

Joy

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UNIT OVERVIEW

MEMORY VERSE: “...Do not grieve for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Nehemiah 8:10b

Have you ever seen someone who is going through something that you thought was amazingly difficult, yet he had a peaceful look on his face that said he knew that God would provide for him? This is joy. Have you ever seen God’s hand at work in your life in a real way and felt an overwhelming peace and fulfillment? This is joy. Have you ever been in a worship service singing praise songs to God where you might have had your eyes closed and your hands raised, and you felt if you were to open your eyes Jesus would be right there smiling at you, telling you how much He loves you? This is joy.

Joy is one of the greatest testimonies of our faith in God to those who don’t believe. It tells others that we really do believe that God will work things out in the midst of a trial. It tells others that you give Him the credit for the things that happen in your life and that He alone is the reason why things seem to always work out for you. Without joy, you are trusting often in your own efficiency to handle problems. People need to see that you have let go of control and have given your problems to God. Only then, can He work and only then, can you have the joy that David talked about so many times in the Psalms.

In this unit on joy, you will find....

BIBLE CLUBS that show David being joyful as the ark entered Jerusalem, when the angels rejoice, how we can have joy even when we are in chains and ways that we can express our joy.

PRACTICAL LIVING will teach the children how to remember the things that God has done for them, how to ask for forgiveness, how to wash dishes with a joyful attitude and how to encourage each other.

READ ALOUD, CRAFTS, and **RECREATION** will teach them everything from how to tell others about Jesus and make a joyful noise to God, to how to have joy in a game even, when they were not the winners.

We pray that this unit on joy will help you and the children to whom you minister to find joy in every part of your lives. As we show others that we can have joy, they will see the way that we are able to trust and depend on Someone who is able to get us through whatever it is that we are facing! Joy is only found in the presence of the Lord. When we are in the presence of the Lord, as we move about in our communities, others will be able to see a piece of Jesus. In the devastated communities in which we are working, joy can change everything! It is a radical way to show others that we are not home in this world, but we are going to a better place--where in the presence of Lord we will have the fullness of joy!

WHAT IS JOY?: WEEK 1

WEEK 1 - BIBLE CLUB

LESSON AIM: To help the child understand what joy is.

SCRIPTURE: 1 Chronicles 15:14-16:36

MEMORY VERSE: "...Do not grieve for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Nehemiah 8:10b

David Welcomes the Ark into Jerusalem

This passage describes the celebration that took place when David, now king over Israel, retrieved the Ark of the Covenant from the Philistines and brought it back into the city of Jerusalem.

Looking at the first part of this passage, we see David getting ready for the celebration that would take place when the Ark came into the city. In the New American Standard version of the Bible, you see many references to David preparing for a joyful celebration (15:16, 25, 28; 16:27) In the New International Version, you might see other words like, "rejoicing", which all refer to the expression of joy.

In this passage, joy might seem very similar to happiness. You even might think that they are the same thing. We want the children to see that joy and happiness are very similar, but there are some differences between the two. When you are happy, it is based on an immediate event or action that has happened. You can have joy, even when your circumstances may be very difficult. We will talk about this more in later weeks. Joy comes from a deep internal peace with God, knowing that He is with us at all times, and knowing that He is in control of everything.

David had joy at this particular moment, because by having the Ark of the Covenant again within the walls of Jerusalem, he knew that the presence of God was with him. He was also happy as the scripture clearly points out they sang joyful songs and lifted up their voices with shouts of joy.

The last part of this passage is a psalm of praise that David shared with the people when the Ark was welcomed into the city. What we to show the children is what a heart that is filled with joy might say to God. Allow the children to really have fun with this Bible Club so that they can experience the fullness of joy!

Discipleship
Tip

This week take some time to get one-on-one with the children that you are discipling. Ask them if they can ever remember a time when they felt joyful and to tell you about it. Share with them a time that you felt joyful (specifically a time when you felt particularly close to God, as opposed to just happy) Challenge them by asking them if there is any way to feel joy at all times. Help them by thinking of ways that can remind them that God is with them at all times, so they can have joy at all times.

Hook

Joy is difficult for children to experience. To make it happen, it may require you going the extra mile. Today's Hook needs to be covered with prayer.

- As the children come in for Bible Club, tell them that you have a special surprise for them.
- Make the surprise something you know the children would really like. (For example: a trip to the beach, a new coat for each child, a slumber party at your home, tomorrow instead of Practical Living, you will take everyone to Taco Bell, etc.)
- Tell the children what the surprise is. If you think your children might not all desire the same thing, allow each one to choose what they would like.
- Explain to them that you are sorry, but you can't give them their gifts immediately. First they must endure a time of hardship.
- For the remainder of the day, they must crawl everywhere they go. If they have to go down any stairs, they must be in a sitting position, and go down one step at a time.
- Remind them to keep thinking of the things that they are going to receive later.
- What you want is for them to experience an inner joy as they look towards the gifts you have for them, even while they are in the midst of something they don't like.
- If they grumble, tell them that you understand how hard it is to crawl around.
- However, they can, at the same time, rejoice at the gifts they are going to get.
- Some children may not trust you are going to give them the gift. Is that not the way many of us are with God? That is why we miss out on the joy He wants us to experience.
- Pray, Pray, Pray! You cannot set this up for the children to understand in your own power. You are dependent on the Holy Spirit.
- Your debrief time will be done during Family Time today. The children must experience crawling all day long. Be firm with them about this rule.

DEBRIEF:

How have you felt, about having to crawl everywhere you went today?

Have you thought at all about the gifts you are going to receive?

Say: In the midst of difficult times, I can have inner joy knowing how much Jesus loves me and that He is with me. Sometimes the pain I experience doesn't make sense and yet I can feel inner joy because I trust Jesus to be at work. I may cry, hurt, scream, but still have inner joy.

Today you didn't want to crawl--it maybe even made you cry at times. At the same time, as you felt bad about crawling, you had a joy thinking of the gifts you are going to get.

Bible Story

MATERIALS: Costumes for actors (microphone for anchor - doesn't have to be real, just imaginary); King David should have a crown or a royal robe.

ACTORS NEEDED: Anchor, Reporter, David, Levites, and Cameraman (optional).

- This Bible Club is to be told like a reporter is doing a live broadcast from Jerusalem as the Ark is coming into town.
- Some of the actors can be children, like the camera man, the Levites, and the anchor.
- The parts that should probably be staff or volunteer are David and the reporter.

Script

ANCHOR: Thank you for tuning in today to Channel 7 News. Our top story of the day is the Ark of the Covenant arriving in Jerusalem earlier today. The Ark of the Covenant is the special box that holds the Ten Commandments that God gave to Moses. Wherever that Ark is, the presence of the Lord is there with it. The Ark had been stolen by the Philistines and we are just now getting it back from them. King David made all the arrangements to get it back. He prepared a special celebration for the entrance of the Ark and our own reporter, _____, (name of the reporter) is there on the scene now to give us the full story. _____, (reporter).

REPORTER: Thank you, _____ (name of anchor). You should have seen this place a little earlier. I think the whole city of Jerusalem was out to see the Ark of the Covenant come into the city, but without a doubt the most excited was David. We have an exclusive interview with the king right now. Look, here he is walking up.

King David is walking by, not necessarily in the direction of the reporter. He seems unusually excited and happy.

REPORTER: (shouting) King David, could we have a minute of your time?

DAVID: (with a big smile on his face) Sure, just as long as you ask me why I have this smile on my face!

REPORTER: I would love to know why you have that smile on your face.

DAVID: Because the presence of the living God has come into Jerusalem today. (Begins to jump around a little with excitement).

REPORTER: That is what I have heard. Can you tell us some of the things that you did to get ready for the celebration?

DAVID: Well, I made sure that the Levites knew exactly how to carry the Ark this time.

REPORTER: Who are the Levites?

DAVID: They are the people that God has appointed to be in charge of the tabernacle and the Ark. They are the only people that are allowed to carry it. God wants us to know that His presence is holy and that only the people that He has chosen can come into His temple.

As David is talking, the Levites walk by behind them, carrying an imaginary Ark.

REPORTER: There are the Levites now. (Pointing to the Levites behind David) Are they carrying it right this time?

DAVID: (Looks at the Levites) Yes, they are. You see, they carry it on poles that hold the Ark, so that they never actually even touch it.

REPORTER: So what other things did you do to prepare for the coming of the ark?

DAVID: Well, when you have such a special event, you have to have music, because when we were so joyful about the coming of the Ark we wanted only the best musicians. I also had all of the highest people in the land come out to welcome it in, and as you can see, I put on a special robe for the occasion. (He doesn't have to have one on--it can just be imaginary.) I also had each of the Levites and the musicians wear a special robe. We all looked so nice when the Ark came into the city!

REPORTER: I was also there to be able to see it for myself and it was quite a beautiful sight, I must say! So tell the viewers what you and the rest of Israel did when the Ark came into the city.

DAVID: (Looking off into the distance as if he is picturing the scene in his mind.) Well, as the Ark was coming into the city, we let out a sound that I am sure could be heard from miles around. The musicians blew horns and trumpets and clashed their cymbals. Others played harps and lyres and just let out the most joyful noise that you could ever imagine.

REPORTER: (With a smile to say he/she knows the answer to the question that he/she is about to ask.) Tell everyone what you were doing!

DAVID: I was dancing in the streets and showing the joy that I had in my heart, being in the presence of God.

REPORTER: Do you want to show us a little of the dance?

David can dance if he wants to, or he can be a little shy and say that you would have to be there to be able to see him dance.

REPORTER: After the Ark was in the city, what did you do?

DAVID: I wanted to follow all of God’s commands so, the Ark was placed in front of the tent that I had set up for it. Then I sacrificed burnt offerings before the Lord.

REPORTER: What do you mean by burnt offerings?

DAVID: Well, in my day and time, God commanded us to sacrifice animals to pay for our sins. We had to do this to be forgiven. So whenever we wanted to be in a right relationship with God we had to do this.

REPORTER: Oh, I heard about that. (aside to the audience) We don’t do that now, because Jesus died on the cross for our sins, so all we have to do to be forgiven is to ask Jesus to take control of our lives and ask Him to forgive us. (Back to David) But tell us, what happened next?

DAVID: After that, I passed out cakes to everyone who was there, just because I wanted to celebrate. Then, I had all the musicians play for us again. It was beautiful!

REPORTER: One of my favorite parts of the day was when you shared the psalm that you wrote for this occasion. Will you share a few parts of that psalm that are especially joyful?

DAVID: (Very happy to be able to do this) I would love to! Let me think for a second... Okay, I think I have got some parts that you will like. Here goes..

Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name;
make known among the nations what He has done.

Sing to Him, Sing praise to Him,
Tell of all His wonderful acts.

Glory in His holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

(v. 8-10)

Sing to the Lord all the earth;
proclaim His salvation day after day.
Declare His glory among the nations,
His marvelous deeds among all the peoples.
For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;

He is to be feared above all gods.
For all the gods of the nations are idols,
but the Lord made the heavens.
Splendor and majesty are before Him;
strength and joy in His dwelling place.

(v. 23-27)

DAVID:

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
let them say among the nations, “The Lord reigns.”

Let the sea resound, and all that is in it;
let the fields be jubilant and everything in them!

Then the trees of the forest will sing,
they will sing for joy before the Lord,
for He comes to judge the earth.

(v. 31-33)

REPORTER: That was wonderful. I feel so full of joy right now! Thank you, David, for sharing that with us and thank you for all your time that you gave us today! We all really enjoyed it.

DAVID: The pleasure was mine. Hope to see you again soon! Bye!

David walks away, very happy, almost with a skip in his step.

REPORTER: Well, as you can see, a very joyful King David today as he welcomed the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem. Now back to you, _____ (name of the anchor).

ANCHOR: Thank you, _____ (reporter) I think after hearing that report, we all wish we could have been there when the Ark came into the city. That is all we have for you today, but we will keep you up to date on what is happening here and around the world. For channel 7 news, I am _____ saying good bye.

The End.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Even though you have to crawl around today, and that is hard, do you have joy inside, because of the gifts you have been promised?

After hearing this story about David today, how would you describe being joyful? *(It is a deep inner contentment knowing God is in control and present with you.)*

What was it that made David joyful? *(The Ark of the Covenant arriving in the city, which meant God was present.)*

What were some of the things that David did to show that he was joyful? *(He hired musicians to play, he danced, he worshipped God through songs and wrote a psalm of praise. David's joy here is very outward, perhaps how you will feel when you actually receive the gifts.)*

How do you think you would feel if you knew that Jesus was physically going to come and visit us here at the center today?

Do you think that could have been the same way David felt when the ark came into the city? Why?

Let's look at a verse that tells us about Joy. Look up **Psalm 16:11**.

In this verse, where are we told that joy is found and who gives joy? *(In the presence of the Lord; it comes from God.)*

How does this verse go with the story that we learned today? *(The reason David was joyful was because He was in the presence of the Lord.)*

When you read this verse that tells you where to find joy and who gives it, how does the verse relate to our memory verse this month? *(The verse talks about the joy of the Lord being our strength.)*

Having joy is a strength that we can depend on at any time. In order to get that joy, all we have to do is to be in the presence of God and He can give it to us.

Can you think of a time when you really needed to have the joy of the Lord as your strength? **[Leader,** share about a time that was difficult for you. Tell how God's peace let you know that He was there and gave you the joy that you needed to be strong.]

Let's say that you just found out your best friend was moving. How do you think you could have joy in that situation? How would you show joy and how would you feel? *(You might not be happy, but you could have joy because you know that Jesus will never leave you no matter how many friends come and go.)*

Take some time and pray with the children you are working with. Ask God to give them joy at all times so that others would see them and know that God is in their life!

WEEK 1 - SKIT

CHARACTERS: Maria and LaTasha.

SCENE: Maria and LaTasha are walking home from school.

MARIA: Hey, LaTasha! Aren't you glad that today is finally Friday?

LATASHA: Yeah. In some ways I don't like Fridays as much because we don't have S.A.Y. Yes!®

MARIA: But LaTasha, don't you remember what we're supposed to do after school today?

LATASHA: What?

MARIA: _____ (a staff at the center) is taking you and me to the park.

LATASHA: That's this Friday?

MARIA: I don't know how you could forget! I have been thinking about it all week!

LATASHA: This is a better day than I thought! You know I am so excited about going to the park with _____ (staff) because every time I'm with her I feel like I am in church, you know that feeling where you have happiness deep down inside.

MARIA: I know what you mean. I think the reason we feel that way around her is because she has Jesus in her heart. I think the feeling you are talking about is joy.

LATASHA: Yeah, joy. Isn't that what we are talking about at the center this month?

MARIA: Yeah! Isn't that weird? Every time we study something it seems like I notice it everywhere.

