provided all that the people needed as they lived in the wilderness—food, water, protection. In what ways has Jesus provided for us in even greater ways? (*God provided what we need to be forgiven by sending Jesus. Jesus offers "living water"—a way to live with God forever.*)
5. If we were celebrating the Feast of Booths this week, what is something God has done that you'd want to remember? (*Repeat this question as often as you'd like. Answers will vary.*)
6. When is it hard to remember to be joyful? What can you do during those times to still find a reason to celebrate? (*Repeat this question as often as you'd like. Answers will vary.*)

3. 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?

4. Verses to Take with You

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment

What You Need: Bibles

What You Do:

- Give each kid a Bible.
- Look up and read Philippians 4:4 using the Bible 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.

- Ask kids whether they think it's possible to ALWAYS rejoice or be joyful in the Lord. Challenge them to explain why or why not.
- Point out that having an attitude of thankfulness—at all times—will help us be joyful in the Lord at all times.
- Ask kids if they know what a time capsule is. (*A container that holds present day items, such as photos, letters, or anything else that is a reminder of what is happening in our lives or in the world right now. It's typically hidden away for our future selves or someone else to find and open.*)
- Invite kids to brainstorm what they would put in a time capsule that, if discovered in a year or so, would reveal what God is doing in their lives right now that they can praise and celebrate. If kids need a few ideas to get them started, share what you would put in your time capsule then stir their imagination with the prompts below.
 - What is important to you right now? What could you put in your time capsule to remind you of that?
 - What's a favorite Bible verse you have? What could you put in your time capsule to remind you of it?
 - What would you write in a THANK YOU letter to Jesus today?
 - Who are the people in your life you are most grateful for? What's something you could put in your time capsule that represents those people?
 - What trips, activities, events, or experiences have you experienced recently? What could you put in your time capsule to remind you of those fun times?
 - How has God answered a prayer, provided, cared for, encouraged, or helped you in some way? What could you put in your time capsule to remind you of that?
- Challenge kids to consider creating an actual time capsule this week by using a shoe box or other container. They might hide it in the back of their closet, garage, or other place where it might not be found for a while. Tell them to be sure to include a note with the date and purpose of the time capsule. When someone finds it or they rediscover it, they can celebrate what God has done in their life.

5. Make it Personal with Prayer

[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: Bible

What You Do:

- Read Proverbs 17:22 from the Bible aloud to the group.
- Invite kids to say the first part of the verse together then pause to allow them a moment to reflect and pray as they focus on ways they've seen God's care and love for them this week.
- Invite kids to say the second part of the verse. Remind them that building the habit of choosing joy is most difficult when things are not going our way. That's when we need to stop and remember what God has done for us.
- Encourage kids to ask God to help them with a situation they are facing that is troubling them right now and making it hard for them to feel joyful.
- Invite kids who are willing to do so to pray out loud while encouraging the others to pray silently. Remind them that God hears our prayers whether we speak them out loud or in our thoughts.
- Close by praying for each of the kids to build the habit of being joyful and find ways to celebrate Jesus this week.

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.)

1. Take a Snapshot

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment

What You Need:

- Paper, one piece for each kid
- Pens or pencils, one for each kid
- Die, one for each Small Group

2. Bible Story Extension

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

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

What You Need:

- Bible
- Toothpicks, approximately 100 for each Small Group
- Mini marshmallows, one bag per Small Group
 - For a non-food version, use PlayDoh to form several small lumps in similar size.
- Die, one for each Small Group
- Bandana (or piece of fabric in similar size), one for every 2-3 kids

3. 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.

4. Verses to Take with You

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Made to Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment

What You Need:

- Bibles

5. Make it Personal with Prayer

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

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

What You Need:

- Bible

**NOTE: Continue collecting empty 8oz. water bottles for Week 3. Each kid will need two bottles with caps. The bottles will need to be completely dry inside.*

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**