

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: Booth Builders

Application Activity: Times of Day for Joy

Memory Verse Activity: Duck, Duck, Jump "Up!"

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.

* 1. Booth Builders

[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: Construction paper, craft sticks, glue sticks, and markers

What You Do:

- Give each child a piece of construction paper and a few craft sticks.
- Set out the glue sticks and markers.
- Encourage the kids to arrange the craft sticks flat on the construction paper to resemble the shape of a shelter.
 - This can be a simple rectangle, square, or other similar structure.
- Once the kids have figured out how to arrange their craft sticks, instruct them to use the glue sticks to secure them to the paper.
- As the kids finish the outside structure with the craft sticks, instruct them to use the markers to draw their favorite party foods inside the structure.
- As they're working, review the following points from the Bible Story.
 - God told the Israelites to hold celebrations to remember what God had done for them, including a special festival called the Feast of Booths! They celebrated that God had provided crops/food to eat.
 - People would build temporary shelters or booths, and camped out, sharing meals together.
 - When Jesus came along, people had been celebrating the Feast of Booths for generations. Then Jesus came to be living water—to make a way for us to have a relationship with God forever.
 - God wants us to make it a habit to stop and celebrate what God has done.
- As the kids finish, encourage the kids to share their "booths" with each other and point out their party foods.
- Make sure each kid's name is on their creation and set aside for pick up. (Help with writing as needed.)

What You Say:

“The Feast of Booths was a way for God’s people to stop once a year and take time to celebrate all that God had done. It was a way for them to build the habit of finding joy because God is with us and provides for us! God wanted the Israelites to celebrate and God wants us to celebrate too!

“When Jesus came along, He made a way not just for our physical needs—like food and shelter—to be met, but He took care of our spiritual needs too! He made a way for us to have a relationship with God forever. God has done great things for us!

“The truth is, we won’t always feel joyful. But when we stop and make it a habit to celebrate and be grateful for all that God has done, we **WILL** find joy. God has done so much for us, including sending Jesus! God loves us deeply so no matter what happens, we can **[Bottom Line] make a habit of choosing joy.**”

[Make It Personal] (Tell the kids about one habit you have in place to help you find joy and remember all that God has done for you. Maybe you spend time with God each morning, maybe you listen to worship music in the car on the way to work, maybe you pray each evening and thank God for blessings from that day. Try to give kids a concrete example of a simple habit you’ve put in place to help you celebrate all that God has done.)

2. Times of Day for Joy

[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 plates, a pillow, a backpack, and a ball; *Optional: Use “Times of Day Items” Activity Page instead of paper plates, a pillow, a backpack, and a ball.*

What You Do:

- Set the items (or cards from the “Times of Day Items” Activity Page) in the center of your group area.
- Instruct the kids to circle up around the items.
- Join the circle yourself.
- Instruct the kid on your left to select an item or card.
- Lead the child to name that item and identify the time of day it represents.
- Once they’ve identified the item, lead the kids to talk about that time of day by reading from the scenarios below and asking the kid the question about how we can have joy.

PLATES *(If using the “Times of Day Items” Activity Page, read the scenario that corresponds with the food on the plate.)*

- **Breakfast:** You spill your milk ALL over your favorite hoodie right before school. What could you do in that moment to find joy? *(ie: clean yourself up and thank God that you have other things to wear)*
- **Lunch:** There’s a kid sitting next to you who is being very quiet. What could you do to help him find some joy? *(ie: tell him a funny joke; invite him to play with you later at recess)*
- **Dinner:** Your little brother ate the last roll, and it was supposed to be yours. How can you find joy even when you’re frustrated? *(ie: decide to forgive your little brother, and thank God for giving you a brother—even when he bugs you!)*

BACKPACK

- **School day:** Your teacher is sick, and you have a substitute. You really miss your teacher. How could you find joy? *(ie: make a get well card for your teacher)*

BALL

- **Anytime:** Your team lost the game after missing one goal at the very end. What could you do to find joy even when you’re disappointed? *(ie: encourage teammates and remind them they’ll be other games to win)*

PILLOW

- **Bedtime:** While getting ready for bed with your parent, you remember a friend who was sad at school today. What could you do in that moment to find joy? *(ie: talk with a parent about ways you could cheer up your friend; you could pray for that friend together and thank God for giving you the chance to cheer them up)*

What You Say:

“Every day, we have opportunities to **[Bottom Line] make a habit of choosing joy**. Even when you spill milk, or lose the game, or notice a friend who is sad, you can remember that God is with you and

loves you. Even when things aren't going the way we want them to, we can pause and decide to look for joy instead of focusing on what's wrong. We can remember how God has helped us in the past and know that God will help us in the future. Let's take time every day and **[Bottom Line] make a habit of choosing joy.**"

3. Duck, Duck, Jump “Up!”

[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: Bible marked at Proverbs 17:22

What You Do:

- Select a volunteer to open the marked Bible to Proverbs 17:22.
- Read the verse aloud and lead the kids to repeat each line of the verse after you.
- Talk about the second part of the verse.
- Say: “A cheerful heart—a person who looks for joy in every situation can make you stronger and healthier. Looking for and finding joy can help you feel better!”
- Instruct the kids to sit in a circle.
- Select a volunteer to go first.
- Recite the verse and lead kids to repeat the words of the verse as the volunteer taps their heads around the circle.
- When you get to the “up,” instruct the kid whose head was tapped to jump up and chase the volunteer around the circle to reach the seat first.
 - If using the NIV, lead the rest of the group to finish reciting the verse as the other two kids run around the circle.
- Repeat until you’ve allowed every kid to be “it” and you’ve reviewed the Memory Verse several times.

What You Say:

“That was so fun! Healthy habits, like getting plenty of sleep and eating the right foods, can make us stronger. Our Memory Verse teaches us that a cheerful heart—a heart that looks for joy in all situations—makes us healthier and stronger too. That’s why it’s important to **[Bottom Line] make a habit of choosing joy.**”

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 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: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Instruct the kids to sit in a circle.
- Remind kids that one way to **[Bottom Line] make a habit of choosing joy** is by choosing to be grateful.
- Invite the kids to take turns sharing one thing that they're thankful for.
 - Make sure you share an example too.
- Close the group time in prayer.

What You Say:

"When we make time to stop and say, 'thank You, God,' it helps us remember that all things we're thankful for come from God because God cares for us. Let's pray and thank God for everything so we can **[Bottom Line] make a habit of choosing joy.**

"Dear God, thank You for loving us and making a way for our lives to be filled with joy no matter what happens. We have so many things to be thankful for. Help us to remember to take time to celebrate all the good things in our lives, including the most joyful news of all—Jesus. We love You and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to show off their booth creations and talk about how just like the Israelites, we can **[Bottom Line] make a habit of choosing joy.**

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 #1.*

*** 1. Booth Builders**

[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:

- Construction paper, one piece for each kid
- Craft sticks, five or six for each kid
- Glue sticks, enough for a Small Group to share
- Markers, enough for a Small Group to share

2. Times of Day for Joy

[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 plates, three for each Small Group
- Pillow, one for each Small Group
- Backpack, one for each Small Group
- Ball, one for each Small Group
- *Optional: Instead of gathering paper plates, a pillow, a backpack, and a ball, print "Times of Day Items" Activity Page on paper and cut apart, one set for each Small Group.*

3. Duck, Duck, Jump "Up!"

[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:

- Bible marked at Proverbs 17:22

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:

- No supplies needed

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**