LATASHA: Yeah, me too!

MARIA: Well, this is where you have to go to your house and I have to go to mine, but _____ (staff) said to be at the center at 3:30. Don't forget the permission slip that your grandma has to sign.

LATASHA: Okay, I'll see you then!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

What was the feeling called that was deep down in LaTasha's heart? (*Joy*)

Where is the best place to find joy? (*In the presence of the Lord--we learned about it in Bible Club.*)

Do you think it is good to hang around people that help to make you feel joyful? Who are some of those people? (*People who love Jesus and live for him.*)

Do you think people think of you as that kind of a person? Why? If not, how could you become that kind of person?

WEEK 1 - MEMORY VERSE

MEMORY VERSE: “...Do not grieve for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Nehemiah 8:10b

EXPLANATION OF THE VERSE

In this verse, Nehemiah is encouraging the people to rejoice in the Lord because He alone is the source of their strength. Nehemiah also wanted them to know that holiness and joy were to go together (from the earlier part of the verse). What we want the children to see, is that joy can be something that can be a permanent part of our lives and can provide us with comfort and strength in any situation!

TEACHING THE VERSE

- Read the scripture to the children.
- Teach two of the actions from below at a time.
- Each time you teach two new actions, start at the beginning again. This will teach the children to not forget the previous actions.
- Do this until you have completed the verse.
- Then, do it two more times as a group.
- If you have time, separate the children into two groups and see who does the better job reciting the verse.

MOTIONS TO THE VERSE

Do not: Shake your head “no”.

grieve: Wipe away tears.

for: Hold up four fingers.

the: Clap your hands.

joy: Make a fist with one hand and put it over your heart. With the other hand, cover the hand that you just put over your heart. With a soft smile on your face, pretend as if something is growing in your hands and allow it to keep growing until you end up with your arms completely extended, palms up to God, as if your heart has just overflowed with joy.

of: Pat your right leg.

the: Pat your left leg.

Lord: Point up to God.

is: Shake your head “yes”.

your: Point to yourself (explain to the children that Nehemiah was saying “you” as in each one of us).

strength: Flex your muscles.

Nehemiah 8:10b Shout “Nehemiah” and hold up eight fingers, then ten, while you shout these numbers as well.

WEEK 1 - PRACTICAL LIVING

The Gilgal Basket

MATERIALS: Small wicker basket for each child, dried flowers (can be bought at Home Depot or other garden shops), ribbons, craft markers, glue, rocks that can be written on, paper, pencil and permanent markers.

This practical living segment is based on the passage in Joshua 4.

- Before practical living, you may take some time to make your own Gilgal basket that you can show to the children. This will give them an idea of what they will be doing today. It is also important that they see how God has worked in your life!
- When the children come in for practical living, tell them, “To be able to do practical living today, you have to understand an important thing that happened in the Bible.”
- Tell them the following story of Joshua 4. You might want to read the scripture yourself, and add in any other important things that you feel they should know. Don’t read this story word for word. Read it over before practical living and tell the story from memory.

Many of you might have heard the story of how Moses parted the Red Sea, but what many people don’t know is that God parted the sea again! This time the Israelites were about to go into the promised land that the Lord had been preparing for them for the last 40 years. Joshua was the leader of the people and the only thing that stood between the people and the Promised Land was the Jordan River.

The Jordan was a mighty river and, during this time of the year the banks of the Jordan were flooding. The flooding didn’t matter to God. It only helped to show the power of God in a mightier way. When the feet of the priests, who were carrying the Ark, touched the water, the river parted and the people of Israel walked across on dry ground. The place where the people crossed the Jordan was called Gilgal. Here at Gilgal, God wanted the people to never forget what had happened, so He told them to do something special.

God told them, “Take stones and build an altar at the edge of the Jordan River. Let this be a sign among you, so that when your children ask later, saying, ‘What do these stones mean to you?’ then you shall say to them, ‘Because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord.’ So these stones will be a memorial to you.”

In our lives, we can have joy when we know that God’s hand has been on our lives. This month as we are beginning to talk about joy, we want to take the time to remember and recognize the times that God has provided for us, or worked in our lives in a special way. We need to remember these times, so that we can tell others how great God is. When we remember these times, we are also reminded of how God has provided for us, over and over again. Today, you are going to get a chance to think of some of the times that God has worked in your life.

Take a few minutes and show the children the basket that you have made. Share with them each stone that you put into your basket and how it reminds you of a time that God worked in your life.

- Give each child a basket.
- Have them decorate their baskets. (Glue on dried flowers, ribbons, etc.)
- Give them each a sheet of paper and a pencil so that they can write down some of the things that God has done in their lives.
- To stimulate their thinking ask them “Has God answered a prayer you prayed?”
- Since only a few words will fit on a rock, you might want to help them think of a few words that will be enough to remind them what God did for them in each one of their situations that they wrote down on paper.
- If the children are too young to write, help them think of some things and write these down for them. They might like to draw something on the rock themselves, and then you can write down words/phrases that describe their drawings.
- If your children are having a hard time thinking of things that God has done, here are some things that you can mention that might get them on the right track:

Provided parents that love you.

Provided a baby brother or sister for you to play with.

Provided a place for your family to live.

Provided a job for your mom or dad.

Helped you find out about the youth center so you could come.

Gave you a special teacher at school.

Gave you a good friend who lives close to you.

Gave you a church so you could learn about His Word.

Answered a prayer of yours.

- These are just a few big ones. There will be many others that will be unique to each individual child. Help them try to think of at least one that is unique to them.
- Remind them as they are working on this project that we can find joy in knowing that God is with us. As we look at our basket of rocks, we can allow the joy of the Lord to be our strength as we remember times when we were aware He was with us!
- After the children have completed these baskets, you might want to keep them at the center. Then, as a teacher, you can help them see the days that God provided for them, or did something special in their lives and together you can add a rock to their baskets.
- If the children ever have to leave the center, this can be a special thing that you can send with them as they leave. This can be a wonderful encouragement as they go through all of the changes that come with moving!

Week 1 – What is Joy?

- You might also want to make one of these baskets for the center, so that in times when God provides a special donation, or allows a new staff or volunteer to come, you can add a rock to the basket for the group.
- Needless to say, after this practical living segment, you will want to keep some extra rocks on hand for adding to the baskets!

WEEK 1 - READ-A-LOUD

“The Tree That Was Lonesome”

Found in *The Moral Compass*; William J. Bennett page 37

SUMMARY: This story is about a tree that felt like he was too old and good for nothing until some animals came to live inside his hollow trunk. The tree realized that even though he was old, he had things to give to others and things to be joyful about. We want the children to see that even when the situation is bad, that they can have joy. In this first week on joy, we just want them to really see what it means to have joy.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

The name of this story is, “The Tree That Was Lonesome.” What do you think it could be about?

Have you ever felt lonesome? When? Why?

POST-READING QUESTIONS

Why was this tree lonesome? (*Because he felt that he was old and ugly and now that he had no leaves, he felt as if he were of no use to the world.*)

How did the woodpecker and the squirrel feel about the old tree? Why? (*They were very grateful for the tree, because he gave them a place to live.*)

How did the tree feel after he discovered how useful he was? (*He felt full of joy!*)

What are some of the things that you are good at that can make you feel joyful and also help other people?

WEEK 1 - CRAFTS

✂ A Carton of Flowers

MATERIALS: Pulp egg carton; thin, flexible wire, 6-8 inches long and a button for each flower; small cans or plastic caps from laundry detergent; clay or play dough; fluffy moss; green construction paper and/or floral tape; glue and scissors.

- Give each child one egg holder. Have them cut the holder into the shape of a flower either with pointed petals or rounded ones, depending on the type of flower you are making.
- Give each child a piece of wire 6- to 8-inches long and a button.
- Have them poke two small holes in the bottom of the flower with the wire or a pair of scissors.
- Thread the wire through one hole and then through the button and back through the second hole. The button becomes the flower's center.
- Twist the wire around itself to make a sturdy stem.
- Take a strip of either floral tape or green construction paper and wrap the wire. If you are using construction paper, be sure to glue the ends in place.
- Cut a leaf out of green construction paper and attach it to the stem using glue. You may need to hold it in place for a few minutes until the glue begins to dry.
- Put some clay or play dough in the lid, or can in which you have chosen to "plant" the flower.
- Press the stem of the flower down into the clay.
- Place fluff moss over the top of the clay to make the "soil" look more real.

GUIDED CONVERSATION:

When you see a patch of flowers that have just bloomed, how do you feel?

What does it mean to you to have joy?

When are some of the times that you have a hard time having joy?

WEEK 1 - RECREATION

DAY ONE: Set Up Teams

MATERIALS: Students divided into two teams, (the list should be prepared by the staff in advance), poster board, and marker.

OBJECT: To help the children learn how to work together and support each other.

SET UP:

- Create two permanent teams. These teams would play together everyday during recreation. These teams will change every month. This gives the students a chance to learn how to work with new team members. It also gives them a chance to play on a winning team, if they were not on one in the past.
- You will want to make sure the teams are evenly matched age-wise.
- You may want to sit down as a Staff team and decide who will be on what teams.
- Be sure and keep your lists from the previous months, so that you can remember who played together in the past.

TO PLAY:

- Have each team come up with a team name. It can be whatever they want. The names that our students liked best were ones that had to do with their relationship with Jesus. Acronyms are fun to use too.
- Have each team create a team cheer. (Raps are fun too!)
- Remember that during recreation, winning isn't as important as spirit.
- Make posters which you will keep up and post the scores.

JOYFUL JOKERS		REJOICING RADICALS	
COMPETITION	SPIRIT POINTS	COMPETITION	SPIRIT POINTS
1,000	20,000	2,000	10,000
1,000	10,000	1,000	30,000

DISCUSSION

Watch to see how the players respond to their new teammates and who provides leadership on the team. Notice who is encouraging and discouraging new ideas.

Was it hard to come up with a team cheer? Why?

We are learning about joy this month. **Did you see anyone who was being joyful, or not joyful during the time you had to work on your cheer? What kinds of things did they do that was joyful or not joyful?** *(They were happy to help in whatever way that they could to help the team; they were complaining about any idea anyone else gave, but they never shared any ideas.)*

Why is it so important to be joyful? *(People can see Jesus as part of your life if you have joy in all situations and others like to be around someone who is joyful.)*

DAY TWO: Balloon Basketball

MATERIALS: Balloons, two low chairs

OBJECT: To score the most for your team by getting the balloon into the basket, before the time is up.

SET UP:

- This game can get pretty wild, so you might want to divide your two large teams into smaller teams.
- Have a smaller team of each group play each other and the rest of the team members can cheer for their team mates!
- Place two chairs at opposite ends of the room.
- A child from each team is chosen to be the “basket” and stands on the chair at his team’s goal.

TO PLAY:

- The leader, in the center of the room, throws the balloon up into the air.
- The players begin batting the balloon towards their goal.
- They want to get the balloon to their “basket,” who will then stomp on it and burst it.
- There is not a goal until the balloon is burst.
- Having the person who is the “basket” stomp on the balloon adds to the excitement, because it will pop out of his/her hands and it gives the other team a chance to retrieve it, should it slip away from them.
- The goalie cannot be touched! If he has the balloon the other team cannot try to get it from him. If they do, they may need to sit out of the game for a while.
- If other students are waiting to play, you might want to set a time limit for each team to play. You can either keep the score a running score, or start a new game each time.

OBSERVE

- Watch to see which children are trying to get the ball from the goalie when they shouldn't, or which children are obeying the rules without having to be reminded.

DISCUSSION

When was the time that it was easiest to feel joy in this game? *(When you were winning or you made a point.)*

Do you think that you can have joy even if you don't win? Why? *(Yes, because your joy is not based on winning or losing-- this game it is based on God and His love for you.)*

Are there times at school when you are tempted to forget the joy that you can have in God? What about during games that you play there?

DAY THREE: Centipede Tag

MATERIALS: None.

OBJECT: To not be tagged by the front of the centipede and to grab onto the back of it.

SET UP:

- Have the children get into lines of three.
- One of them faces forward and the other three grab onto the waist of the child in front of them. This forms a centipede.
- One person is "It". The person who is "It" does not have a group.

TO PLAY:

- The person who is "It" is trying to grab onto the end of one of the centipedes.
- The child who is at the front of the centipede is trying to grab the person who is "It".
- If the person who is it grabs on to the back of a centipede, then the person at the front of that centipede now becomes "It".
- The game continues for as long as time allows.

OBSERVE

- Watch for the children who are showing joy no matter what happens in the game. Who are the ones who are always complaining who are encouraging the rest of their team?

DISCUSSION

We have begun studying joy. Can anyone tell me what it means to have joy? *(It means that we have delight in our hearts, or feeling satisfied.)*

Does having joy in a game always mean that you are happy? *(No, it means that you do not let the result of the game change the contentment of your heart.)*

Is there anything that you can do to help you be joyful? *(Focus on Jesus. Remember how much He loves you.)*

DAY FOUR: Free Play

MATERIALS: All the fun play equipment that you have.

OBJECT: To give the children free time to do what they want and to see how they respond under pressure with their character.

SET UP:

- Today, let the students have fun playing whatever they want to play.

TO PLAY:

- Feel free to play with them, but allow them to guide you and help you know how to carry out the rules that they have set.
- Give them the freedom to choose the games and enforce the rules as they think they should.
- Don't allow them to look to you to solve all their problems with rules and whether players obey them. Try to let them make decisions and find out the consequences of them.

OBSERVE

- Watch to see which children are the ones that are having fun, and which ones are upset because they cannot play the game that they wanted, or use the equipment that they wanted.

DISCUSSION

Did anyone play a game today that wasn't one that you picked because the game you wanted was already being used by someone else? How did you feel?

Do you think that you can have joy in a situation like that? How?

Remember that whether you get to play the game you wanted or not, you can make this game as fun as possible by focusing on the good things and not just on what you don't have.

Can someone tell me our memory verse for this month? How do you think we can use it to help us in recreation?

If we get discouraged, we can always remember that we can have our joy in the Lord, and not in this game. Focusing on this thought, we will be able to enjoy the game, no matter what happens.

WHAT MAKES GOD JOYFUL?: WEEK 2

WEEK 2 – BIBLE CLUB

LESSON AIM: To help the child understand that God rejoices when sinners repent.

SCRIPTURE: Luke 15:1-10

MEMORY VERSE: "...Do not grieve for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Nehemiah 8:10b

The Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin

These two parables of Jesus illustrate the same point: that there is rejoicing in heaven when a sinner repents. We want the children to see in these two parables how much Jesus cares about the lost, and how happy it makes him when a sinner repents.

