



JOY | WEEK 4 | JUNE 23, 2024

## Elementary Lesson

# Reason to Believe

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

**Bible Story:** Reason to Believe (God Will Give Us Joy) • *Habakkuk 3:17-18*

**Key Question:** What can you celebrate today?

**Basic Truth:** I am loved by God no matter what so I can love God, love others, and love life.

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

## 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 can you celebrate today? This question can help preteens reframe their circumstances and look at their world a little differently. It can help them discover ways that God is working in their lives in ways they maybe hadn't noticed before. We hope that our kids will discover that they always have the best reason to celebrate because of their faith in God—even if nothing else in their lives seem to be going right.

We finish the month in *Habakkuk 3:17-18*. Habakkuk wrote these words as God's people were about to be taken captive. Everything was going wrong in Habakkuk's world . . . but still, he chose to trust God and choose joy. Habakkuk ultimately found joy because of God's faithfulness and love that nothing could take away.

### 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



## 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)

#### KA-ZUNE

(2 Kazoos, “Ka-Zune Cards” -1 set)

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!

**(SLIDE: KA-ZUNE)**

**HOW TO PLAY:**

- **ASK:** Call up two volunteers. If you lead a K/1<sup>st</sup> environment – be prepared to give them a little assistance. Also call up two small group leaders (SGLs) or two older kids.
- **EXPLAIN:** Give the two contestants a kazoo. They will need to hum the songs that you will reveal to them to try to get their team to guess the title. Both teams go at the same time. The SGLs will listen to the audience to try to be the first to say the correct answer. The first one gets a point.
- **PLAY:** Hold up the cards one at a time so only the kazoo-ers can read them. Allow about 20 seconds of guessing before you reveal the answer and move on to the next song.

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

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

**(VIDEO: START THE PARTY, EVERY BEAT)**

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

**(No supplies)**

If you’re anything like me, I’ll voluntarily sign up for fun, but I have little desire to clean up a mess. I was the kid that hid in the bathroom when my parents told me I had chores.

“All messes need to be cleaned up eventually, right? Well, what happens when *life* feels like a mess? How in the world do you clean that up?”

“When you feel like your life is in disarray, what then? Your friend group has a bunch of bickering, and you’re struggling to avoid the drama. Your dad got a new job, and you have to move to a town you never knew existed. You had a couple of bad soccer games, and your coach is no longer starting you. Messy. What in the world do you do? How do you cope? And furthermore, when life gets like that, why on earth would you feel like celebrating anymore?”

“This is an important question to address. Nobody in this room is immune from hardships. Life stinks sometimes. For everyone. It might stink for some of you right now.

“Believe it or not, in the midst of all the mess, joy can be found. Even if your life looks different than you would like, there is a ray of sunshine. A silver lining. And we’re going to use this (*hold up Bible*) to help us find it. The people who God inspired to write the Bible experienced all sorts of times when life didn’t go as planned, when they were disappointed, when nothing felt worth celebrating. Thankfully, many of them included these sorts of moments in what they wrote to help us discover how to trust God and respond well in the face of a hard time in life. Let’s check out one of those writers right now.

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

The story and words of Habakkuk are an encouragement for me. Habakkuk's whole world was collapsing. Nothing was going right. He had absolutely nothing to celebrate. Knowing some of his situation, it is safe to say he was sad and worried. Despite everything going on, Habakkuk *chose* joy. That's crazy, because 'joy' is not an emotion I associate with any mess.

"But Habakkuk did something that I think we can all do. He looked back at all the times God showed up and remembered all the times when things were good. Those memories helped him recall how God was and still is in control. When this is true, there is always hope in every situation. Habakkuk trusted God's promise to bring good out of hard things and right all wrongs.

"Now, there's a solid chance you are not facing a fierce Babylonian army or a failed fig crop. Nevertheless, there are lots of things in our lives that can go wrong in a big way. You might receive word that a family member is really sick. There's a chance you could get placed in class with that one person you rarely get along with. Your dad could lose his job. You could get cut from a team. You could fail a test or a class. Sometimes you can't control the bad things that happen, but you *can* control how you respond.

"If you focus on what's wrong, you will feel hopeless and overwhelmed every time.

"For example, if I focus only on the fact that my life is an absolute mess, I could start to feel defeated and upset. But everything changes if I consider the ways God has used me and will continue to use me once I chose joy. God can help me find joy even while I pick up the mess and organize the chaos.

"When you choose to take your focus off your problems and look to God, you can find joy. Joy doesn't always look like big smiles and laughter. In hard situations, it is okay to feel sad or even cry. But even through the sadness or tears, there's a potential to find joy. Joy is that thing that lets you know deep down in your heart that God can still do great things and that God can make something good come from what is hard now.

"Centuries after Habakkuk, Jesus would show us this kind of joy. He faced many difficulties, but Jesus was still able to find joy in knowing God is always up to something good—even when we can't see it. Check this out...

**(SLIDE: BASIC TRUTH)** 'I am loved by God no matter what so I can love God, life others, and love life.

"Even when your life is messy and harder than you ever imagined, you can still rest in the fact that God loves you, is with you, and has plans for your good and His glory.

