



JOY | WEEK 3 | JUNE 16, 2024

## Elementary Lesson

# Build Your Kingdom Here

**Monthly Virtue:** Joy—Choosing to celebrate what God is doing

**Bible Story:** Build Your Kingdom Here (Ezra and the Rebuilding of the Temple) • *Ezra 3:10-13*

**Key Question:** What is something that took longer than you wanted it to?

**Memory Verse:** A cheerful heart makes you healthy. But a broken spirit dries you up. *Proverbs 17:22 (NirV)*

### LEADER BIBLE STUDY

*Choose joy! This may be a commonly used phrase you've heard, but what does it actually mean? Joy is more than being excited about the good things that happen to us. Joy is an attitude—a decision to trust God no matter what is going on in our lives. From the very beginning, God had a plan for the world. As we dive into the Bible, we'll discover God's plan for us and how God has been at work through it all. When we see and celebrate what God is doing, we can find true joy!*

Key Question: What is something that took longer than you wanted it to? Joy is something that we choose every single day. And we can still choose joy even when the things we hope for end up taking longer than we would like or expect. As preteens think through this question, they can begin to see that no matter how long the journey might be, they can still choose joy along the way.

For week 3, we head to *Ezra 3:10-13*. At the time, God's people were living as captives in Persia, when the new king, Cyrus, allowed them to return home to Jerusalem. However, when they returned, everything was broken down and destroyed. The people got to work rebuilding the temple . . . but before they got far, they stopped to worship God and celebrate the ways that God had helped them.

#### Pre-Service Check List

- HUDDLE AS TEAM → You're in this together! Pray together and talk about the activities for the day.
- PLAY MUSIC
- PUT OUT TOYS → A welcoming environment is important! We want it to be obvious from the moment kids walk in that they belong HERE!
- PUT ASIDE DISTRACTIONS
- ENGAGE WITH KIDS

#### Morning Flow

Doors Open  
9:15/11:00

Large Group Starts  
9:35/11:20

Small Group Starts  
10:05/11:50

## LARGE GROUP

### COUNTDOWN AND WELCOME (3 Minutes)

(VIDEO: COUNTDOWN, SLIDE: KIDCITY EXPECTATIONS)

LGL: “Welcome everyone! I’m so glad you are able to come hang out with us in KidCity today. My name is [INSERT NAME]. We are going to have a lot of fun today, but before we do let’s go over these announcements/KidCity Expectations.

**(SLIDE: 5<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY FUNDAY)** GUESS WHAT?! This month is extra special because it had a 5<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY FUNDAY! It’s also the last day in your grade before you move up to the next one. It’s going to be a party! You and your friends don’t want to miss it – so be sure to invite them and their families to come with you.

**(SLIDE: BAPTISM)** *(Said on the fourth weekend of the month only)* “Today are baptisms at Hope. Baptism is a way of telling the world that you love God and have made the decision to follow Him with your life. It’s a big deal! Is there anyone here who is getting baptized today? *(Pause and if someone is, go ahead and give them a high five and get the kids to clap).* Awesome!”

**(SLIDE: KIDCITY EXPECTATIONS)** “Now, let’s quickly go over our KidCity Expectations (rules) so we can make sure that we make the most of our time today: *(Don’t dwell on these too long, but make sure you review them briefly so we can set everyone up for success.)*

1. Be Kind
2. Be Safe
3. Have Fun

### LARGE GROUP GAME (5 Min)

#### JOY STEPPING

(No Supplies)

“We are continuing the Party that we are having all summer and having a JOYful time doing so!

**(SLIDE: VIRTUE)** Joy—Choosing to celebrate what God is doing

“Even when things are darkest, Christians – those who follow Jesus – can always have joy because we can always remember how much God has done for us! Check out our monthly verse...

**(SLIDE: MEMORY VERSE)** “A cheerful heart makes you healthy. But a broken spirit dries you up. *Proverbs 17:22 (NirV)*

“Oh man, I don’t want to be like an old piece of gum stuck to the sidewalk on the inside! I want to choose to have joy no matter the circumstance. We will talk more about that later, but for now, let’s play a game! Actually...let’s dance. This is called ‘Joy Stepping’!

**(SLIDE: JOY STEPPING)**  
**(VIDEO: JOY STEPPING)**

**HOW TO PLAY:**

- **DANCE:** This is an all-play. There are no winners – think Dance Dance Revolution. Everyone will follow the dance prompts on the screen. Call out what is on the screen so kids can easily follow along. It’s pretty quick!
- **REPEAT:** The Joy Stepping video is one minute long, so feel free to repeat it! You can even call up SGLs or kids to the stage to have a ‘dance off’ and the audience can vote on who did it the best.