In the first parable, we see that the shepherd left the ninety-nine sheep that were safe, to look for the one that was lost. This does not mean that those ninety-nine sheep are not important, it just illustrates how Jesus would look for anyone of his sheep that were lost. Jesus then tells us that the angels in heaven will be rejoicing over sinners in the same way.

The next parable gives us the story of a young woman who has lost one of the coins on her necklace. The coin referred to in this parable is worth about a day's wages, so it is easy to see how valuable it was. Like the first one, this parable also tells that there will be rejoicing in heaven over a sinner that repents, but there is a different focus in this parable. This parable really highlights the extensive way that the woman searched for the coin all over the house. "Does she not light a lamp, sweep the whole house and search carefully until she finds it?" (v.8) Then, joy comes to her when she has found her valuable treasure.

What we want the children to see this week are what kinds of things make God rejoice. We want them to see how much they are loved by God, and how God rejoices over them when they come to Him. They are very special to Him!

Discipleship
Tip

Take some time this week to get one-on-one with the children with whom you are working. Ask them if they have ever given the angels in heaven a chance to rejoice. (If they have asked Jesus into their lives then they have!) If they haven't, take this time to present the gospel to them by asking them if they were to die today, how sure are they that they would go to heaven. If they have already made a commitment to the Lord, ask them if there is someone with whom they could share this good news with. Pray together about who they could talk to and if you should go with them to talk to this person. Inspire them to be constantly thinking of people with whom they might want to share!

 **Hook**

MATERIALS: A small surprise for each child (a piece of candy, a sticker, etc.).

- When it is almost time for the children to go into the room where Bible Club is, tell them, “Today, I want you to walk to the Bible Club room in a single file line, and go in and sit on the floor with your hands folded in your lap. Do not say a word to anyone else.”
- These directions should be pretty ordinary, but today have one of the staff or volunteers stationed in the room where Bible Club is held, so that they can be watching who is walking in and sitting the way that you asked.
- Have the staff or volunteer who is watching the children, write down the children that they see that are obeying the rules and the ones who are disobeying the rules.
- Once all the children have had a chance to come in and sit down, have the staff or volunteer who was watching, call out the names of the children who were doing the right thing and have them move to a different place, separate from the other children, but nearby the others.
- Pray that the Lord will have at least one child obey.
- Ask the children that are left (the ones who didn’t do the right thing) if they know why they are not with the other children.
- Give them a chance to guess and then tell them that they are where they are because they did not properly enter the room.
- Ask them individually if there is anything that they want to say.
- If any of them apologize, allow those children to move to the other group.
- After you have given each of them a chance to say something, reward the children who are now in the group that did the right thing.
- Give prizes to those who have recently joined the group first and then the ones that were there from the beginning.
- Act more joyfully when giving the prizes to the ones who did the wrong thing first, than the ones who did the right thing from the beginning.
- If there are any children who did not repent on the first time around, give them a chance to now apologize for what they did.
- If they choose to apologize now, give them prizes, too. They don’t have to apologize.
- After you have given each one another opportunity to apologize, ask these debriefing questions:

DEBRIEF

How did you feel when your name was called the first time; or, maybe it wasn't called, how did you feel then? *(You might not have been sure what the names were being called for...)*

For those of you who did not come in and sit down correctly, how did you feel when you knew you did something wrong?

After we gave you the chance to apologize, how did you feel when you got the prize? Did you feel like you really deserved an award? Were you glad that you apologized?

If you were someone who did the right thing when you came in and sat down, how did it feel when you saw people who did the wrong thing get a prize just like you did? Did you feel like you should not have tried very hard to do the right thing?

If you were giving out the prizes, who would you have given them to? Why?

Leaders: Watch and see if the children who did the right thing first had any compassion for those who didn't do the right thing first.

Say: Today, we are going to hear how God feels about those who do the wrong thing first, and then come to Him.

(For those who apologized in the 2nd or 3rd go-around, tell the children that though you can't read what they are really thinking, God can. You gave them a prize because they said the words you wanted to hear. God, however, rewards not according to the words we speak but according to our hearts--what we truly think.)

Bible Story

MATERIALS: Copies of the “Suggestions for Bible Club”, for as many children as you would like to be involved in the skit.

- Today for Bible Club, give some of your older children a chance to lead the Bible Story section. (Giving them a chance to lead creates ownership!)
- Before Bible Club, talk to your older children and ask them who would like to be in charge of the skit today. (You might know someone you would like to choose to be in charge, and then you could ask for volunteers that might like to help.)
- Give them each a copy of the “Suggestions for Bible Club”, and ask them if they have any questions for you.
- Tell them that, when they think they are ready, they need to show you or tell you what they have planned.
- Be sure to tell them how much time, that they have to prepare. It probably won't be very much time so they will need to stay on task!
- Try to let them figure out what to do on their own. The directions should be enough.
- You don't have to leave the room, but allow them to figure out what they are going to do on their own. This shows that you have confidence in them and they will rise to the challenge.
- If they try to ask you what they should do, try not to say anything until they have come up with an idea as a group, and have some kind of plan.
- When they show you or tell you the ideas that they have, try your best to say two or three things that you liked about what they have done, first.
- Then, ask them questions about the parts that might not seem very well thought out, or that still need a little work.
- Give them lots of encouragement after they have finished performing the skit. No matter how they do, give them credit for trying--remember, they didn't have to do this!

Suggestions for Bible Club

CONGRATULATIONS! You have been chosen to help with Bible Club today. You must be pretty awesome, because this is a big responsibility! You are responsible for teaching the other children about a passage in the Bible!

- In the passage in the Bible that we are studying today (Luke 15:1-10), there are two parables. A parable is a story that Jesus told that has two meanings.
- The **first parable** that you will need to act out is a story of a shepherd who has 100 sheep. He notices that one of them is missing, so he goes out looking for it.
- When he finds it, he is so happy that he picks it up, puts it on his shoulders, and carries it home. When he gets home, he is so happy he goes to all of his friends and neighbors to show them that his lost sheep was found.
- Then, Jesus says that the angels in heaven rejoice in the same way as the shepherd did, when someone asks God to forgive him.
- The **second parable** that Jesus tells is about a woman who has a necklace that has ten silver coins on it. One day she realizes that one of the coins has fallen off. She looks everywhere for it. She lights a lamp and looks, she sweeps the floor and searches everywhere until she finds it. When she does, she goes to all of her friends and shows them that she has found her coin. Again, Jesus says that the angels in heaven rejoice in the same way as this woman does, when a sinner realizes that he is wrong and asks God for forgiveness.

Here are some ideas for the first parable:

1. Have someone be Jesus, and have him tell the story while others act out the parts of the shepherd, and the sheep that are being lost. (The shepherd and the sheep would not say anything, they would just be acting.) Then, when they are finished Jesus could say, "In the same way, the angels in heaven rejoice when someone who is wrong realizes that he is wrong and asks God to forgive them."
2. You could have the shepherd talk and tell his own story. He might say, "I thought I had one more sheep--I do! Manuel is gone! I must find him!" The shepherd would call for the sheep, and then when he found it he might say, "Manuel, I have been looking all over for you! I was so scared that you were lost and I might never see you again." You can make up the rest of the lines. This is just an idea.

Here are some ideas for the second parable:

1. You might have a woman looking for her coin, while Jesus tells her story. (Similarly done like the first idea for the other parable.)
2. You could also have a woman who talks out loud as she is looking. She might say things like. "Look at my beautiful necklace. It is the prettiest...Oh! One of the coins is missing! I can't believe it! I have to find it!" Be sure to have someone say at the end, that this is how the angels rejoice when someone who has made wrong choices asks God to forgive him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What was the shepherd sad about? What made him joyful? *(He was sad when he lost his sheep; he was joyful when the sheep was found.)*

What was object was that the woman was looking for? What did she do when she found it? *(She was looking for a coin, and she rejoiced and told all of her friends when she found it.)*

Have you ever lost something that was very important to you? How did you feel when it was lost? What about when it was found?

From the Bible story that you just heard, how do the angels feel when a sinner asks Jesus to forgive his sins? *(They rejoice! They are full of joy!)*

Let's look in the Bible and read some other verses about how God feels about us. Someone look up **Isaiah 62:5**, and someone else look up **Zephaniah 3:17**. (You might need to help them find this one!)

In the verse in Isaiah, it compares the way that God feels about you, to something else. What is it? *(A young man rejoicing over his bride.)*

Have any of you ever been to a wedding? If you have, how does the groom look at the bride? Can you imagine Jesus looking at you like that? *(He does!)*

Now look at the verse in Zephaniah, it tells us five things that God is promising to do with us. Can you name them? *(He is with us; He will save us; He will delight in us; He will quiet us with His love; He will rejoice over us with singing.)*

Have you every felt so joyful inside that you felt like singing? Could you share that with us? Can you imagine that God feels like that about you?!

When you know that Jesus loves you and is joyful when He looks at you, how do you feel about Jesus? *(You might want to get to know Him more or spend as much time with Him as you can.)*

When you have someone at school tease you about something or make fun of you, can you change how you feel by you picturing Jesus being joyful as He looks at you? Why? Can you find strength in this joy? *(Yes it can! It can change our view because we realize that what they think about us is not nearly as important as what Jesus thinks. There is strength in that!)*

Take some time to pray with your children right now and ask Jesus to give them the joy that comes only from Him. Also pray that they will remember how He feels about them when difficult situations arise.

WEEK 2 - SKIT

Skit

CHARACTERS: Bobby, Reuben and Tony.

SCENE: Bobby and Reuben walking to the store after the center, and they run into their friend Tony.

REUBEN: Hey look, Bobby, there's Tony. Let's see what he's up to.

BOBBY: Hey Tony, where are you going?

TONY: *(Walking over to them)* Hey guys, I was just walking to the store for my mom. Where are you guys coming from?

REUBEN: We just left the S.A.Y. Yes!® Center that's at our church. You should come some time. It's so fun.

TONY: I don't know, they probably wouldn't let me in.

BOBBY: Well, sometimes we do have a waiting list, but why would you say that?

TONY: I have been getting in a lot of trouble lately. I think the last place that they would let me in, is a church.

REUBEN: What do you mean? Everybody has done something wrong. Believe me, they didn't let me in because I was good enough.

TONY: Really? Well, you don't know what I have done.

REUBEN: You're right, I might now know, but God does. Did you know that He sent his Son to die on the cross to pay for your sins, so that you don't have to die?

TONY: I have seen pictures of Jesus hanging on the cross, but I didn't really know what it meant. So you're saying that he died for everyone who goes to church?

BOBBY: No, he died for everyone! Anyone who believes that he died for them can have eternal life, and be sure that they are going to heaven when they die.

TONY: So you're saying that He died for me too?

BOBBY: Yeah, you got it, man. It took awhile for that to hit me too. But now that I have Him in my life, I have peace in my heart that I never had before.

TONY: But you guys just don't know. The stuff that I have done might be too bad for Him to forgive.

REUBEN: No way, man. There is nothing we have done that He doesn't have the power to forgive. All you have to do to be free from all that stuff is to tell God that you know you're a sinner, and that you believe He died on the cross for you. Ask Him to come into your life to be your Savior because you know that there is no way that you can do good on your own.

Week 2 – What Makes God Joyful?

- TONY:** So, I have to go to church and tell Him that?
- BOBBY:** No, you can do it right here. All you have to do is pray. Do you want us to pray with you?
- TONY:** Right here? Are you sure that He will hear us?
- REUBEN:** I know that He will hear us if you are serious about what you are doing, and you know in your heart that this is really what you want to do.
- TONY:** Absolutely. I have been wondering about Jesus and God and stuff for a long time. I never had anyone to explain it to me. Now that you guys have explained it, it seems so easy. Can we pray now? But I don't really know what to say.
- REUBEN:** That's okay. I can tell you what to say, and you can repeat it after me. Are you ready?
- TONY:** Ready as I will ever be.
- REUBEN:** Bow your head and close your eyes. Now just say what I say... Dear Heavenly Father (*Tony repeats*)...I admit that I am a sinner.....and have done many things that have made you sad.....please forgive me for what I have done....I believe that you died on the cross for my sins.....please come into my lifeand be my Savior and Lord. Thank you for coming into my life like you promised. .. In Jesus' name I pray ...Amen.
- TONY:** I did it!
- REUBEN:** You did it and the Bible says that the angels in heaven are celebrating right now.
- TONY:** They are? Why?
- REUBEN:** Because you asked Jesus to forgive your sins and come into your life.
- TONY:** That is awesome!
- BOBBY:** I hope you didn't have to be home by a certain time, because you are probably late.
- TONY:** (Looking down at his watch) You're right! I'd better go! Thank you guys so much. I want to hook up with you guys later. I have a lot of other questions to ask you!
- BOBBY:** Come to the S.A.Y. Yes![®] Center tomorrow after school!

Tony shouts "Okay" as he runs off. Bobby and Reuben give each other a high five.

- BOBBY:** That was so cool! I can't believe he wanted to know about God like that?!
- REUBEN:** I know! I know the angels in heaven are joyful, but so am I!

The boys walk off.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Why were the angels in heaven joyful? *(Because someone who had done wrong asked for forgiveness and trusted in God!)*

What would have happened if Reuben and Bobby had not told Tony about Jesus? *(They would have not gotten to see God use them, and Tony might not have known about God for a while longer.)*

How do you think you would feel if someone responded to you, like Tony responded to Reuben and Bobby, when they told him about God? *(It would be fun!)*

Do you think you would know what to say to someone who asked you about Jesus? How could you learn? *(To learn, you could talk to your teacher and get them to help you know what to say.)*

WEEK 2 - MEMORY VERSE

MEMORY VERSE: “...Do not grieve for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Nehemiah 8:10b

EXPLANATION OF THE VERSE

In this verse, Nehemiah is encouraging the people to rejoice in the Lord because He alone, is the source of their strength. Nehemiah also wanted them to know that holiness and joy were to go together (from the earlier part of the verse). What we want the children to see, is that joy can be something that can be a permanent part of our lives and can provide us with comfort and strength in any situation!

Word Scramble

MATERIALS: One set of cards for each 2-3 children. A "set" includes one card for each word of the verse. (The cards that you can copy are on the next page.)

Optional: For bonus round, two sets of a verse from previous months

- Divide the children in small groups of three, or even pairs.
- Depending on the time you have, decide how many rounds you can play.
- If you have 10-15 minutes, you could do about 4 rounds.
- Set the rounds up like this:
 - Round One: Two minutes for the team to get their verse together, in the correct order.
 - Round Two: One minute to get the verse together.
 - Round Three: 30 seconds to get verse together.
 - Round Four (Bonus Round): give students a verse from previous months, to put together in the same way. Whoever finishes first is the winner.
- As you go through the rounds, everyone who finishes within that time can advance. If you have lots of winners, GREAT! Your kids know the verse.
- You could give some prizes out for each round. Here's an idea:
 - Round One: Raisins or M&M's®.
 - Round Two: Sticker or additional raisins or M&M's®.
 - Round Three: Nicer sticker or 2 S.A.Y. Yes!® dollars.
 - Round Four: 5 S.A.Y. Yes!® dollars or 15 minutes in the computer lab (Something that is a privilege at the center.)