Friends don't forget you can look at what God has done for you in the past. If you sit and think for a moment, you can consider the ways God has worked in your life. When you look at what God has done, is doing, and will do, you can always find a reason to celebrate.

"I realize some people are facing various difficulties in this room. Despite your circumstances, I want you to consider this question:

**(SLIDE: KEY QUESTION)** ‘What can you celebrate today?’

*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.

Dear God, thank You for these amazing words that Habakkuk shared. They remind us that our joy doesn't come from things that happen to us. Our TRUE joy comes from You. When things are hard, please help us to remember that You love us, that You're with us, and that You've promised to make everything right in the end. We are so glad to know that we can trust you no matter what! 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.

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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 can you celebrate today?

*(Answers will vary: God has given me a loving family, I have food to eat, I can come to church to learn about God, etc.)*

### HABAKKUK FINDS JOY (K-5<sup>th</sup>)

**(“Habakkuk Finds Joy” Activity Page- 2-3 sets per group, Bibles marked to Habakkuk 3:2, Habakkuk 3:17, and Habakkuk 3:18, Colored paper cut into quarters – 2 quarters per kid, Drawing utensils)**

What You Do:

- Gather the kids to review the Bible Story using the following key points:
  - Habakkuk was a prophet, someone who listened to God and told people what God was saying.
  - Habakkuk lived in Jerusalem during a really difficult time: enemies were closing in on them, people had forgotten about God, they were fighting each other, and treating others unfairly.
  - Habakkuk called out to God. (*Read Habakkuk 3:2 from the marked Bible.*)
  - Habakkuk had a conversation with God and Habakkuk wrote it all down.
  - God answered Habakkuk and told him life was going to get harder before it got better.
  - Habakkuk chose to have joy because he knew that God had done great things in the past.
- Say: “Habakkuk had a choice! He couldn’t change what was happening around him, but he COULD choose to trust God because God had done great things in the past.”
- Give each kid one of the cards from the “Habakkuk Finds Joy” Activity Page.

- o Identify each picture as you hand each card out.
- As you read a passage from today’s Bible Story, instruct the kids to listen for the word they are holding. As they hear their word, instruct them to stand up and hold their card up.
- Read **Habakkuk 3:17** to the group from the marked Bible.
  - o Pause at any references to fig tree, grapes, olives, fields without food, sheep, or cattle and prompt kids to stand, as needed.
- Collect the cards from the “Habakkuk Finds Joy” Activity Page and set them aside for later.
- Give each kid one or two of the colored paper cards.
- Instruct the kids to draw a picture of something not so great that happened to them recently.
  - o Encourage the kids to make more than one drawing if they choose.
  - o Prompt them with leading questions if needed:
    - Did you lose something recently?
    - Have you ever gotten sick and had to cancel plans?
    - What is something that has made you sad, frustrated, or scared?
- Read **Habakkuk 3:18** to the group from the marked Bible.
- Say: “Habakkuk chose to trust God, even when things were hard.”

**What You Say:**

“Habakkuk was honest with God about the things that were going wrong. He didn’t just act like everything was okay. Even though Habakkuk may have been angry or upset, he chose to TRUST God. We all face hard things—like the pictures you drew on your cards. But even when things aren’t going our way, we can choose to focus on how Jesus made a way for us to have a relationship with God forever. No matter what is happening around us, we can trust that God is always up to something good. That’s why: there’s always a reason to celebrate.”

*[Make It Personal] (Share with the kids an age-appropriate example of something hard that you have recently faced. How did knowing that God loves you and is with you, help you find joy even in the midst of a difficult situation?)*

**JOY: EXTENSION (K-5<sup>th</sup>)**  
 (“J-O-Y” Activity Pages – 1 set per group, glue sticks)

**What You Do:**

- Lay out the “J-O-Y” activity pages.
- Make sure kids have their drawings from the previous activity.
- Give each kid a “Habakkuk Finds Joy” Activity Page card from the Habakkuk Finds Joy Activity.
- Encourage the kids to tear up their cards (both the ones they’ve drawn, and the Bible Story images) into small pieces.
- As kids are tearing the cards, use the glue stick to fill the inside of each letter on the pages with glue.
- Ask kids finish tearing their cards, instruct them to fill up the letters of the word “JOY” with the torn pieces.
- Say: “No matter what happens—good or bad—we can still find JOY because God loves us, God is with us, and God sent Jesus to save us.”



### What You Say:

“Friends, look at this beautiful collage you’ve made out of all these torn pieces. When hard things happen, it’s easy to focus just on that hard thing. It’s certainly okay to be sad and to tell God how you feel. But even when we’re sad or frustrated, we can choose to trust God. The Bible is full of true stories about real people that show us we can trust God no matter what.

“Instead of focusing on what’s going on right in front of us, we can look for JOY. We can remember that God loves us, and that God sent Jesus to make a way for us to have a relationship with God forever. So, awwhen hard things happen, let’s remember that there is ALWAYS joy to be found. Let’s ask God to help us understand that **there’s always a reason to celebrate.**”

### PRAY

“God, we love You. Thank You for reminding us that You are with us and that You sent Jesus because You love us. When hard or frustrating things happen, please help us to be like Habakkuk and choose to trust You. Remind us that we can have joy, no matter what because [Bottom Line] there’s always a reason to celebrate. Thank You for Jesus. 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.