“That was so fun! Now everyone stand up and let’s worship God!”

## **WORSHIP (6-7 Minutes)**

**(VIDEO: START THE PARTY, JOY)**

## **BIBLE STORY (12 Minutes)**

**(No supplies)**

“Question for you all...what is something that is worth the wait? *(Take answers. Things like, a birthday cake being baked and decorated, the sequel to an awesome video game, the second season the newest Star Wars tv series, etc.)*

“Yes! All great examples of how waiting can pay off BIG TIME! But if we can be honest for a minute, waiting for *anything* can be difficult. Waiting for summer vacation is the worst. Waiting for your favorite cousins to drive in from out of town can take forever. Anticipating your birthday when it is weeks away can be super hard. Waiting isn’t great. It’s not very fun, and it certainly is not very joyful.

“I’m curious, though. Is it possible to have joy when waiting? Is there a way we can keep focused on what God is doing in the process and celebrate with joy before we are finished waiting? Sometimes the good stuff in life takes time before it is done baking. It is a process—sort of like making a cake from scratch. Is it possible to find joy in the middle of the wait?”

“Great questions. *(hold up Bible)* Let’s see if we can find some answers.”

**(VIDEO: BIBLE STORY 6 MIN)**

“This is such a great story! The Israelites were taken from the city and land they built. In the process, Jerusalem was destroyed, looted, and burned. But eventually, God gave the people of Judah the opportunity to return. Upon surveying all the damage and destruction, they knew the rebuilding process would take a long time. There were plenty of opportunities for the people to express sadness or anger over their city’s condition. Instead of bitterness, the Israelites responded

in a completely unexpected way. They celebrated each step with shouts of joy that could be heard for miles around because they completed the temple's *foundation!*

“Now I realize nobody in this room will be leaving today to go build a temple. But we all have big work to complete. School projects, big chores, learning to play a sport, improving your musical skills, or healing from an injury. We will never be completely finished in this lifetime with all the things we need and want to do. That’s why it’s so important to celebrate the steps along the way.

“Truth is, I don’t always feel like celebrating when I’m looking at a mountain of dirty clothes or when I have a five-page report on a boring subject due at school. But the best part of all this is the fact that God gives us joy, and we don’t have to find it by ourselves. Celebrate the milestones. Celebrate the steps. See what God has done along the way and you’ll find your joy! When we follow Jesus, God gives us joy through the Holy Spirit so we can celebrate every moment!

“You never have to wonder or doubt if you matter. Not only did God create you exactly the way you are for a reason – which is wonderful – but He also values you so much that He wants a relationship with you. That’s an incredible thing to reflect on. The Creator of the Universe chases after us when we are far from Him. That’s why we sometimes call God ‘The Good Shepherd’.

“Joy can be found in remembering and thanking Jesus for the times He rescued us and for the times He will rescue us again. For many in this room, you’ve already decided to follow Jesus for the rest of your life, and we think that is awesome! If you’ve never told Jesus you want to follow Him—that you want Jesus to be like your shepherd—and you want to talk with someone, let your Small Group Leader know today. We’d love to set aside some time to talk with you about what it looks like to be sought after and cared for by a fantastic shepherd, Jesus.

“In the parable, Jesus pointed out that the neighbors and friends celebrated the return of the lost sheep. Likewise, we get to celebrate the ways God is at work in the world and in the lives of those around us! Joy can also be found when we see our friends and family are found by God’s love and grace.

“God is with you each step along the way. We can trust God no matter what. It’s so important for all of us to stop and remember God doesn’t abandon us even when life is difficult. When we pause to give thanks for all God has done and ask God for help to keep going . . . that can bring you joy.

“We don’t want you to process this alone! Each of you will be joining a Small Group of peers and a fantastic Small Group Leader to further discuss this. As we prepare to head to Small Groups, I want you to think about this one question:

**(SLIDE: KEY QUESTION)** ‘What is something that took longer than you wanted it to?’

*Have kids turn and talk to their shoulder partner for 60 seconds. Your KQ slide on Playlister will keep track of time for you. While kids are talking, walk around and listen in to what they are saying and give prompts if needed. Don’t try to resolve anything, kids will have a further discussion within their small group time.*

“Ok friends, come back together in 3, 2, 1....

“I heard some great thoughts floating around. You are going to have more of a chance to talk about this in small group time, but for now let’s pray.