Do not	grieve
for	the joy
of the	LORD,
is your	strength
Nehemiah	8:10b

WEEK 2 - PRACTICAL LIVING

“I did it. Will you forgive me?”

MATERIALS: Large board, marker for writing on the board, copies of the page of Skit #1 for each actor, and copies of the “Skit for Kids” page for each class.

- This practical living segment is designed to show the children how God is joyful when we admit that we are wrong and ask for forgiveness.
- Begin your practical living time today with skits done by the staff and volunteers, or older children that you are sure can do a quality job.
- After the actors have played out the skit to the end of the instructions, have them freeze and ask the questions that follow each.
- Do Skit # 1, scene 1, and then ask the following questions. (The scripts for the skit are found following these directions.)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR SKIT #1 - SCENE 1

What was Pablo doing that was wrong? *(He was pulling Cynthia’s hair.)*

What else was he doing that was wrong? *(He was lying. He lied about pulling Cynthia’s hair.)*

When Pablo lies and hurts others, do you think that helps his relationship with God or makes it worse? Why? *(It hurts it because sin separates us from God. Until he confesses his sin, his relationship with God is not going to be as close as it used to be.)*

What happens if Pablo never admits that anything is his fault? *(He could start believing the lie that he is telling himself, people will not trust him about other things if they know that he has lied.)*

- Now have the actors act out Scene 2 of Skit #1
- After Skit #1, Scene 2, ask these questions:

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AFTER SKIT #1 - SCENE 2

What did Pablo do right in this scene? *(He admitted that he did pull Cynthia’s hair.)*

What did he not do that he should have done? *(He didn’t ask Cynthia to forgive him. He just said that he was joking.)*

Why do you think it is important for us to ask forgiveness when we have done something wrong against someone? *(Because the Bible tells us be at peace with everyone. (Romans 12:18) Even if Pablo is at peace with Cynthia, Cynthia does not have peace with Pablo, so he must ask her to forgive him.)*

Do you think what we say matters when we ask someone to forgive us, or is it just important to say that we are sorry?

- Let the children respond with what they think and then let the actors act out Scene 3.
- After the actors are finished with Scene 3, ask these questions:

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR SKIT #1 - SCENE 3

What did Pablo do right, in this scene? (*He apologized to Cynthia.*)

Do you think, after seeing the way that Pablo apologized, that it matters how we ask for someone’s forgiveness? (*Yes.*)

After Pablo apologized to Cynthia, do you think Cynthia felt any better? Do you think Pablo really sounded sorry? (*No, no.*)

- Tell the actors to sit down for a minute.
- Take a few minutes to tell the children the steps of asking forgiveness from someone.
- Write each of these steps on the board as you talk about them. **Say the parts** that are in italics.

1. Admit that you did something wrong.

The first thing you have to do is admit that there is something to forgive. Just like we saw Pablo do in the first scene, if you also say that there is nothing that you did wrong, there is no hope of getting things to work out.

2. Start by saying the person’s name and looking them in the eyes, then tell the person whom you hurt, exactly what you did wrong and when you did it.

Let’s take Pablo and Cynthia for example. If Pablo were to tell Cynthia exactly what he did and when he did it, what would he say?

“Cynthia, I pulled your hair three times while you weren’t looking a few minutes ago.”

This would be the first part of what he would say. Then he would do the next steps.

3. Tell the person that you hurt that you were wrong for doing what you did.

This step lets the person know that you know exactly why you are asking for forgiveness and that you know that it is wrong.

4. Ask the person that you hurt to forgive you and wait for her to respond!

When you ask the person to forgive you, you are not in control any more. You make her an active part of the forgiveness. Don't you think that it is harder to ask forgiveness this way? Do you think it will be as easy to do the same thing a few minutes later like we saw with Pablo? Why?

- Now call the actors back and have them act out scene 3b.
- What you want to do now is to let your children practice asking each other for forgiveness.
- Divide them into their classes and have them sit on the floor, in a circle.
- Give each group a copy of the “Skit for Kids” page, included after this lesson.
- Have the teacher in each class, ask for volunteers to practice asking for forgiveness.
- Have the children act out the skit and ask for forgiveness.
- After they have finished, ask the other children in the class how they did.
- Have them say one thing that they did well before they say anything that they should have done better.
- Give other children a chance to do a skit.
- Continue the skits until time has run out.
- You can do a skit more than once by having different children do the skit . Let a child who was asked to forgive someone in another skit now be the one asking for forgiveness.
- If possible, give everyone a chance to practice asking for forgiveness using the steps that we talked about today.

Skit #1 - Scene 1

Pablo is a 6th grader and Cynthia is a 4th grader. They both come to the S.A.Y. Yes!® Center. Pablo is having trouble keeping his hands to himself. When Cynthia isn't looking, he pulls her hair. She asks him to stop each time, but he says he hasn't done anything. Finally, Cynthia tells the teacher. When the teacher comes over to them, Pablo continues his story that he hasn't done anything. Actors then freeze.

Skit #1 - Scene 2

Pablo looks at his teacher and decides to admit that he did pull Cynthia's hair. The teacher thanks him for admitting what he did and asks him what he should do now. Pablo shrugs his shoulders and says that he was just kidding with Cynthia and that he won't do it again. The teacher is still standing there, looking at him when the actors freeze.

Skit #1 - Scene 3

The teacher tells Pablo that he needs to apologize to Cynthia. Pablo quickly says, "Sorry, Cynthia," without looking at her. He does this just to make the teacher happy. The teacher leaves. Cynthia is still not happy because she doesn't feel as if Pablo actually apologized. As soon as the teacher walks off and Cynthia looks away in disgust, Pablo pulls her hair again. Cynthia immediately yells for the teacher. Pablo quickly says, "Sorry, Cynthia. Why do you have to be such a cry baby?" Actors freeze.

Skit #1 - Scene 3b.

The teacher tells Pablo that he needs to apologize to Cynthia. After a little hesitation, Pablo looks at Cynthia right in the eyes and says, "Cynthia, I pulled your hair three times a few minutes ago. What I did was wrong. Will you forgive me for that?" Cynthia thinks for a second and says that she will forgive him.

Skit for Kids

Skit #1

David and Jamaal are playing basketball. Jamaal asks David to keep the score. Every now and then David adds an extra point to his score. David tells Jamaal that he is one point away from winning. Jamaal asks if he is sure. David says he is. Jamaal says that he trusts David and so he must be right. David scores the next point. Jamaal says, “You win.” What should David do?

Skit #2

Carlos and Juan are working on their homework together. Carlos is having a hard time understanding the homework, but Juan thinks it is easy. Carlos keeps asking Juan to explain it. Finally, Juan gets annoyed and says, “Carlos, you must be stupid if you don’t understand this. You should go back a grade or something.” Carlos looks down at his paper without saying a word. He is very hurt. What should Juan do?

Skit #3

LaTasha and Synicka are looking at the pictures that LaTasha’s grandmother took at their last youth center party. They come to a picture of someone that Synicka doesn’t like very much, but when LaTasha is good friends with. Synicka says, “Look at Maria in that picture. She’s stuffing her face again like usual.” LaTasha tells Synicka that she doesn’t want her to look at the rest of the pictures because she hurt her feelings. What should Synicka do?

Skit #4

Deandre and LaShawndra are brother and sister. They both go to the S.A.Y. Yes!® center. One day their mother tells Deandre to come straight home after school because they have to go somewhere. She also tells him to bring LaShawndra home with him. Deandre remembers to come home after school, but he forgets to tell LaShawndra. When LaShawndra doesn’t come home, Deandre’s mother asks him if he remembered to tell her. He says that he did and that LaShawndra said she wasn’t coming because she wanted to go to the center. Deandre’s mom says she is going to call the center right now and tell them to send LaShawndra home. What should Deandre do?

Skit #5

Camille and Jasmine are best friends. They always walk home from school together. Today, Jasmine says that her mom is going to pick her up because they have to go somewhere and that she can’t walk home from school with her, but instead Jasmine goes to another friend’s house after school. Camille believes Jasmine because she trusts her. The next day at school Camille asks Jasmine what her mom and she did after she picked her up from school yesterday. What should Jasmine do?

WEEK 2 - READ-A-LOUD

“Charlemagne and the Robber Knight”

Adapted from a retelling by Mary Frary and Charles Stebbins

The Moral Compass, page 653

SUMMARY: This is the story of Charlemagne, the Emperor of Germany. He finds himself on a strange mission given to him by an angel who told him to go and rob his own people. On the way to the forest, he meets a strange, dark knight and after overpowering him, the Emperor admits to being the greatest robber in the country. Together, they discover that one of the Emperor’s trusted men is plotting to kill him. The robber, not knowing the Emperor is the one who just overpowered him, tells him to go and tell Charlemagne of the plot the robber fears that the Emperor would not trust the word of a common thief and that he might be sentenced to life if he were in the court of the Emperor. The plot turns out to be true and when the trusted man admits to plotting to kill the Emperor. The Emperor then sends for the thief. He offers him forgiveness of his crimes if he will turn from his ways and become a knight and fight for good instead of evil. The robber gladly accepts and becomes one of the king’s most trusted men. What we want the children to see is that God is joyful when someone who has made wrong choices, turns from them and begins making the right choices.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

Do you think that if someone has stolen things all of their his life and then one day decides to stop being a thief and ask Jesus to forgive him, that Jesus would do this?

(Yes, he would be forgiven because Jesus is joyful when a sinner repents of what he has done, no matter how great or small.)

In the Bible Club this week, we learned about a shepherd who lost his sheep and rejoiced when he found it. Do you remember what the Bible says the angels do when a sinner repents? *(They rejoice.)*

Today, we are going to read a story about someone who had been very bad for a long time. Listen and see if he was forgiven or too bad to be forgiven.

POST-READING QUESTIONS

What was it that Elbegast had done? *(He had robbed many people.)*

What did he discover when he broke into the house of the minister? *(That he was plotting to kill the Emperor.)*

Week 2 – What Makes God Joyful?

How do you think the Emperor felt when he heard Elbegast say that he wanted to tell the Emperor of the plot? (He was surprised that he cared about the well-being of the Emperor, and was glad that he wanted to do the right thing.)

When the Emperor offered to forgive him, how did Elbegast feel? (He was surprised that he was very loving and very kind.)

How do you think that the Emperor felt when Elbegast accepted his gift and turned from his ways? (He was happy and full of joy that the one who used to cause his kingdom so much trouble, was now helping the kingdom.)

Do you think God is like the Emperor and willing to forgive whatever it is that you have done? Are you going to accept the gift that he offers?

WEEK 2 - CRAFTS

✂ Jesus Place Mat

MATERIALS: Large pieces of construction paper, glue, scissors, magazines, and clear contact paper.

- Today, give the children some freedom to make their own place mats that they can give to anyone that they want to tell about Jesus.
- Have an example made of an evangelistic place mat.
- Give each child a large piece of construction paper and give them some ideas of what they could write on it to tell someone else about Jesus.
- As they are making the place mats, try to help them think of specific persons that they want to give them to, and what those persons need to know about Jesus.
- These are some ideas of things that they could write on their place mat:
 - Jesus loves you.
 - Eph. 2:8-9, “For it is by grace that you have been saved, not of yourself, so that no one can boast.”
 - Romans 5:8, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
 - 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.”
 - Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
 - They can cut pictures out of magazines to decorate their place mats to have a little more color.
 - They could write that person's name in a verse to make it more personal.
 - They could write the steps that a tract from your church might use. For instance, the four Spiritual Laws tract has four steps. (1. God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. 2. Man is sinful and separated from God and therefore cannot know and experience God's love and plan for his life. 3. Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's sin. Through him alone we can know God's plan for our life. 4. We must individually receive Christ as Savior and Lord then we can know and experience God's plan for our life.)
- When they have finished, they can cover their place mats with clear contact paper to make it easy to eat on and wipe off.

GUIDED CONVERSATION

Why do you think it is important to tell others about Jesus? *(Because that is what Jesus told us to do. How else will they know about Jesus?)*

What is it that makes God joyful?

Have you ever had the chance to tell someone about Jesus and have that person want to pray to receive Christ? If you have, how did it feel? If not, how do you think it would feel?

WEEK 2 - RECREATION

DAY ONE: Obstacle Course Relay

MATERIALS: Recreation equipment (two of each) hula-hoop, jump rope, basketball, anything really--you can have as many or as few as you like. You don't need more than three or four but have at least two.

OBJECT: To be the first team to have all of their team members to complete the obstacle course and sit down in their lines.

SET UP:

- Before recreation, choose two or three things that you would like to use in an obstacle course.
- Each thing that you choose, you should have one for each team to make the game equal.
- Have them do something with each of the things that you put in the way. For example: Jump rope three times, hula-hoop three times, run around the chair and come back.
- You could add in some things like bounce a basketball five times, jump over something, using a racket of some kind--bounce the ball in the air twice. If you are playing outside, or have a small basketball goal, you could have it end with shooting the basketball to make a basket. Whatever you create! This game could be different every time you play!
- Divide the children into their two teams.
- Have them start standing in a line. When they return, tell them to sit down in the line, so that you know which children are finished already.

TO PLAY:

- Tell the children that when they are in their lines, they can start.
- Have one staff person watching each of the team to make sure they are doing each of their "events" along the way.
- Also, the staff person should be available to retrieve anything that might roll away, or get misplaced during the course.
- The winner is the team that completes the course and is seated in their lines first.

DISCUSSION

Did you feel joyful at any time during this game? About what? *(When you were winning, when you saw the other team do poorly.)*

Do you think that there was anything that happened during this game that would make God rejoice? *(It makes Him happy when we do things that put others before ourselves; it also makes Him happy when we admit that we have done something wrong and take responsibility for our actions.)*

What did we learn about in Bible Club that makes God rejoice? *(When a sinner repents!)*

If your team tried their best and didn't give up, were spirited, won the spirit points for the day, but lost the game, do you think losing would matter as much? What is something that you could find joy in?

Just the fact that your team worked together, you won the spirit points and you had a good time, even though it might not mean that you won the game.

DAY TWO: Hide And Seek

MATERIALS: None.

OBJECT: To be the last person found.

SET UP:

- This game can be played either inside or outside.
- Set boundaries of where they are allowed to go to hide. Where you play will depend on your facilities. If you have no outdoor space to play, don't let that stop you. Kids can have great fun finding hiding places inside. It challenges them to be a little more creative.
- One player is chosen as "It".

