

## Today's Suggested Schedule—June 2024, Week 1

**Today's Bible Story:** Lost and Found (The Story of the Lost Sheep) • *Luke 15:1-7*

**Today's Bottom Line:** We can have joy because of Jesus.

**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. Reflect on how your life has become joyful from following Jesus. Ask God to help the kids in your group to be open to discovering how Jesus rescues us and invites us to follow Him.*

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: Joy Finder

Application Activity: Teamwork Travel

Memory Verse Activity: Verse in Motion

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**

#### **Jesus Welcomes Everyone:**

**Context:** The religious leaders (Pharisees and teachers of the law) were upset that Jesus was spending time with people they considered sinners. Jesus uses this parable to explain why He does this.

- **Key Theme:** You Matter to God: Just like the lost sheep mattered to the shepherd, you matter to God. No matter how far you feel from Him, He is always seeking you out because you are valuable to Him. Jesus' ministry includes everyone, emphasizing God's love for all.

#### **God's Pursuit of the Lost:**

**The Parable:** A shepherd has 100 sheep and loses one. Instead of being satisfied with the 99, he goes after the one lost sheep. This shows God's relentless pursuit of those who are lost.

- **Key Theme:** God values each individual and seeks to bring everyone back to Him.

#### **Joy in Repentance:**

**The Celebration:** When the shepherd finds the lost sheep, he celebrates. Similarly, there is great joy in heaven when a sinner repents and returns to God.

- **Key Theme:** Repentance is powerful and brings immense joy to God and all of heaven.

#### **Other Scripture References:**

##### **God's Love for All People:**

**John 3:16:** "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

- **Application:** This verse reinforces that God's love is for everyone, not just a select few. Jesus came for all people, demonstrating the nature of God's love.

##### **Jesus' Mission to Save the Lost:**

**Luke 19:10:** "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

- **Application:** Jesus' purpose is to find and save those who are lost, just like the shepherd in the parable. This verse underscores the mission of Jesus to rescue and redeem.

##### **The Value of Each Person:**

**Matthew 10:29-31:** "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."

- **Application:** These verses highlight how much God values each person. If God cares for even the sparrows, how much more does He care for us?

##### **Repentance and Forgiveness:**

**1 John 1:9:** "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

- **Application:** This verse emphasizes the importance of repentance and the assurance of God's forgiveness. It connects with the joy in heaven over one sinner who repents.

## 1. Joy Finder

### [Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

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

**What You Need:** “Wolf with Lost Sheep Cards” Activity Page, and “Sheep Cards” Activity Page

#### What You Do:

- Show the group the picture of the lost sheep with a bow around its neck from the “Wolf with Lost Sheep Cards” Activity Page.
  - Say: “Out of all the cards, there is only one sheep with a bow around its neck. That is the lost sheep.”
- Shuffle all of the cards from the “Wolf with Lost Sheep Cards” Activity Page and the “Sheep Cards” Activity Page together.
- Lay the cards out, face down, in a 3 x 6 grid pattern.
- Instruct the kids to form a circle around the grid of cards.
- Choose one kid to go first.
- Instruct the kid who is going first to turn over one card.
  - If a sheep without a bow is turned over, direct the kid to leave the card face up.
  - Choose a kid to go next.
  - Instruct the next kid to flip over a card.
  - If a card with a wolf is turned over, turn all the cards back over, shuffle them, and lay them out in a new grid pattern to start a new game.
  - If the lost sheep (with the bow) is turned over, instruct the kid to shout, “Found!”
  - Direct the rest of the group to respond by shouting, “Joy!”
  - Declare the game to be over.
- Shuffle cards and start new rounds as time and interest allow.

#### What You Say:

“Every time we ‘found’ the lost sheep, what did we shout? (*Invite responses.*) That’s right! ‘Joy!’ It was like throwing a big celebration because we found the lost sheep!”

“In our story today, Jesus was hanging out with some people who others didn’t like. Jesus shared this incredible story about the lost sheep to help them understand that He came for EVERYONE. Why is this such good news for you and me? (*Invite responses.*)”

“Just like the lost sheep in the story, God has done some big things to rescue you and me. Let’s face it, we can’t be perfect all the time. The good news is there is no mess or trouble we can get into that’s too deep or too awful for Jesus. He is always there to help us. Because of Jesus, we can have a relationship with God that will last forever. And that is a reason to celebrate! **[Bottom Line] We can have joy because of Jesus.**”

**[Make It Personal] (Tell the kids about how you decided to make Jesus your Savior. How did it change your life? How does following Jesus bring you joy?)**

*NOTE: Be sensitive to kids who might have questions about following Jesus. Follow your church’s policy for having conversations with kids about salvation. Involve families with this discussion or decisions as well.*

Review Questions:

1. **What is a parable?** *(A story that uses everyday objects and situations to explain something about God's kingdom)*
2. **In what ways are we like sheep?** *(We wander away; we try to do things on our own; we need to be rescued and cared for; we don't always make wise choices, etc.)*
3. **In what ways are we like the shepherd's friends?** *(We can celebrate the amazing things God is doing in people and in the world around us and be joyful)*
4. **How would you define sin?** *(When we do things that break our relationship with God or other people.)*
5. **Why does a sheep need a shepherd?** *(Sheep are not very smart; they get distracted and wander away; they are helpless and can't defend themselves; if they fall over, they can't get back up on their own.)*
6. **True or False? Jesus will help us and rescue us most of the time, as long as we don't mess up too many times.** *(False. There is no mess or trouble we can get into that's too deep or too awful for Jesus. He is always there to help us.)*
7. **What brings great joy in heaven?** *(Whenever someone chooses to follow Jesus)*
8. **Where does joy come from for a Jesus follower?** *(Joy is a gift from God. The Holy Spirit brings us joy.)*
9. **Jesus spent time with all kinds of people—even those the religious leaders called sinners. What does that tell you about him?** *(Answers will vary.)*
10. **What is something Jesus has done for us that we can celebrate?** *(Answers will vary.)*