“God, You are so good and so faithful! You provided for Your people and helped them rebuild the temple foundation and then the temple in Jerusalem. Help us to remember and celebrate all that You’ve done for Your people throughout history, and all that You’ve done for us today. Please remind us to stop and say thank You . . . and to celebrate the ways that You’re always working in our lives. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

## **DISMISS TO SMALL GROUPS**

## SMALL GROUP

**Monthly Virtue: Joy—Choosing to celebrate what God is doing**

**Bible Story: Build Your Kingdom Here (Ezra and the Rebuilding of the Temple) • *Ezra 3:10-13***

**Key Question: What is something that took longer than you wanted it to?**

**Memory Verse: A cheerful heart makes you healthy. But a broken spirit dries you up. *Proverbs 17:22 (NIV)***

Kids learn best through play and through conversation. Both are equally important, so be sure to give time to both!

### KEY QUESTION (K-5<sup>th</sup>)

(No Supplies)

Spend some time coming together and talking about the Key Question. There aren't any right or wrong answers but use this time to help kids have a discussion about what they just learned and encourage them to grow in their faith. Try to keep the conversation spiritually based. Why does what we are talking about matter in light of what God has done for us?

Key Question: "What is something that took longer than you wanted it to?"

*(Answers will vary: I think it will never end, I can believe lies about myself or my circumstance, I can forget the things from God that bring me true joy, I don't know enough about God to give me His perspective, etc.)*

### CELEBRATION SHUFFLE (K-5<sup>th</sup>)

(**"Signs" Activity Page - 1 set per group, "Skills" Activity Page - 1 per group, Floor Tape**)

What You Do:

- Use the tape to hang the three signs from the "Signs" Activity Page in different areas of the group area.
  - If hanging the signs up is not possible in your group space, spread the signs out on the floor instead.
- Direct the kids to gather in the middle of the group space.
- Review the three different areas—the words on the signs—with the kids:
  - "I am still learning how to do this."
  - "I know how to do this."
  - "I have never tried this."
- One by one, read a statement from the "Skills" Activity Page.
- Instruct the kids to move to the sign that best describes their familiarity with that skill, to stand near that sign, then to celebrate with the other kids near them before returning to the middle for the next statement.
  - Encourage kids by explaining we all learn different things at different times, and it's okay for them to choose any sign for each statement.
- After kids have arrived at their chosen signs, lead them into a celebration, regardless of the area they chose; kids can dance, high-five each other, etc.

- Direct kids to return to the middle of the space.
- Repeat for each statement.
- Encourage positive interactions and celebration dances throughout the game.

**What You Say:**

“It was so interesting to see all the different skills we have learned, are still leaning, or are waiting to learn! We’re all on this amazing journey of learning and growing, and it’s totally okay to be at different levels. Whether you landed in the ‘still learning’ zone, the ‘got this’ zone, or the ‘never tried this’ zone, you all were able to celebrate because, guess what? The truth is, we’ll never be completely finished in this lifetime with all the things we need and want to do. That’s why it’s so important to celebrate the baby steps along the way.

“Best of all, God is right there with us every step of the way. So, when we give thanks for all God has done and follow Jesus, God gives us joy through the Holy Spirit so we can *[Bottom Line]* celebrate each step of the way.”

*[Make It Personal] (Share with the group any steps you have taken to improve or learn a new skill. Perhaps you’ve learned to play a new instrument or fix a car. Or maybe you’re trying to be a better listener. How does remembering how God has helped with the things you’ve learned so far give you the strength to take steps toward improving or learning something new?)*

**CELEBRATION SHUFFLE: EXTENSION (K-5<sup>th</sup>)**

**(No Supplies)**

**DO:**

- Thank God for a small accomplishment you completed recently.
- Pray for help to be watchful for ways God shows up in your life.
- Pray to say thank You for something big God has done for you, your family, or someone you know.
- Think about how much God loves you, and the way God sent Jesus to rescue us.
- Pray about something you love most about God and want to celebrate.
- Close your group time in prayer, encouraging kids to be on the lookout for evidence of God’s love and care each day this week.

**PRAY**

“Dear God, thank You for reminding us of the things we have overcome and achieved. Help us to remember not to get stressed when we struggle to complete things or when they don’t go the way we think they should. Help us to remember that we will never be completely finished in this lifetime with all the things we might want to do or learn. Help us enjoy and celebrate the steps we accomplish and trust You to be with us as we keep going. We love You and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”



## **FINAL ACTIVITY: Biblical Literacy (K-5<sup>th</sup>)** **(Supplies Vary)**

**What You Do:**

Follow the instructions of the “Books of the Bible” activity that is in your bin.