TO PLAY:

- While the person who is "It" counts to 50, everyone else scatters and hides.
- The person chosen to be "It" calls out, "Here I come, ready or not," and takes off in search of the others.
- If the person who is "It" spots someone, he calls out the person's name and runs back to the home base.
- If the person whose name was called beats the person who is "It" to the base, he can go out and hide again.
- If the person who is "It" reaches home base before the player whose name was called reaches home base, then the player whose name was called joins the person who is "It" to try to find the other players.
- To avoid cheating, those who join the person who was is "It" can be given a red piece of paper that they show to the person whose name they are calling out. This will tell the other person that they are trying to tag them before they reach home just like the person who is "It" is trying to tag them. Anyone who cheats should automatically be out of the game - they sit and watch.
- The last person called can either be the next person to be "It" or he gets to choose the next person to be "It". His choice.

OBSERVE

- Watch the children to see which ones are encouraging each other in the game and who is just mad because they got tagged early.

DISCUSSION:

What is a way that you could have showed joy in this game? *(Even though you got tagged early to still play and have a good time.)*

How is this game like the story we heard about in Bible Club? *(In Bible Club, the shepherd was looking for his lost sheep and the woman was looking for her gold coin.)*

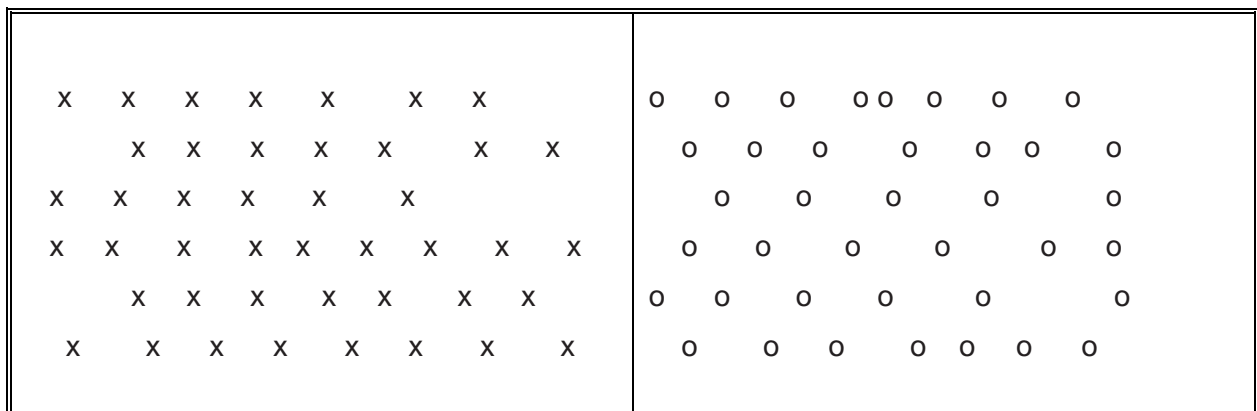
When you were looking for someone, how did you feel when you found them and caught them? *(Excited, happy, joyful.)*

The way that you felt today when you found someone playing hide and seek is only a small glimpse of the way your Father in heaven feels when you ask Him to come into your life and forgive your sins.

DAY THREE: Balloon Volleyball

MATERIALS: Balloons; a "net" - rope laid on ground or chairs to divide teams.

OBJECT: To be the team that scores the most points by not allowing the balloon to touch the ground on their side.



SET UP:

- Divide players into two teams.
- Players sit on the floor facing the net.

TO PLAY:

- A counselor bats a balloon with their hand to the other team.
- They try to keep it in the air and over to the opposing side.
- Only 3 touches of the balloon are allowed by a team before it goes over the net.
- Players must keep their bottoms on the floor at all times. (Sometimes it is a good idea to let the kindergarten and first graders stand up on their knees because they are so short they might not ever touch the ball.)
- Points are scored if:
 - The ball touches the ground on opposing teams side
 - More than 3 players on the opposing team touches the balloon before it passes over the net.

OBSERVE

- Watch for the children who are losing, what is their attitude like?

DISCUSSION

When someone missed the ball on your team, how did you feel? (*Upset, frustrated, and mad at that person.*)

Many times in professional sports, we see famous people getting upset when they aren't doing well. Do you think there is any way to have joy even though your team may be losing? (*We have to remember that winning this game does not determine who we are. We can have the confidence to know that whether or not we win or loose this game Jesus still loves us.*)

What is something else we can do when we are frustrated instead of saying bad words? (*We could take some deep breaths and count to ten or many other things. We could also remember that we are a child of God and that we want to do things that would make Him proud.*)

DAY FOUR: Free Play

MATERIALS: All the fun play equipment that you have.

OBJECT: To give the children free time to do what they want and to see how they respond under pressure with their character.

SET UP:

- Today, let the students have fun playing whatever they want to play.

TO PLAY:

- Feel free to play with them, but allow them to guide you and help you know how to carry out the rules that they have set.
- Give them the freedom to choose the games and enforce the rules as they think that they should.
- Don't allow them to look to you to solve all their problems with rules and players obeying them. Try to let them make decisions and find out the consequences of them.

OBSERVE

- Watch to see what children are having a good attitude and choosing to have joy, no matter what they are doing.

DISCUSSION

Can someone tell me why we should always be able to have joy? *(Because God has promised to give us joy if we stay focused on Him)*

Can someone give me an example of something he saw someone do, that showed you that they were joyful? *(Someone could have been in a good mood throughout recreation, whether or not they got to play the game that they want to or if they won what they were playing.)*

Why is it that you think people find it hard to be joyful? *(Because they think that this game is more important than anything else in their lives right now and they don't want to focus on the good in things.)*

WHEN SHOULD WE BE JOYFUL?: WEEK 3

WEEK 3 – BIBLE CLUB

LESSON AIM: To help the child understand that we should be joyful at all times, even in times of trouble.

SCRIPTURE: Acts 16: 16-34

MEMORY VERSE: "...Do not grieve for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Nehemiah 8:10b

Paul And Silas Rejoice Even In Chains

This passage is a classic illustration of joy that comes only from God. In this passage, we see two men who are charged with a crime that is unjust, and then thrown into the worst prison cell in the city. Amidst all of that, they still have joy and this joy leads to the salvation of the jailer and his family. What we want the children to see is that you can have joy in any situation because God never changes. Having joy in turmoil or chaos is the evidence of the gospel in our lives.

Verses 16-18 describe a young woman who was demon-possessed following Paul and Silas around, shouting that they were messengers of the Most High God. They cast out the demon. Her master became very angry because the demon had given her the ability to prophesy about the future. The master of the servant girl had Paul and Silas thrown into prison because he said they were bringing strange customs to their land.

Before Paul and Silas were thrown in jail, they were beaten severely and then given to the jailer. The officials told the jailer to guard them securely, so the jailer put them in an inner cell and put their feet in stocks. With all these terrible things happening to them in the first European city where they came to preach the gospel, they sang praises to God, out loud, in the prison cell. This was the evidence of joy in their lives. It showed that they were not shaken, and that they trusted someone greater than them, the officials, and showed that they were not discouraged.

Through the rest of the passage we see an earthquake sets them free, but they choose to stay in the jail so that they can be a witness to the jailer. The jailer and his whole family trusted Christ because of the joy that Paul and Silas had in their Lord. This is what we want to teach the children, but we must first demonstrate joy in our own lives for them to see. You can't give away something that you don't have. Pray that God will give you joy in the midst of difficult situations, so that you will be able to draw these little ones to the Lord.

**Discipleship
Tip**

Take some time to get one-on-one with your children this week. Share with them a time when you had a very challenging time in your life. If you were able to have joy in that time share that with them, but if you didn't have joy share with them how the situation might have been different if you did have joy! Challenge them to think of a way that they can have joy in a difficult situation that they might be going through. Remind them that joy comes from the Lord and is the evidence to the world of our faith in Christ. Pray with them and ask God to fill them with joy from Him in all situations.

 **Hook**

MATERIALS: Granola bars.

- When the children arrive today, tell them you are sorry, but there is no snack today.
- Tell the children that you want them to sit at the table quietly.
- If you normally begin our day with recreation, tell them no games may be played today. Everyone must sit quietly.
- There is nothing more difficult for a child than to have to sit and be quiet.
- Fine them a S.A.Y. Yes!® Dollar each time they speak. You can keep a running tally and tell them you will remove it from their bank accounts.
- Gage how long you will require them to sit quietly at the table. It should be long enough to be painful.
- You may excuse Kindergartners and First Graders sooner than you do older children.
- Have them go to the room where you will have the story told.

DEBRIEF (Today, do the debrief segment after the story.)

What did you think when you were told there would be o snack today? How did you feel? (*Angry, sad, disappointed, hungry.*)

What did you think about having to sit and be quiet?

What did you do?

What could you have done? (*Silently quoted memory verses, asked Jesus for strength to sit quietly, picture Jesus sitting next to me and silently talk to Him.*)

Did you experience joy during this time?

What have you learned about joy this month? (*Joy comes from being in the presence of God. Since Jesus lives within believers, He is always present with them. But we must acknowledge His presence and focus on Him to experience joy.*)

If you didn't experience joy what were you focusing on? (*Probably angry they didn't get a snack, life isn't fair, frustrated that they couldn't play, pity self because things aren't going their way, etc.*)

Bible Story

MATERIALS: An actor to play Paul.

- Have the children come sit down and continue to be silent.
- If you let the younger children go first, have a quiet activity for them to do, while they wait for the older children. Sitting on the floor and doing a circle game would be best.
- Paul walks into the room.
- Paul looks around the room and sees the children in a quiet activity.
- Paul walks over to the children and introduces himself.
- Paul then asks them what they have done this morning.
- When he hears that they didn't get a snack, and had to sit quietly, he says to them, "You know I was thrown in jail once. For no other reason than that I loved Jesus."
- The following is the script that the staff or volunteer who plays Paul might read over before hand and then without using it, can tell the children the story from memory.

The Script

You see, Silas, a friend of mine, and I had just set out on a long trip. We had planned to go to as many cities and towns to tell people about Jesus as we could. The first city that we had arrived in was called Philippi. There was a woman there that kept following us around. The problem was that she was possessed by a demon. She was a slave and her master had been using her to predict the future. The demon in her allowed her to predict the future and her master was making a lot of money because of her.

When she was following us around, she kept shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God and are telling you how to be saved." This was the truth, but if people saw us hanging around with her, it might make people think that we were demon possessed too, so I looked at the woman and said, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the demon came out of her.

I thought everything was going to be okay now, but a few hours later the girl's master showed up and dragged Silas and I to the middle of the marketplace straight to the police. You see, the girl's master was mad because we had ruined his way of making money from this girl. So he took Silas and me to the police and told them, "These men are Jews and they are throwing our city into an uproar. They are trying to get us to practice customs that we don't want to practice."

Can you believe that? First of all, I had never even talked to this man, so how could I have tried to get him to practice a custom that he didn't want to practice, and second, all I did was try to help this young woman and to save the ministry that Silas and I were doing in Philippi. Does that sound a little bit like the things that you are being punished for right now? So, do you know what they did to us? They stripped us and beat us on our bare skin! After we were severely beaten, they took us to the prison. There, they told the jailer to keep us under strict security. That was all the jailer needed to hear and he put us in the darkest, most secure prison cell. There was no way that we were ever going to get out!

Week 3 – When Should We Be Joyful?

So, do you know what we did? We realized that God was stronger and more powerful than the jailer and the police. We had been in the city, telling people about Jesus and we knew that God was in control and that if He wanted us in prison, it must be for a good reason. We also knew that if He wanted us out He had the power to get us out. So, we started singing praise songs. We were joyful! We knew that our God was in control and we had nothing to fear. It sure doesn't help to sit around and worry, so we sang every song we knew.

About midnight, while we were still singing songs and praising God, something very exciting happened. There was an earthquake that shook the foundations of the prison. At once all the prison doors flew open and the chains on our feet just fell off. The jailer woke up and when he saw that the doors were opened to the cells, he thought that we had all left. He knew that if the prisoners escaped they would kill him, so he took out his sword to kill himself. I hated to see him do that, so I said, "Don't harm yourself. We are all here."

As soon as the jailer saw that we were all there, he lit the light of the prison and came rushing into the cell where Silas and I were. He brought us out and asked us, "What must I do to be saved?" You see, because we had joy in a hard situation, the jailer could see that God was real in our lives. We told the jailer that all he had to do was, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved."

Do you know what he did after that? He washed off all of our wounds that we had because of the beating that we had the day before, and he wanted Silas and I to take him right then to be baptized! The other amazing thing was when he told our story to the rest of his family, they asked Jesus to come into the life too, and we baptized the whole family together. So after we baptized the whole family, they invited us to their house to eat. They were all filled with joy because they had believed in God as a whole family.

So what you all need to remember is that, when you are faced with a difficult situation, if you can keep the joy of the Lord as your strength, you never know who might be watching. Those who are watching may want to know how you are able to have joy in the middle of a hard situation. What will you tell them? Let the children respond -"Because the joy of the Lord is my strength."

Well, I have to go! Remember, let the joy of the Lord be your strength.

Week 3 – When Should We Be Joyful?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (In Small Groups)

Why were Paul and Silas beaten and thrown into prison? *(They were punished for casting a demon out of the slave girl.)*

Let's look up Acts 16:23-25. Have them read it. What did they do once they were in prison? *(They sang songs of praise to the Lord.)*

Do you think it would be hard to sing songs of praise when your situation is bad? Why?

How do you think the other prisoners felt when they heard the songs that Paul and Silas were singing? *(They were probably glad to hear these happy songs and felt comforted by them.)*

How do you think God feels when He hears us singing songs to Him, even when our situation is bad? *(He feels happy that you can rejoice, because you are showing where your faith is - in God!)*

If Paul and Silas hadn't focused on Jesus, what are some things that they might have done that would have been sin? *(Say bad things, curse God, hurt other people by their word or by their actions, etc.)*

What was your focus on when you didn't get a snack? Did you do what you felt like doing or what you know was right to do?

When you are having a bad day, what is something that you could do to have joy in that situation? *(Pray and ask God to give you joy and ask him to show you His perspective of the situation. Sing and worship Jesus to focus on Him. Choose to believe His love for you.)*

Teach the children one or two praise songs. Make them songs that they would like. Encourage them!

Take some time to pray with the children right now. Ask God to give them the strength to choose joy in the difficult days, so that others will see their joy and want to know about God for themselves!

WEEK 3 - SKITS

Skit

CHARACTERS: Maria and LaTasha.

SCENE: The girls are at the S.A.Y. Yes!® Center, doing their homework.

LATASHA: I hate doing math. (*Puts her pencil down loudly*) I am just going to tell Mrs. Abner that I didn't have time to finish it.