## \* 2. Teamwork Travel

### [Live for God | Application Activity]

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

**What You Need:** Blindfolds, prepared tape pathway, and items to create an obstacle course

#### What You Do:

- Point out the tape pathway to the kids.  
Place a few available items such as books, chairs, boxes, tables, etc., in the obstacle course to create roadblocks within the pathway.
- Instruct the kids to get into teams of three.
  - Join a team if two kids remain after grouping.
  - Form one team of four if one kid remains after grouping.
- Give each team a blindfold.
- Assign each kid on each team a different role—Lost Sheep, Celebrator, or Shepherd.
- Instruct the Lost Sheep to put on the blindfold.
- Direct the Shepherd to guide the Lost Sheep through the obstacle course, until they get to the finish line.
- Instruct the Celebrator to cheer and celebrate for the Lost Sheep as they move through the obstacle course and are rescued by the shepherd.
  - For teams of four, assign two kids to be Celebrators.
- Stagger each team's start.
- Instruct the kids to switch roles after each round.

#### What You Say:

“That was fun! Great job working together with your team! When you were the Lost Sheep in the game, you needed someone to come walk alongside you to help. Who does the lost sheep remind you of? (*Invite responses.*) Sometimes, we're like the lost sheep, trying to do things by ourselves and getting a bit mixed up. We've all done things that might make us feel lost from God.

“When you were the Celebrator, you brought joy to your team! Who does the Celebrator remind you of? (*Invite responses.*) Sometimes, we're like the friends and neighbors who celebrated when the lost sheep was found! We're invited to celebrate all the ways that God is at work in the world around us. And who do you think is like the Shepherd? (*Invite responses.*) Just like the shepherd rescues the sheep, God is making rescues all around us every single day.

“God's Spirit brings us joy because we've been rescued. We can also find joy when we see how Jesus has rescued other people around us. **[Bottom Line] We can have joy because of Jesus!**”

### 3. Verse in Motion

#### [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

**What You Need:** Bibles, and “Verse Motions” 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 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

- Choose a kid who would like to read the verse aloud.
- Read the verse together several times.
- Use the “Verse Motions” Activity Page to demonstrate the hand motions.
- Encourage kids to copy your motions while reciting the verse.
- If time allows, ask the kids to pair up and recite the verse to each other with motions.

#### What You Say:

“What are some things that make you laugh? (*Invite responses.*) King Solomon, the author of this verse, was telling us that God created us to feel joy and laughter. Why do people take medicine? (*Invite responses.*) Yes! Medicine helps people feel better when they’re sick. In the same way, joy and laughter can keep our minds and bodies healthy and happy!

“When we truly understand what God has done for us, it’s a reason to have joy! We can find joy in thanking Jesus for the times that He’s rescued us and for the times He will rescue us again. We can’t help but feel super-joyful because we know we’re loved and taken care of. **[Bottom Line] We can have joy because of Jesus.**”

## 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 Page, markers, and pencils

#### What You Do:

- Give each kid a prepared "Joy Journal" Activity Page and a pencil.
- Instruct the kids to write their names on the cover in the blank provided.
- Set out the markers.
- Instruct the kids to color the cover of their "Joy Journal."
- When kids have finished coloring, direct them to turn to the next page.
- Read the Bottom Line, and invite the kids to recite it with you a few times.
  - **[Bottom Line] We can have joy because of Jesus.**
- Read the prompt in the "Joy Journal" to the group: "Draw a picture of something that brings you joy!"
- Invite kids to share what brings them joy.
- Instruct kids to draw a picture of the people, places, actions, or things that bring them joy in the space provided.
  - It could be a favorite activity, such as: going to church, spending time with a friend, reading a book, talking to God, seeing family happy, or anything else!
- Inform the group that they will be drawing in their "Joy Journal" all month, and that you will hold on to them until the end of the month.
- Collect the journals and store them for the following weeks.
- Close the group time in prayer.

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

#### What You Say:

"Dear God, thank You for being a good Shepherd, always watching over us. We know that when we go the wrong way, You come looking for us with love and joy in Your heart. Thank You for sending Jesus. Even when we make mistakes or feel lost, thank You that Jesus is there to guide us back to You. Help us to trust that **[Bottom Line] we can have joy because of Jesus.** We love You and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up the kids, encourage them to share the verse using any of the hand motions you came up with.



## 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 #2.*

#### **1. Joy Finder**

**[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]**

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

**What You Need:**

- Print "Sheep Cards" Activity Page on cardstock and cut apart, two sets for each Small Group
- Print "Wolf with Lost Sheep Cards" Activity Page on cardstock and cut apart, one set for each Small Group

#### **\* 2. Teamwork Travel**

**[Live for God | Application Activity]**

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

**What You Need:**

- Blindfolds, one for every three kids
- Painter's tape, one roll for each Small Group
- Items to create an obstacle course:
  - boxes
  - books
  - tables
  - chairs
  - whatever is on hand
- Before group time:
  - Use the tape to create a pathway outline on the floor.

#### **3. Verse in Motion**

**[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]**

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

**What You Need:**

- Bibles
- Print "Verse Motions" Activity Page on paper, one 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:**

- Print "Joy Journal" Activity Pages on paper, cut apart, and staple pages together in order, one set for each kid
- Markers, enough for a Small Group to share
- Pencils, enough for a Small Group to share

- *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 this week. 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**