

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 Key Question: What does joy mean to you?

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 (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

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. 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: Party hats, pens, note cards, coin (or small, party related item)

What You Do:

- Give each kid a pen and 4 note cards.
- Ask kids to write one thing that brings them joy or excitement or makes them want to celebrate on each card. ***[Make it Personal] Fill out 4 of the note cards along with the kids.***
- Collect and shuffle all the note cards.
- Form two teams that sit facing each other several feet apart.
- Place the 3 party hats on the floor between both teams then set the note cards face down near the hats.
- Ask all the kids to turn around and cover their eyes as you place the coin (or a party-related item) under one of the hats.
- Invite kids to turn back around.
- Choose a kid from one team to take a note card from the pile then choose someone on the other team and say, "Does *[whatever is written on the card]* make you want to celebrate?"
- Tell the kid who was chosen from the other team to look under one of the hats.
 - If it contains the coin, they will say, "Yes, that makes me want to celebrate!" and then move to the other team.
 - If the hat does not contain the coin, they will say, "No, not really," and return to their spot on their original team.
- Repeat in the same way, alternating teams, and play until everyone is on the same team.
 - If the game needs to finish more quickly, narrow the play down to only two party hats.
- After the game, let kids share more details about the things they wrote on their note cards. ***[Make it Personal] Share some of the things you wrote on your note cards.***
- Ask:
 - When you think of the things on your note card, what makes each of them worth a celebration?
 - If you didn't have it, could you still be joyful? Why or why not?
- Lead the discussion in the direction of celebrating what Jesus has done for us.
- Ask:
 - What is something God has done for us that's worth celebrating every day?
 - When you think about Jesus, what makes you feel the most joyful or happy?
- Remind kids that Jesus went to great lengths to rescue us from being separated from God. Just as we tried to get everyone on the same team in the game, God wants EVERYONE to believe in Jesus and be part of the greatest celebration ever!

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 in this discussion or decision as well.

2. Bible Story Extension

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

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

What You Need: Containers of prepared popcorn kernels

What You Do:

- Form two teams.
- Give one kid on each team a container of the popcorn kernels then explain the rules to them:
 - Shake the container 10 times while holding one hand on the lid to make sure it doesn't open and spill.
 - At your signal, open their container and begin searching for one red kernel.
 - They cannot dump the popcorn out but must search with the popcorn in the container.
 - The first kid to find the red kernel among all the others, earns a point for their team.
 - Their team will be eligible to earn another point by answering a question about today's Bible story (see below).
- After each round, tell the kids to tightly return the lid to their container, give the container to another kid on their team, and repeat the process above.
- Celebrate the team with the most points after going through all the review questions below.
- Return to any of the review questions and discuss the answers in more detail.
- Encourage kids to think about if they have ever told Jesus they want to follow Him—for Him to be like their shepherd.
- *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 in this discussion or decision 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.)*

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 does joy mean to you?
- When you think of Jesus as your shepherd, what comes to mind?
- What is something you can celebrate today?
- Name some large and small ways God is at work around us. How does that help you to have joy?
- What do think about heaven celebrating a sinner who repents?
- Who is a sinner? What is sin?

4. Verses to Take with You

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

What You Need: Bibles, markers or colored pencils, “Verse Draw” Activity Page

What You Do:

- Give each kid a Bible and direct them to look up Proverbs 17:22 using the Bible Navigation Tips 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.

- Read the verse to the group.
- Say the verse together by inviting half of the group to say the first part and the other half to say the second part.
- Ask:
 - A cheerful heart can’t take away a sore throat or mend a broken arm, so in what ways does a joyful attitude make you healthy?
 - Describe someone who has a broken spirit.
 - How does a sad, discouraged attitude make someone feel dried up?
 - When have you felt both of the emotions mentioned in this verse?
 - What are some ways to turn a broken spirit into a cheerful heart?
- Give each kid a set of the cards from the “Verse Draw” Activity Page.
- Set out the markers or colored pencils.
- Instruct kids to draw a simple illustration on each card for that part of the verse.
- When finished, let kids share their illustrations and the meaning behind each one.
- Collect the cards then shuffle them together.
- Divide the group into two teams.
- Give each team an equal amount of the shuffled cards. It’s okay if teams do not have complete pairs of each illustration.
- Tell teams to place their cards face down on the floor in no particular order.
- Explain that you will read one part of Proverbs 17:22, then, at your signal, one player on each team will race to turn over all the cards that illustrate that portion of the verse.
 - All the other cards should be returned to the face down position.
 - Kids will look at the illustrations and the text on each card to make sure they are leaving the correct cards (the ones that correspond with the part of the verse you read) facing up.
- Collect the cards, reshuffle, then distribute again.
- Repeat the game several times until each kid has had a turn flipping the cards over.
- Give any of the kids who would like to an opportunity to say Proverbs 17:22 from memory.

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: Pencils, "C3L3B@@T3! (CELEBRATE!)" Activity Page

What You Do:

- Give each kid a pencil and a "C3L3B@@T3! (CELEBRATE!)" Activity Page.
- Invite kids to try to read the phrases on the top of the Activity Page.
 - Point out that for the words to make sense, they had to look at the numbers and symbols in a different way.
 - Answers: Celebrate, I love Jesus!, You make me smile (happy), Jesus is my Shepherd, Start the party!
- Remind kids that followers of Jesus choose to look at life differently by looking for ways God is at work around us every day and to celebrate it.
- Ask kids to share ways they have seen God at work around them.
 - If needed, prompt ideas by suggesting they think about how God cares, protects, provides, answers their prayers, and teaches them.
 - Point them in the direction of things they are thankful for, then reflect on how that is evidence of God at work on their behalf.
- Direct kids' attention to the framed box on their Activity Page. Invite them to write a short phrase that expresses one of the ideas that was shared. Tell them to use numbers and symbols to replace some of the letters.
- As kids finish, tell them to trade papers with someone and see if they can read what each other wrote.
- Review some of the things kids wrote then take a moment to pray.
 - Invite any kids who are comfortable doing so to pray aloud as others pray silently.
- Close your group in prayer, thanking God for showing up in our lives and giving us so much to celebrate.

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:

- Party hats, 3 for each Small Group
- Pens, one for each kid
- Note cards, 4 for each kid and leader
- Coin (or party related item that will fit under the hats), one for each Small Group

2. Bible Story Extension

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

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

What You Need:

- Containers with lids (3-4 cup capacity), two for each Small Group
- Un-popped popcorn kernels, 3-4 cups for each container
- Red permanent marker
- Before Group Time: Use the marker to color 1 kernel for each container. Pour 3 cups of popcorn kernels (un-popped) and one, single red kernel in each container and seal the lid.

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

What You Need:

- Bible
- Markers or colored pencils
- Print "Verse Draw" Activity Page on cardstock then cut apart, one set for every kid

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:

- Print "C3L3B@@T3! (CELEBRATE!)" Activity Page on paper, one for each kid.

- Pencils

**NOTE: Begin 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**