MARIA: So, you are going to lie to Mrs. Abner, just because you don't feel like doing it?

LATASHA: Yep!

MARIA: So what are you going to do when she gives us another assignment, tomorrow. You sure won't understand the next one that she gives us if you don't understand this one.

LATASHA: (*Covering her ears.*) Quit telling me about all this math I am going to have to do. I can't take it anymore!

Maria keeps working on her math.

LATASHA: I wished I liked math as much as you do and then I wouldn't have all these problems.

MARIA: LaTasha, who told you I liked math?

LATASHA: Well, you just sit there doing it like you love it. Don't you like it?

MARIA: No, sometimes I think math is very hard, but I know that I can still have joy even when I am doing math.

LATASHA: What do you mean?

MARIA: Well, when I do my math I pray and ask Jesus to give me His joy. Then, I think about the fact that I am learning and that if I can just finish this assignment, I will be done for today. I know I have to learn this, so tomorrow when Mrs. Abner teaches us something new, I won't be lost. I like how it feels when I understand how to do something, even if math isn't my favorite subject.

LATASHA: So I guess if I just do it and get it over with, it will be better than not doing it and getting in trouble and then being behind in math.

MARIA: I think you have the right idea. Now since you are going to do your math, what did you get for number three?

The girls go back to doing their homework.

Week 3 – When Should We Be Joyful?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

What was the problem that LaTasha was having? *(She didn't like the math that she had to do for homework.)*

What was the advice that Maria gave her? *(Have joy in what she was doing because the assignment wasn't very long, and she would learn something when it was all through.)*

What are some hard situations that you face?

How can you have joy in the midst of your circumstances?

WEEK 3 - MEMORY VERSE

MEMORY VERSE: “...Do not grieve for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Nehemiah 8:10b

EXPLANATION OF THE VERSE

In this verse, Nehemiah is encouraging the people to rejoice in the Lord because He alone is the source of their strength. Nehemiah also wanted them to know that holiness and joy were to go together (from the earlier part of the verse). What we want the children to see is that joy can be something that can be a permanent part of our lives that can provide us with comfort and strength in any situation!

Rhythm Verse

MATERIALS: None.

- To begin this game, you will need to teach the children the hand-clapping pattern below:
 - (On 1) Clap hands on lap.
 - (On 2) Clap hands together in front of you.
 - (On 3) Snap fingers on your right hand.
 - (On 4) Snap fingers on your left hand.
- When you first teach this, use the numbers to help the children stay on beat. You want to help them get into a rhythm.
- After they have established a rhythm using the counting, stop counting and see if they are still able to repeat the pattern. If they are, go on to the next step. By the way, you may have some children who struggle with this game, but it's really good for them to do this anyway.
- Next, start putting the verse you are covering with the clapping. An example is below, using this month's memory verse. Notice that the clapping will pair up with syllables, not complete words.

(Do)	clap hands on lap
(not)	Clap hands together in front of you. Snap fingers on your right hand. Snap fingers on your left hand.
(grieve)	Clap hands on lap.
(for)	Clap hands together in front of you. Snap fingers on your right hand. Snap fingers on your left hand.

- Continue the verse using the pattern above.

Week 3 – When Should We Be Joyful?

- After you have put the whole verse into the pattern, repeat the verse several times until the children feel comfortable with it. Once this happens, you can also start doing the verse really slow and then speed it up as you go along. Eventually, you will be going so fast that the children will break down in laughter. This is great fun!!!

WEEK 3 - PRACTICAL LIVING

How To Wash The Dishes With Joy

MATERIALS: As many plastic dishes as you can find (can purchase plastic dishes at a super market), a tub or bucket for every 5 children, sponges, towels, “Joy” dish soap, if you can find it.

BEFORE PRACTICAL LIVING:

- Have enough stations set up so that there will be no more than five children per station.
- Each station should have some plastic dishes that are set up like a table. You don't have to have every part that you would use for a meal, but they will be clearing off the table as well, so you just want to give them something to clear.
- Each station will also need a makeshift sink. It can be a bucket, or tub, or something that could look like a sink.
- Each station will need sponges, towels and soap.
- You have to decide if you want your children to actually wash or just pretend to wash. It would be great if they all actually wash, but if they can't, they will probably get the idea as well.

DURING PRACTICAL LIVING:

- Tell the children when they come in for practical living that today they are going to have a chance to wash dishes with a joyful attitude.
- Tell the children, “The first thing that we are going to do is to see how much time it saves when we do the dishes with a joyful attitude. We are going to watch a skit that shows us the difference between having joy and not having joy.”
- Begin with two skits that are going on at the same time, onto the right and to the left of each other.
- Each skit needs a mother and a child.
- The child is the same character in each skit.
- You want to do the skits at the same time so that you can see how much time you will save when you do the dishes with a joyful attitude.

Skit #1 (on the left) Doing the Dishes without a Joyful Attitude

Vanessa is sitting in a chair, watching television. Her mother calls in from the other room saying that she needs to come in and do the dishes. She tells her mom that she will, at the next commercial. Her mom says that Vanessa needs to come now, or she will be sent to her room and not be able to watch anymore TV for the rest of the night. When the commercial comes on, Vanessa yells back to her mom that her favorite commercial is on, and she just wants to see it real quick. Her mom comes from the kitchen and says that this is Vanessa's last chance to obey. Vanessa says that when the commercial goes off she will be there. Her mother tells Vanessa that it is too late. She has to go to her room the whole rest of the night. Plus, she has to come straight home from school tomorrow and do all of the dishes.

Skit #2 (on the right of the stage area) Doing the Dishes with a Joyful Attitude

Vanessa is sitting in a chair watching television. Her mother calls in from the other room saying that she needs to come in and do the dishes. Vanessa jumps up and goes into the kitchen and does the dishes. (You might want to have some dishes for her to pretend to wash and dry.) She is able to see the last part of the show that she was watching and do whatever she wants after that.

- The two skits should start at the same time so that you can see which one actually takes less time.
- After both skits are finished, ask the children these questions:

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR SKITS

Which one took less time, doing the dishes or complaining about it? (*Doing the dishes with a joyful attitude.*)

Do you think that Vanessa #2 really wanted to do the dishes? Why do you think that she was so willing to do them? (*She probably didn't really want to do them, but she also knew that getting in trouble was much worse.*)

Do you think Vanessa #1 is glad about the choice that she made now? What do you think she is wishing right now? (*No, she is probably wishing that she had just done the dishes!*)

- **Tell the children**, "Today we are going to learn how to do the dishes with a joyful attitude."
- First, divide the children into groups of no larger than five per group.
- Once they get into groups, tell them to number off, one through five.
- **AFTER** they have numbered off, tell them what each of their jobs are. As you call out each number, have each person in that group raise his hand when his number is called. Make sure every group has the same number and then tell them their job.

Week 3 – When Should We Be Joyful?

NUMBER ONES - JOY MONITORS - They are the encouragers and get to make sure that everyone is having joy as they do their jobs.

NUMBER TWO - DISH GATHERERS - They have to clear the table and make sure the extra food is in the trash and they hand the plates to the dish washers.

NUMBER THREE - DISH WASHER - They dry the dishes with a towel and then put the dishes away. (Set them in a nice, neat stack.)

NUMBER FOUR - DISH RINSER - They rinse the dishes after they have been washed.

NUMBER FIVE - DISH DRYERS - They are responsible for actually washing the dishes.

- After the children know their jobs, go through the step-by-step instructions of how to wash dishes.
- Tell the children that they are to listen to each step and when you say, “go,” to do what you have told them to do if their job is called.

Step #1

Respond with joy when someone asks you to do a job around the house.

Today we will practice doing the dishes with a joyful attitude, but we need to respond with joy when we are asked to do any job. Ask the children, “What should you say when your mom asks you to do the dishes?” If what they say is something along the lines of, “Sure, mom, I would be happy to do the dishes,” have all the children practice saying this sentence one time, in unison. You might want to encourage them by saying that you can’t hear them and let them yell it again. They might have a better chance of remembering it then.

Step #2

Gather all of the dishes to be washed and put them by the sink.

If any plates have any food on them, you can put it in the trash or in the garbage disposal if you have one. Set the dishes to be washed in a pile beside the sink.

- After you have told them this step, tell them to “go,” so that the **dish gatherer** can do her job.

Step #3

Wash all of the dishes with a sponge and soap.

You want to make the water pretty hot. The hotter the water is, the more germs that it kills. Try to get the water as hot as you can stand it without hurting your hands. Be sure to wash both sides of the dish. Look for any pieces of food that are stuck on the dish. If there is something that is really hard to get off of the dish, you can fill the dish with water, making sure to cover the spot. Let it sit until you have finished washing all of the other dishes. When all of the dishes are washed, set them in a pile so that you can rinse them easily.

Week 3 – When Should We Be Joyful?

- After you have told them this step, tell them to “go” so that the **dish washer** can do her job.

Step #4

Rinse each dish in hot water.

You want to rinse under running water. Make sure all of the suds of the soap are off of the dishes.

- After you have told them this step, tell them to “go,” so that the **dish rinser** can do her job.

Step #5

When all the dishes are rinsed, you should find a clean towel to dry off the dishes.

Make sure on glass that you also dry inside of the glass and that you dry both sides of a dish. When the dishes are dry, you can put them away, or stack them in a nice, neat pile.

- After you have told them this step, tell them to “go,” so that the **dish dryer** can do her job.
- After the children have all got a chance to get their jobs once, they can change numbers and try it again.
- This time, instead of reading the whole step to them, you might try saying an abbreviated version like “Step One - gather the dishes.”
- This will give the children a chance to try to remember all of the things that you said before, even though it wasn’t about the job that they were doing then.
- You can continue to switch the numbers as long as time permits.

WEEK 3 - READ-A-LOUD

“What Bradley Owed”

Adapted from Hugh T. Kerr; *The Moral Compass*; William J. Bennett pg 22

SUMMARY: This is a story about a little boy who had to do chores around the house. One day he decided he didn't want to do them for free, so he decided to ask for money for each thing he did. His mother paid him the money, then she listed all of the things that she had done for him at no charge. We want the children to see that when you do things with joy in your heart, like Bradley's mother, you get much more reward out of them.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

Do any of you have chores that you do around the house? What are some of the things that you have to do?

Do you look forward to doing the chores at your house? Why?

How do you think your parents feel about doing the chores?

The story that we are going to read is about the attitude that one boy had when he did his chores. As I read this story, listen to see if you think he had the right attitude.

POST-READING QUESTIONS

What did Bradley do after he finished his chores? *(He made a list of his chores were and how much his mother owed him.)*

Do you think what Bradley did was wrong? Why?

How did Bradley's mother respond? *(She paid him what he asked for, and wrote him a note that listed some of the things that she had done for him, and told him she did them all for free.)*

Why do you think Bradley's mother did each of the things that she wrote on the list? *(She loved Bradley.)*

Do you think that it was fun for her when Bradley was sick?

Who do you think had joy when they were doing something for someone else, Bradley or his mother? Why? *(His mother, because she did things out of love and did not expect something back.)*

WEEK 3 - CRAFTS

✂ Decorative Napkin Rings

MATERIALS: Toilet paper or paper towel rolls, construction paper, scissors, glue, markers, stickers, lace, and anything else that could be used as decoration.

- When the students come in for craft time, tell them, “Today we are going to learn how to find joy in an ordinary job like setting the table. We are going to make napkin rings to help us see the joy, even in jobs that we may not like.”
- Show them what napkin rings are and how you use them. Their family may not have used napkin rings before.
- Be sure to have an example of one that you made so they can get an idea of what they will look like when they are done.
- Give each student at least one toilet paper roll, or half of a paper towel roll.
- Have them cut their roll in four equal portions.
- Have them decorate their roll to make a set of four matching napkin rings.
- If they have more than four people in their family, they might want to make a few more if time and supplies allow.
- Tell them that they can be creative and make whatever they would like to create.
- Give them different ideas of what they can do to make the rings look good.
 - They could cover the inside of the rings as well as the outside so that the cardboard will never show.
 - They could add a lace trim to make the rings look a little fancier.
 - They could make a special napkin ring for each member of their family.
 - They could make their napkin rings to be used at a certain time of the year when families might have an extra special celebration. (Christmas or Thanksgiving).

GUIDED CONVERSATION

What are some jobs that you have to do around the house that you don’t like very much?

Can you think of a way that you can find joy in doing chores like we are doing today with these napkin rings?

If your mom, or the other people in your family saw that you were having joy in the jobs that you used to hate, how do you think they would respond?

What would you say to them when they ask you what they change is?

WEEK 3 - RECREATION

DAY ONE: Phone Book Volleyball

MATERIALS: Four to six old phone books (if you can't get phone books, use newspaper) something to use for a net, two large trash bags.

OBJECT: **Part One:** To be the team with the least amount of pages on your side of the net.

Part Two: To have the cleanest side and the heaviest bag of trash.

SET UP:

- Begin by setting up a net, using an old blanket and two chairs. You could even use a piece of rope between two chairs and say that everything has to go over the top of the rope. If you do this, you might want to put a piece of tape on the ground to show where the net is. If you see anyone pushing paper under the line, he will be out and you will put a large handful of trash on the opposing team's side at the end of the game. Have a piece of paper and pencil ready to mark these down if you need to.
- Each team gets an equal amount of phone books.

Part One:

- When the leader says "go", they have to work as a team to rip out pages of the phone book, wad them up in balls and throw them over the net.
- They can not tear out more than one page at a time.
- Students will lose handfuls of trash at the end if you see their team wadding up 5 or 6 pages at a time for one ball. Leaders should warn them as they see the students do this during the game.
- Students are also allowed to throw the trash that the other team has already thrown over, back over the net.
- When the leader says time is up, everyone should stop and the leader will make the adjustments for improper behavior (give handfuls of paper to the team who wasn't doing the right thing) then the leader should announce the winner for part one.

Part Two:

- Now, give each team a trash bag.
- Their goal is to get as much trash in their trash bag as they can. Have them put the phone books that they tore out of, into the bag also.
- They can get trash from either side, but they will not win if their side is not clean.
- Be as meticulous as you can with making them clear up every speck of paper. This way they get to make a huge mess, but clean it up too!!

Week 3 – When Should We Be Joyful?

OBSERVE

- Watch to see which children are playing together or as a team. Do the children make up some kind of strategy to try and win?

DISCUSSION:

Did anyone find it hard to have joy today when you played the game? When?

