

## 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.

### **SMALL GROUP (15 minutes)**

#### **SOCIAL: Providing Time for Fun Interaction**

Early Arriver  
Opening Activity

### **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: Hide and Seek Sheep  
Application Activity: Jesus and Joy!  
Memory Verse Activity: Emoji 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**

#### **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. Hide and Seek Sheep

### [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:** *Optional: painter's tape*

#### What You Do:

- Gather the kids and explain that you will play a game of Hide and Seek as sheep!
- Designate an area as your “pen”—this could be an area rug, a grouping of chairs in a big circle, or, optionally, a section marked on the floor with painter's tape.
- Select a willing volunteer to be the seeker—the “shepherd.”
- Designate the other kids to be sheep.
- Instruct the “shepherd” to cover their eyes and count to ten.
- Direct the rest of the kids (the “sheep”) to attempt to hide.
  - If your meeting area is not conducive to hiding, instruct the kids to simply spread out in the group space.
- When time is up, direct the shepherd to find (tag) the sheep.
- If a sheep is tagged, instruct them to go to the “pen” for the remainder of the game.
- Encourage the “sheep” in the pen to “BAAAA” until all sheep are found.
- When all sheep are found and safely in the pen, celebrate together.
- Lead your kids to sit down as you review the Bible Story.
- Talk about the following key points from the story:
  - Jesus told this story about a shepherd and his sheep. The shepherd had 100 sheep but lost one. What did he do? Jesus said that the shepherd left the 99 sheep behind to go and look for the one missing sheep because the sheep was so valuable to the shepherd.
  - And when he found the lost sheep, what did the shepherd do? Celebrate! The lost sheep had been found! The shepherd told his friends the good news so they could celebrate too.
  - We're sometimes like the lost sheep. We can try to do the right thing on our own, but we won't always get it right. We will mess up. But the good news is, because of Jesus, we don't have to be perfect. We can have a relationship with God forever because of what Jesus has done!
  - Sometimes, we're like the shepherd's friends. We can celebrate when we look around and see all the wonderful things God is doing in the world around us. We have an opportunity to be joyful and celebrate too.
- If time allows, select a new “shepherd,” and play another round or two.

#### What You Say:

“I love this story that Jesus told because it shows us that Jesus wants to have a relationship with EVERYONE. He doesn't want any of us to be ‘lost’ or away from Him. At the end of His time on Earth, Jesus died on the cross and rose again. He did that to make a way for us to be forgiven—no matter how lost we get. Jesus is always there to help us! When we put our trust in Jesus, we can have a relationship with God that lasts forever. That's a HUGE reason to have joy!

“But this story isn't just about the lost sheep. It's also about everyone who celebrated when the lost sheep was found. You see, God is always working to do good in the world around us. And every day, more and more people are learning about God's BIG love for them. Each time we see something God

has done, we can stop and celebrate just like the shepherd's friends! Remember, **[Bottom Line] we can have joy because of Jesus.**"

*NOTE: As you talk about what it means to be "lost" and how Jesus came to save us, be sensitive to kids who might have questions about what it means to follow Jesus. Follow your church's policy for having conversations with kids about salvation. And always involve families with this discussion/decision as well.*

**[Make It Personal] (Tell the kids about a time you celebrated something BIG God has done. Maybe someone you've been praying would come to church with you finally came. Or maybe a coworker or friend asked you to pray for them for the first time. What did you see God do in that situation? Did you celebrate with joy? Why or why not?)**

## \* 2. Jesus and Joy!

### [Live for God | Application Activity]

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

**What You Need:** “Jesus and Joy Cards” Activity Page, and prepared envelopes

#### What You Do:

- Instruct the kids to sit in a circle.
- Direct the kids to close and cover their eyes.
- Quickly hide the prepared envelopes around your group space.
  - If your meeting area is not conducive to hiding the envelopes, scatter the envelopes all around your group space instead.
- After you’ve hidden the envelopes, direct the kids to open their eyes.
- Tap each kid’s head as you count off 1 and 2 around the circle.
- Encourage the kids to remember their number.
- Guide the kids to look around the group space to find one envelope with the number they’ve been assigned.
  - So all the “1” kids will look for envelopes with the number one written on it, while all the “2” kids will look for envelopes with the number two written on it.
- Direct all of the kids with the “1” envelopes to sit in a circle together, and all of the kids with the “2” envelopes to sit in a different circle together.
- Once every kid has an envelope and is sitting with their group, lead the kids to open their envelopes together. Read the words aloud.
- Say: “Real joy comes from knowing Jesus. God is always working in the world around us. When we look for what God is doing, then we can celebrate and have joy!”
- After reading the section below, collect all the cards.
- Save the “JESUS” cards for the Prayer activity.

#### What You Say:

*(to group 2)* “Hold up the cards that say, ‘Jesus!’ Great job! Jesus loves us and came to make a way for us to have a relationship with God forever. *(to group 1)* Hold up the cards that say, ‘Joy!’ Great job! Knowing how much Jesus loves us should bring us . . . ‘JOY!’ We can also look for ways that God is working in the world around us and celebrate those things too.