Why do you think God wants us to have joy in all circumstances? *(Because it lets others know that we do not place such a high importance on things, like a game, to make us feel good. We can have joy in the fact that we are child of God and that doesn't change, whether we are winning or losing.)*

When you see someone who is upset after losing a game and you know that they believe in Jesus, what is something that you could tell them to encourage them to have joy, even if it is a bad day? *(You could remind them of the memory verse that you have learned this month. You could remind them about what Paul and Silas went through in the jail, and remind them of what happened to Paul and Silas when they chose to have joy, etc.)*

DAY TWO: Kick, Run, Dodge

MATERIALS: Enough balls to kick for about one third of each team (4-6), paper circles about three inches in diameter (enough for every member of one team).

SET UP:

- Divide the players into their two teams.
- Draw two lines, about 50 feet apart.
- Place all the balls on one line.
- Spread the paper circles across the area between the two lines. Choose one team to kick first.
- The team that kicks first must number off in threes.
- Tell the team that is not kicking to go out and stand on a circle.
- They cannot move off the circle unless they use the pivoting (opposite from kicking) foot.
- Have the children who are kicking first, form lines behind the balls. (Three children per ball)

Week 3 – When Should We Be Joyful?

TO PLAY:

- The team that is kicking first kicks their balls and then tries to run through the other team, to the other line and run back.
- While the runner is running, the other team tries to get the ball that they kicked and throw it at the kicking team to get them out.
- The team that stands on the circles can pass the ball to each other and do whatever they can to get the runners out.
- If the other team tags the runner with the ball, the runner is out.
- If the runner can make it down to the line and back without getting hit, he scores a point for their team.
- When all the players who kicked first have either gotten tagged or made it back across the line, put the balls back on the line and allow the next players to kick the ball.
- When all of the members of one team have had a chance to kick, count up all the players who have scored. These are their points.
- Then the team switches and the kicking team now stands on the circles and the other team has a chance to kick.
- Give each team two turns to score if time allows.

OBSERVE

- Watch to see which children are working together as a team and who is just playing for themselves. Notice who is joyful, even when they are losing or get tagged.

DISCUSSION:

When was it the hardest to have joy in this game? (*When you got tagged with the ball, or your team was losing.*)

When you felt like getting upset, is there anything that you could have said to yourself or reminded yourself of? (*“The joy of the Lord is my strength.” (The memory verse) Remind yourself that this is only a game, and it doesn’t matter if you win or lose that you are still loved by God.*)

Do you think it makes the game more fun when you have joy in all situations? Why?

DAY THREE: Balloon Stomp

MATERIALS: A balloon for each player and piece of string for each player.

OBJECT: To be the team to have at least one balloon still unstomped.

Week 3 – When Should We Be Joyful?

SET UP:

- Divide the group into their two teams.
- Give each player a balloon to blow up and a piece of string with which to tie the balloon to his/her ankle.

TO PLAY:

- When the leader says, "Go," the players attempt to stomp as many of the opposing player's balloons as possible, while trying to protect his/her own balloon.
- Those whose balloons have been stomped should step aside to watch and cheer the survivors on their team. Be sure to encourage them that they are an important part of the team spirit!
- The team who has the last player with an unstomped balloon is the winner.

OBSERVE

- Watch to see if there are any children who are really out to win. Who tries the hardest to stay in the game? Who has the best response when their balloon is popped?

DISCUSSION

When you had your balloon popped, how did you feel? Why?

What did you want to do or feel like doing after your balloon was popped?

When did you feel more joy: when you tried to help others and they won while you lost or when you won yourself? Why?

DAY FOUR: Free Play

MATERIALS: All the fun play equipment that you have.

OBJECT: To give the children free time to do what they want and to see how they respond under pressure with their character.

TO PLAY:

- Feel free to play with them, but allow them to guide you and help you know how to carry out the rules that they have set.
- Give them the freedom to choose the games and enforce the rules as they think that they should.
- Don't allow them to look to you to solve all their problems with rules and players obeying them. Try to let them make decisions and find out the consequences of those decisions.

Week 3 – When Should We Be Joyful?

OBSERVE

- Watch to see what children are the ones who are easily defeated in playing and are continually discouraged. See if you can find children who are choosing joy even when they may not be winning, and reward them.

DISCUSSION

Can someone tell me why it is important to choose joy, even when things are going bad, or we are not winning the game? (What we have been studying all week.) *(So that others can see the evidence of God in our lives and so we can know that this game is not the most important thing in our lives.)*

Can someone give me an example of something that they did or saw someone do that showed you that they were choosing joy? *(Someone could have had a good attitude when losing a game or could have been quick to forgive when someone did something wrong to them etc. Leader: Have someone in mind yourself.)*

HOW SHOULD WE EXPRESS JOY?: WEEK 4

WEEK 4 – BIBLE CLUB

LESSON AIM: To help the child understand that we can show joy through songs, praising God, and other expressions.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 100

MEMORY VERSE: "...Do not grieve for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Nehemiah 8:10b

Psalm 100

This psalm is one that many of us have heard and read many times. It is basically the heart attitude of joy. When we have the joy of the Lord, our hearts naturally want to praise Him and worship Him with our whole being.

The first two verses are written in the form of a command. The psalmist is telling us to shout, to serve, and to come before the Lord with joyful singing. Each of these is a form of worship before God.

Verse three is a confession that God is the creator of the universe. You cannot worship someone that you feel equal to, so the psalmist is establishing our position with us being the creation while God alone is the creator.

Verse four again gives us commands of how to worship. Here we are told to enter His gates, give thanks, and to bless His name. These are active steps that we must take as the servant of the Most High God to show Him how we feel. The last verse gives the reason that we want to praise and worship God. It says, "He is good, His loving-kindness is everlasting and his faithfulness to all generations."

This week we want the children to see what a heart of joy looks like. What are the outward expressions of a heart of joy? Can your staff be a model of that expression? Pray that God can use you to teach this truth in a supernatural way this week.

Discipleship
Tip

Take some time this week to get one-on-one with the children you are working with. Ask them what was their favorite expression of joy that we did during the Bible Club this week. (Singing, thanking God, etc.) Inspire them to think of times each day where they can show their joy to the Lord.

Encourage them not only to pray at night for their needs, but to sing a song of praise to God as they are going to sleep, or as they wake up in the morning. Challenge them to share with you what they have done next week when you meet together again!

 **Hook**

MATERIALS: None.

- Today, choose at least one of your staff, more if you want to, to be in an especially “down and out” mood.
- Their mood should be apparent from the first moment that the children see them.
- If the children ask them what is wrong, they should say that something bad happened in their day, but they are joyful.
- Be sure that whatever it is that has made your staff person sad today, it is something that is pretty trivial. She might say something like, “I couldn’t find anything clean to wear and I hate what I have on today.” It could be that all the lights were red on the way to the center and she had to wait at all of them and just made her mad.
- Whenever the children ask you what is wrong with you, be sure to tell them what is wrong, but throw in an extra sad, “But I have joy.”
- Your object is to show the children that if you really do have joy you will not be that sad. We want the children to see what joy looks like, and what it does not look like. Your staff person will be showing the children what joy does not look like!
- The staff that is supposedly joyful should continue with the act until Bible Club.
- When the children come into Bible Club, ask them these debriefing questions:
- You could have a second staff member demonstrating joy.
- He could sing quietly to himself, he could whistle, talk to the children about the wonder of God, quoting scripture.

DEBRIEF:

When you first saw _____ (staff) before you even knew what was wrong with her, how did you feel? (*Sad, because she looked like she was hurting.*)

After you found out that she was having a bad day, but she said she was joyful, did you feel better? (*You could have felt better because you knew that problem wasn’t that serious, but you probably didn’t feel joyful.*)

If she was really joyful, how do you think she would be acting?

If you saw her and she was joyful, then she told you that she was having a bad day, how do you think you would feel?

Today we are going to learn about ways that we can show joy so that if you are choosing joy, you will know some better ways to show it than _____ (staff) did today.

Bible Story

MATERIALS: (Optional) The lyrics to the songs that you have chosen to sing written out so that all the children can see them.

- For the Bible Story today, we want to give the children the chance to really praise the Lord and have a heart full of joy as they enter the presence of the Lord.
- As you go through Psalm 100, the children will be doing what the Psalm says to do.
- If there are any of the acts that you don't feel comfortable with, or want to expand that go along with what your church may do to praise God, feel free to adjust these instructions as you see fit. These are just ideas of what to do.
- As you read through the following script, have someone read the text (**in bold type**) and then have someone else give the children instructions on what they are to do. The person giving the instruction might want to give them in sort of whisper as to not distract from the reading of the Word.
- Set up a chair in front. Tell the children to imagine Jesus is sitting in the chair.
- Before you start, tell the children that they are going to have a chance today to see some of the ways that you can express joy to the Lord.

Tell them, “We have learned over the past weeks that we can find joy by being in the presence of the Lord. We can enter his presence through prayer any time that we want to. Another way to enter His presence is through songs of praise to Him. Today, the Bible Club will be a time to show God the joy that we have in our hearts as we come into His presence.”

“_____ (staff or volunteer) will be reading a verse of Psalm 100. After he reads it, then I will tell you what to do to act out, or do what the scripture is saying. Listen very closely to what I am saying because I will be saying it quietly, so that you can think mostly about the verse that _____ (staff) read. I will only be saying it once, so listen closely the first time. Try to have an attitude of praise and worship. Remember that when we are praising God and praying to Him that we are in His presence. Please pay attention so that we can all do each step together.”

- When you are ready to start, take some time to pray and without closing the prayer enter into this time in the presence of the Lord with the children.

Script

(Verse 1) **Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.**

Tell the children to shout things to God right now like, “Our God reigns, God is the King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Prince of peace, the joy of the Lord is my strength, He saved me and made me His child, etc.

Tell them that they can shout more than one thing. Let them shout for a few seconds and try to remind the children that God can hear them and not to be silly.

(Verse 2) **Worship the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with joyful songs.**

Begin a song that they know like, “This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.” You can also sing, “I’ve got the joy, joy, joy down in my heart.” You might want to choose another song that you think your children will know but make sure that it is a joyful song! You may want to sing more than one!

(Verse 3) **Know that the Lord is God. It is He that has made us, and we are His; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture.**

Tell the children that they can take a few minutes to say one sentence prayers to God to thank God for creating them and saving them. The staff may want to start, and then allow the children a chance to pray out loud, too.

(Verse 4a.) **Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise;**

Have two of the staff form a bridge with their arms (like in “London bridge is falling down”- staff stand facing each other and raise their hands and hold each others hands above their heads.) Have the children line up and walk under the “bridge”. Tell them that they are entering the gates of the Lord. When they walk under the “bridge”, tell them that they should say one thing that they are thankful for. This is the way that they can enter His gates with thanksgiving!

(Verse 4b.) **give thanks to Him and praise His name.**

Choose another song to sing here. This time it can be any praise song that your church may sing. You might want to choose one that is upbeat. Using the songs from your church can help the children understand what the worship time at your church is for!

Week 4 – How Should We Express Joy?

(Verse 5) **For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations.**

Tell the children, “One way that you can praise God is to read the scripture back to God. This is the last verse in this psalm. So as we close this time, _____ (staff reading the text) is going to repeat the verse of the psalm that he just read in small sections. Close your eyes and listen closely to what he is saying and imagine that you are saying this scripture to God.”

When the reader has read the text through a second time, at the end close with, “In Jesus name we pray, Amen!”

- Depending on how long this took for your children, you might want to go through the whole thing again.
- Doing it again will help the things that they did to stick in their minds, but more importantly, they can focus more on being joyful on the second time around, because they will already know what to do, even if they have to be reminded.
- If you don't have time to do it again now, you might have some extra time in the week. Try to squeeze it in another time in the week. Repetition is great for learning. Who knows, they might even want to do it at home!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What were some of the things that we did to show joy? *(We shouted praise, sang songs, prayed, and prayed scripture back to God.)*

What was the part that you liked the best? Why?

How did you feel when you were praising God? Did you feel the joy of the Lord? In what ways?

How do you think the person who wrote that psalm, felt about God?

Do you think that someone who doesn't know God can praise Him? Why? *(You can't praise someone you don't know! Only Christians can praise God. (John 4:24))*

The Bible tells us many ways that we can show the joy that we have in our hearts, to God. Let's read some verses and see if we can find some other ways to praise God besides what we did today. Someone look up Psalm 63:4 and Psalm 149:3.

In Psalm 63:4, what does the psalmist say that he will do, because of the joy he has for the Lord? *(He will praise God and lift up his hands.)*

Have you ever seen people raise their hands while they are singing in church? From reading this verse what do you think that they are doing? *(Showing God that they are dependent on Him like little children and praising God.)*

Week 4 – How Should We Express Joy?

Now, lets look at Psalm 149:3. How does this verse tell us that we should show the joy that we have for the Lord? *(We can praise him with dancing, with tambourines, and harps.)*

Have you ever seen people doing any of these things in your church? From this verse, what are they doing, when they do these things? *(They are showing the praise that they have for God and expressing their joy to Him.)*

Where can you show the joy that you have for the Lord? Can it be anywhere, or can you just praise Him in church? *(Anywhere!)*

If someone saw you expressing the joy that you had for the Lord in some of the ways that we just talked about, and they asked you why you do these things, what would you tell them? Would you be embarrassed? *(You would tell them that what you are doing is an expression of your joy to the Lord.)*

Take a few minutes to pray with your children. Give each of them a chance to pray a one-sentence prayer so that they can tell God something that they are joyful about. Close the prayer time with your own prayer of joy.

WEEK 4 - SKIT

CHARACTERS: Bobby and Reuben.

SCENE: The boys are at church on Sunday morning, sitting in the pew. The service is just beginning. It is the first time Bobby has ever come to the service at church. Set the scene for the children, but let them imagine the congregation.

REUBEN: (Whispering) I am so glad that you came this morning. I really think you are going to like it!

BOBBY: It was hard to get up this early on Sunday. I'm used to sleeping in.

Just then, a voice (the music leader) tells everyone to stand for their first song. The music begins.

BOBBY: Do you have to sing?

REUBEN: Well, when you sing, you are worshipping God. We want to worship God because of all the joy that we have for what He has done for us. If you don't know the words, you can just listen and try to sing along when it repeats again, in a little bit.

Bobby is looking around at other people as they sing and looks a little confused.

BOBBY: Why are people singing with their eyes closed and there is one lady over there with her hands up. What is she doing?

REUBEN: These are all ways to worship God. They close their eyes so that they can block out everything else except God. Some people raise their hands so they can show God how they are like a little child and God is their father. It is just a way to express joy.

BOBBY: So, do I have to do it?

REUBEN: No, do whatever feels comfortable to you. You might have your own way to express your joy to God.

Bobby looks over at one lady and points and starts to laugh.

REUBEN: Bobby, don't laugh at her. That woman is dancing before the Lord. She has so much joy that she is dancing to express her joy. Now different people have different ways to express their joy. We should concentrate on God during the singing instead of on what everyone else is doing.

BOBBY: I can see why people close their eyes!

REUBEN: Right, just concentrate on singing, okay?

BOBBY: I think I know the words to this song now. I might be getting the hang of this.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What were some of the ways to express joy that Reuben and Bobby talked about?

(Singing, raising your hands, closing your eyes, when you sing and dance)

Can you think of any other ways to express joy, that you can do? *(You can tell people about what God has done in your life, when something goes wrong to not get upset but have joy, you can kneel in prayer.)*

What are some ways that your church expresses joy?

Does everyone have to do those things? Why or why not?

WEEK 4 - MEMORY VERSE

MEMORY VERSE: “...Do not grieve for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Nehemiah 8:10b

EXPLANATION OF THE VERSE

In this verse, Nehemiah is encouraging the people to rejoice in the Lord because He alone is the source of their strength. Nehemiah also wanted them to know that holiness and joy were to go together (from the earlier part of the verse). We want the children to see that joy can be something that can be a permanent part of our lives that can provide us with comfort and strength in any situation!

A Living Verse

MATERIALS: A copy of the verse for each child; the verse written on small pieces of paper, one word per piece of paper (use the sets provided in week two), number of sets will depend on the number of children.

- Allow the children a few minutes to study the verse.
- Be sure you collect the copies of the verse you gave each child, or have them put the verses in their pockets.
- Place the children in teams.
- Give each child a few words of the verse.
- When the leader says, "Go," the team gets into proper order.
- The first team to line up according to the words of the verse, is the winner.
- Have the team say the verse, each child saying his word; then have the entire team recite the verse together.

WEEK 4 - PRACTICAL LIVING

How To Encourage Each Other

- MATERIALS:**
- Center #1** - Different kind of stationary or note cards to write notes on, you can also use construction paper or other fun papers.
 - Center #2** - Construction paper, markers and scissors.
 - Center #3** - Card stock or poster board, markers, stickers and clear contact paper, if possible.

BEFORE PRACTICAL LIVING:

- Set up each center with the supplies, that are listed above.
- The **first center** is a center to write encouraging notes to others. If you can think of anything else you would like to include at that center, feel free.
- The **second center** is a center to make coupons for a chore that you want to do for someone else. You might write down a list of ideas and have that available for the children to look at. Some examples: washing the car, watering the grass, doing the laundry, making a meal, cleaning out a closet, helping to carry groceries home, anything that they can think of.
- The **third center** is a center where they can make an encouraging bookmark to give someone as a gift. Have whatever stiff board that you have chosen to use, already cut out to the size of a book mark (1"x 6"). Also, precut the clear contact paper to a size about a 1/4" larger than the bookmark, all around. When the children have completed their bookmarks, they can stick a piece of clear contact paper on the front and back of the bookmark to make it look laminated. If the children don't have time to finish, they can take the supplies with them for later.

DURING PRACTICAL LIVING:

- When the children come in for the practical living segment, **tell them**, "Today we are going to learn some ways that we can encourage someone. Encouraging others is one way that we can show our joy. You will be going to three centers today. You will not have a very long time at each center. Don't expect to finish all of the projects today. At each center you can at least start making something that will encourage someone else. You can finish these in your times in the classroom after you have finished your homework."
- Explain to the children what each center is.
- Number them off in three's, or if you have three classes, you could rotate the children according to classes.
- Tell them that they will have about 7-8 minutes at each station, so they will have to work quickly.

Week 4 – How Should We Express Joy?

- When they hear you say change stations, they must change right then. They will not have time to finish all of the projects that they are going to start today.
- Be sure you have at least two adults at each station, to help the children get started quickly and begin to work.
- At each station, tell them to pick someone that they think needs to be encouraged and do the activity with them in mind. Especially when they are making the coupons, have them think of a person that they want to encourage before they randomly make a coupon.
- When the children have had a chance to go through each station, ask these questions to summarize your time:

QUESTIONS FOR SUMMARY:

What are the three ways that you can encourage someone by doing? *(Writing them a note, helping them with a chore that they need done, and giving them a thoughtful gift.)*

Can anyone think of any other things that you could do to encourage someone? *(Go by and visit them if they can't get out much, bring them flowers, make them a special dessert, tell them how much they mean to you, etc.)*

What are some signs for which we should be watching that might tell us when to encourage someone? *(When they seem sad, when they are sick, when someone died in their family, or someone is going through a hard time, if they lost their job, etc.)*

How does encouraging someone show that we have joy? *(It shows that we are not just focused on ourselves. People who have joy want to share it with others, and that is exactly what encouraging someone does!)*

WEEK 4 - READ-A-LOUD

New!

“3 2 1 Penguins: The Amazing Carnival of Complaining”

A Veggie Tales Video

SUMMARY: This video is about a little boy who is always complaining. It talks about how one person who complains can influence the attitude of everyone around them. This could be an example of what happens when you don't choose joy.

OR, you may do the following...

“Grumble Town”

Found in *The Moral Compass*; William J. Bennett , page 608

SUMMARY: This is a story of a town whose people were always complaining. One day a peddler comes into town and shows them the way to contentment. He tells them to write the problem that they want to get rid of, on a piece of paper and attach it to a magic line. Then, he tells them to choose one of the problems. They all end up choosing their own problem because it seems the smallest. They realize that they really don't have that much to complain about, as they thought they did. We want the children to see that others can't see the joy in our lives if we are always complaining!

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

Who are some of the people that you think of as joyful? Why?

Have you ever heard people that are always complaining about something? Are they fun to be around?

Today we are going to read a story called Grumble Town. See if you can find out what they were complaining about, and if you think it is worth complaining about!

POST-READING QUESTIONS

What were the people of Grumble Town complaining about? *(Small things like the weather or they were bored.)*

What was it that helped them to stop complaining? *(When they compared their problems to that of others, they saw that their problems really weren't that bad.)*

Were these people expressing joy? How could they have expressed joy? *(They were not expressing joy, but they could by saying something like, "It might be a little colder today than I would like, but I will enjoy the cold because I know that summer is coming and it will be very hot!")*

What are some ways that you can express joy each day? *(Don't get too upset over little things, realize that God is in control, and rely on him for strength.)*

WEEK 4 - CRAFTS

✂ Make A Joyful Noise

MATERIALS: Empty coffee cans or vegetable cans, rubber bands large enough to fit around cans, scissors, glue, markers, stir sticks (from a paint store or rulers), construction paper.

- When the children come in for craft time, tell them, “One of the ways that we can show joy that we have is through making music to God. Today we are going to make our own musical instrument.”
- Give each child a can. (Whatever size you have.)
- If the can has a jagged edge, you should cover it with a piece of tape to keep the children from cutting themselves.
- Let them choose a color of construction paper to cover their cans with.
- Have them measure the construction paper with their cans and cut a piece of the paper that will fit their cans.
- After they have it cut to the right size, have them decorate it BEFORE they put it on their cans.
- Encourage them to write their memory verse on the can, or something that will remind them that this is an instrument to show their joy for the Lord.
- After they have decorated their can covers, have them glue them on to the cans.
- Then, give each child six rubber bands and a piece of a stir stick, or a ruler that will fit across the top of the can. (see drawings)
- Have them put the rubber bands around their cans from top to bottom.
- Use the stir stick or ruler to pull the pieces tight. It should stand up perpendicular with the top of the can.
- Show the children how to pluck their strings like they would the strings of a guitar.
- Let the try different rubber bands to see if their sound will change.
- Allow them some times to try to play their new instruments.

GUIDED CONVERSATION

When was a time when you felt a lot of joy in the Lord?

How do you think that we can use music to express your joy in the Lord?

What are some other ways that we can show joy?

WEEK 4 - RECREATION

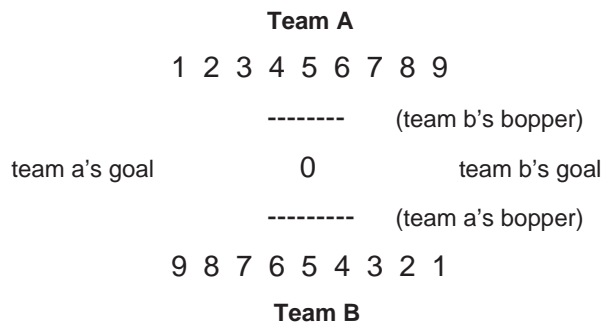
DAY ONE: Bopper Ball

MATERIALS: Two boppers (often called noodles, long foam pieces that are hollow in the middle, usually colorful, can be cut in half to create two “boppers.”), chairs for every child and a large playground ball.

OBJECT: To use the bopper to hit the ball through the goal more times than the opposing team does.

SET UP:

- Divide the children into their two teams.
- Place the chairs in a slight arc-shape, facing the opposite team.
- Number the children like you do in “Steal the Bacon”, starting with number one and going to the end on one side, and then starting at the opposite end to number the team. Try to match students age-wise as much as possible.
- If you have different color boppers, assign each team a color bopper. They must always pick up that color bopper when they play.



- The ball is placed in the middle of the two teams with the boppers on either side of the ball, furthest from its team.

TO PLAY:

- When the players are ready, the leader calls a number and the players with that number run and pick up their boppers and try to bat the ball into the goal using the boppers.
- Tell the children not to swing the boppers above their waists. They can accidentally hit other teammates with the boppers.
- The children who are seated, can use their feet to “kill” the ball in the direction of their goal. They must keep their bottoms on the chair at all times.
- When one child has scored for his team, the two children sit down and another number is called.
- The game is won by the team who has scored the most points by the time that the time period is over.

OBSERVE

- Watch to see if there are any children who are showing joy in the way that they play the game today. Do they celebrate others' victories besides just their own and encourage others when they are not doing so well?

DISCUSSION

What did you do to show joy as you were playing this game today? *(They could have celebrated others victories and encouraged others when they were not doing so well.)*

How does it feel when you show joy in the game? Do you seem to enjoy the game more? Does it matter as much how the game turns out?

How do you think that other children at school would respond if you showed joy when you played a game with them? What would they think if you get just as upset when you lose, as the other children do?

If you showed joy at school, they would realize that there was something different about you. If you reacted like other children, they would not be able to tell that there was anything different in your life.

DAY TWO: Fruit Basket Upset

MATERIALS: Chairs for all but one player.

OBJECT: To have a chair at all times and not be caught without one.

SET UP:

- Place chairs in a circle facing into the circle.
- Choose a leader.
- Everyone, but the leader, sits in a chair.

TO PLAY:

- Beginning with one player, go around the circle naming the children: "apple", "orange"; "peach"; "banana"
- Thus, there are several children who are "apples", "oranges", "peaches", and "bananas".
- The leader stands in the center of the circle and calls out the name of a fruit. Example, "Oranges".
- Everyone who is an "Orange" gets up and tries to sit in a different chair, while the leader tries to get into a chair, also.
- Whoever is left standing, is the next leader.

Week 4 – How Should We Express Joy?

- The more players the more fun because of the excitement of so many people moving.
- The leader may call “Fruit Basket Upset” and then everyone moves.

DISCUSSION:

As we played the game, when was the time when you felt the most joy?

How did you show the joy that you felt?

Do you think that we should have joy when other people lose and we win? What is a way that we could express our joy that would not hurt someone else’s feelings? *(We could not make too much of a celebration when we are the winner. We could tell the person that we played with that we had fun playing with them, and would enjoy playing again sometime.)*

DAY THREE: Chain Reaction

MATERIALS: None.

OBJECT: To figure out the person that is starting all the movements.

SET UP:

- Have all the children stand in a circle.
- Choose one child to be “It” first, and they must leave the room.
- After the person who is “It” leaves the room, choose another player to be the leader.
- Once the leader is chosen and knows what to do (in the section “To Play”), then the person who is “It” may come back into the room and stand in the middle of the circle.

TO PLAY:

- The child who is chosen to be the leader must do a movement that all the rest of the children must imitate. For example the leader could: snap her fingers, pat her legs, stand on one foot, hop, pat her head, turn around, wave her hand, clap, jump up and down or anything else she can think of doing.
- The leader can change the motions at any time, but she does not want the person who is “It” to see her.
- The person who is “It” is trying to figure out who the leader is, so the leader wants to keep herself a secret from the person who is “It”, as long as possible.
- When the person who is “It” thinks that he knows who the leader is, he may guess.
- If he guesses right, he gets to be the leader next.

Week 4 – How Should We Express Joy?

- If he guesses wrong, he may have one more guess in a few minutes.
- If on the second guess, he still guesses wrong, he gets to choose someone else to be “It”, and the leader may choose someone else to be the leader.
- For younger children, the person who is “It” may want to stand in the circle with the rest of the players. This will make it easier for the leader to get caught.

OBSERVE

- Watch to see which children are finding good ways to express their joy instead of having a big celebration when someone else loses and they win.

DISCUSSION

How could you have played this game with joy today? *(You could have been joyful no matter what happened, no matter who won, and if when you were “It”, you were able to pick the leader or not.)*

When there are many players who are not playing with joy, is the game more fun or less fun? Why do you think that is? *(The game is less fun when many people don’t have joy because they are focused on themselves and whether or not they are doing well. When people have joy they are able to enjoy the game, no matter what happens because they know that they will be loved by God, no matter if they win or lose this game.)*

Do you know why Jesus said this, “Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil because of the son of man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy because great is your reward in heaven.”? *(This does not mean that we have to always take it when people say things to hurt us and then we will get a reward in heaven. It does mean that you show joy at school even, when you lose the game. People might think that you are weird, but you can tell them that you can have joy when you lose, because you have Jesus in your life. They might still say that you are really weird and that you can not play with them anymore. This is when you will get the reward, because it is not you that they rejected, but God.)*

DAY FOUR: Free Play

MATERIALS: All the fun play equipment that you have.

OBJECT: To let the child have a chance to use free play to develop the things that they have learned during organized instruction time.

SET UP:

- This is a time to let the students make up their own rules to games and enforce them, themselves. Feel free to play with them, but do not take control of organizing the game.
- Let them do these things and follow their rules.

Week 4 – How Should We Express Joy?

TO PLAY:

- Ask the students to try to participate with their friends in the best ways possible. Remind them that the rules of the center should still be abided by, during this time.
- Have fun!

OBSERVE

- Watch for children who are being careful how they respond when they are losing and how they respond when they do win--that they are not making too big of a celebration.

DISCUSSION

This month we have learned about joy--when to have it and how to show it. What are some things that you have learned from this unit on joy that could help you during recreation time? *(You must be sure not to get too upset when you don't win, since we learned how we all can have joy. We can remember that winning or losing this game does not change the way that God sees you.)*

You also should have learned that there are proper ways to show your joy when you win, that will not hurt some else's feelings, but it is okay to have joy.

Did you do any of those things today? Can you give us an example of what you did, or saw someone else do?