“Like when a friend is sick, and you pray, and they feel better. Or when your mom is worried about her job and then she finds a new one. Or when you come to church and worship with your friends. God is always working and moving. God hears every prayer and cares about us! We can have joy when we pay attention to the ways God is working in the world around us.

“When you hear your word, I want you to hold up your card. Remember, **[Bottom Line] we can have** *(to group 1)* **JOY because of** *(to group 2)* **JESUS**. Let’s do that again. Remember to hold up your card when you hear the word on it! Remember, **[Bottom Line] we can have** *(to group 1)* **JOY because of** *(to group 2)* **JESUS**. Way to go, friends!”

### \* 3. Emoji Verse

#### [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:** “Proverbs 17:22 Strips” Activity Page, paper plates, markers, glue sticks, large craft sticks, and masking tape

#### What You Do:

- Pair kids up and give each pair a Bible.
- Together, look up Proverbs 17:22 using the Bible Navigation Tips below.

**Finding verses with kindergartners:** Guide children to open the Bibles to the marked page. Point to the word *Proverbs* at the top of the page as you say “Proverbs” aloud. Then guide children to find the big number 17 on the page. Explain that this is the chapter number. Finally, guide them to look under the big 17 for the little 22; this is the verse number. Tell them to leave their finger on the verse as you read the verse aloud. Then lead everyone to say the verse together.

**Finding verses with 1<sup>st</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.” You can help by telling them that Proverbs starts with the letters P-R. 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 the verse to the group.
- Point out the very first part of the verse: “*A cheerful heart.*” Ask: What do you think it means to have a cheerful heart? (*Someone who is full of joy! Someone who remembers that God loves them and sent Jesus to make things right.*)
- Give each kid a paper plate.
- Set out the markers and glue sticks.
- Encourage the kids to select a marker and draw a smiley face on one side of their plate and frowny face on the other.
- Encourage the kids to flip to the smiley face side of their plate.
- Give each kid a “Proverbs 17:22 Strips” Activity Page with the first half of the verse.
- Encourage the kids to glue the strip of the first half of the verse above their smiley face.
- When kids have finished gluing, direct them flip to the frowny face side of the plate.
- Give each kid a “Proverbs 17:22 Strips” Activity Page with the second half of the verse.
- Encourage the kids to glue the strip of the second half of the verse above their frowny face.
- Give each kid a large craft stick.
- Help each kid to use the masking tape to attach the large craft stick to the bottom of their plate.
- Write each kid’s name somewhere on their plate.
- Lead the kids to repeat the verse several times together as they flip their paper plates to each side.

#### What You Say:

“What a great Memory Verse for us to discover this month! Hold up the smiley face side. (*Read the first part of the Memory Verse.*) Now, hold up the frowny face side. (*Read the second part of the Memory Verse.*) Remember, **[Bottom Line] we can have joy because of Jesus!** Let’s remember this week to focus on Jesus and what He has done for us! Jesus made a way for us to have a relationship with God,

forever. I'm so thankful God gave us Jesus. Let's focus on having a cheerful heart full of JOY this week!"



#### 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 Opening Activity, and the "JESUS" cards from Jesus and Joy! Activity

##### What You Do:

- Lay the butcher paper page from the Opening Activity in the center of your small group area.
- Instruct the kids to sit around the butcher paper.
- Give some of the kids the "JESUS" cards.
- Say: "The things you've drawn can bring us joy sometimes."
- Encourage kids with the cards to lay them over their drawings along the outside of the page.
- Say: "But following Jesus brings us real joy ALL the time."
- Close the group in prayer.

##### What You Say:

"God, thank You for loving us and for proving that love by sending Your only Son Jesus for us! We know that Jesus came to teach us about You, to show us how to live, and to give His life so we could have a relationship with You forever. Help us to put our trust in Jesus because He is the reason for joy, always. We love You and it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to show off their Emoji Verse faces to share the Memory Verse and how **[Bottom Line] we can have joy because of Jesus.**

## 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 and #3.*

#### **1. Hide and Seek Sheep**

**[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:**

- *Optional: painter's tape*

#### **\* 2. Jesus and Joy!**

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

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

**What You Need:**

- Print "Jesus and Joy Cards" Activity Page on paper and cut apart, one set of cards for each Small Group
- Envelopes, twenty for each Small Group
- Black marker, one for each Small Group
- Before group time:
  - Place all the "JOY" cards in envelopes (one card per envelope), seal, and write a large "1" on the front.
  - Place all the "JESUS" cards in envelopes (one card per envelope), seal, and write a large "2" on the front.

#### **\* 3. Emoji Verse**

**[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:**

- Print "Proverbs 17:22 Strips" Activity Page on paper and cut apart, one set for each kid
- Paper plates, one for each kid
- Markers, enough for a Small Group to share
- Glue sticks, enough for a Small Group to share
- Large craft sticks, one for each kid
- Masking tape, one roll 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:**

- Butcher paper brainstorm from Opening Activity
- "JESUS" cards from "Jesus and Joy!" 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**