

JOY

Finding a way to be
happy even when things
don't go your way

WEEK ONE
K-5TH

READ PHILIPPIANS 4:4

DAY 1

It's easy to be happy when everything is great—when life is good and things are going the way we want. But what about when things don't go your way? No matter what happens, you can have joy because God sent the best gift ever: His one and only Son, Jesus! That's what Christmas is all about.

Philippians 4:4 is a great verse to remember and say to yourself when things don't go your way. With an adult's permission, grab a stocking from the mantel or a sock from your drawer and ten index cards (or a piece of paper cut into 10 smaller pieces). Write one word of the verse on each card and stuff them in your stocking. Set a timer and see how quickly you can put them in the correct order. BUT there's a BIG catch. You can only pull cards out of the stocking ONE at a time. Work until you have all the words in order. Then repeat to see if you can beat your time.

THANK God for sending His son Jesus so you can have JOY!

READ ISAIAH 9:6

DAY 2

Use today's verse to unscramble the words below:

Who did Isaiah promise would be born? _____
S U J E S

He would be called . . .

Mighty _____ Wonderful _____ Father Who Lives _____
D G O D V I A R S E R F O V E R E

Prince who brings _____
E P A C E

This week, we learned that we can have joy because God keeps His promises. No matter what—when things are going well and when nothing is working out the way you want—you are never forgotten by God. He remembers you and He keeps His promises. Thousands of years ago, God made a promise to send a Savior to rescue us. And years later, He kept that promise by sending Jesus! We celebrate this promise every year at Christmas time. God sent His one and only Son to be our Savior. What an awesome gift!

ASK God to help you find joy because He keeps His promises.

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READ DEUTERONOMY 7:9

DAY 3

Did you catch that? God will keep His covenant for *all time*. A covenant is a promise. And you know a promise simply means you will do what you say. It's not that easy for us, is it? Like when you promised your little brother you'd play with him and then you didn't. Or when you promised to clean your room, but you quickly found other things to do. We make promises ALL the time but we're not always great at keeping them.

That's not how God works. When God makes a promise, He ALWAYS keeps it. For all time. He is perfect. His love is perfect. He never makes mistakes. So when you read one of God's promises in the Bible, you can know for sure He will keep it. That's a big reason why you can always have joy!

Name a promise of God. If you can't think of one, ask someone who knows and loves God to help you find some of God's promises in the Bible. _____

How does knowing, for sure, that God will keep this promise make you feel? _____

LISTEN to God's promises and believe that He will keep them. Always.

READ PSALM 105:7-8

DAY 4

Who is God? He is our creator, our heavenly Father and our place of safety. He loves us more than we can imagine. And He sent Jesus on that first Christmas to rescue us, to bring us closer to Him—because He loves us. Through the prophet Isaiah, God promised to send His Son. And He kept that promise by sending Jesus for the whole world, for you and for me, for all time to come! He ALWAYS keeps His promises. He never makes excuses or "forgets" to follow through. Remember, you can have joy because God keeps His promises.

This verse is missing all its consonants! Look up the verse and fill in the blanks.

"_e i _ _e _o _ _ ou _ _o _ . _e _u _e _ _e _ _o _e ea _
_ _ . _e _i _ _ee _i _o _e _a _ _o _e _e _ . _e _i _
_ee _i _ _o _i _e _o _a _ _i _e _o _o _e." _ _a _ _ 105:7-8

KNOW that when God makes a promise, He WILL keep it! God would.

I can have
JOY
because God
keeps His promises



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WEEK TWO
K-5TH

READ LUKE 1:76-77

DAY 1

What did the angel tell Zechariah? (Read Luke 1:13 for help) _____

What did the angel say the baby's name would be? _____

Why did John's birth seem impossible to Zechariah? (Read Luke 1:18) _____

Just think about how joyful Zechariah and Elizabeth must have been when this special baby was born! What seemed completely impossible to them was possible with God! *Anything* is possible with God. And that's a great reason to have joy.

Ask a parent to show you some of your baby pictures. What did they do to prepare for you coming into the family? Did anyone throw a party for them? Then ask them to tell you the story of the day you joined the family.

THANK God for the joy we can have because ANYTHING is possible with Him.

READ PSALM 43:4

DAY 2

We've been talking about real joy this month. Sometimes finding joy means remembering what's true. Even when things are hard, or when they don't go your way, God is still the same. He is still a holy and loving God. He's still the One who made you and sent His only Son for you.

Worship is a great way to remember who God is and how much He loves you. Play some worship music and pay attention to the words of the song. If you don't have a way to play a worship song, sing one of the songs you've learned at church. Sing to God and thank Him for the joy you have because of all He's done for you.

ASK God help you find real joy as you worship Him.





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WEEK TWO
K-5TH

READ MATTHEW 19:26

DAY 3

Can you think of a situation right now that is hard for you? Maybe it's something that makes you sad or unhappy? Write it down in the box to the right.

We all face hard stuff. Sometimes the hard stuff makes us think that God doesn't want to help us. Or that He doesn't care when we are sad. But this week we learned that we can have joy because ANYTHING is possible with God.

Take a look at what you wrote above. How can knowing God and trusting Him make this situation better? How can BELIEVING the truth that all things are possible with God help you face this situation? Remember, you can have joy because anything is possible with God.

LOOK for God doing amazing things and find joy—even in the hard stuff—because nothing is impossible for Him.

READ EPHESIANS 3:19-20

DAY 4

Did you read the part of the verse that says: *God is able to do far more than we could ever ask for or imagine?* That doesn't mean if you ask God for a horse for your birthday, you'll suddenly find a unicorn on your doorstep. God isn't a big Santa Claus that brings presents or a genie that grants three outrageous wishes.

What it DOES mean is that when you choose to follow God, HIS plan will be bigger and better than anything you could have asked for or imagined on your own. And the joy that He gives is bigger and better than any unicorn, Christmas morning or granted wish.

Grab a piece of paper and draw a large heart in the center of the page. Write the words of the verse inside the heart and decorate it. Hang this verse in your room where you will see it everyday.

KNOW that joy comes in believing anything is possible with God.



I can have
JOY
because anything
is possible with God.





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WEEK THREE
K-5TH

READ LUKE 2:6-7

DAY 1

The story of Jesus' birth is pretty crazy. First, Mary and Joseph hear from an angel that they're going to have a baby. Then, they have to travel to Bethlehem to be counted. Once they finally arrive, they can't find a place to stay because the city is so crowded. Finally, they find a barn to spend the night in. And right there, among those smelly animals, Jesus was born. Can you imagine? When you look at all those crazy details, you might not think Jesus' birth was all that joyous.

But despite all the craziness, there will never be a more JOYful birth. God sent His only son, Jesus, to save the world. Jesus was called Emmanuel, which means, "God with us." God made a way for you to know Him by sending His only Son.

Ask your mom or dad to help you find the lyrics to the hymn "Joy to the World." Write them down. Sing the song together and talk about what the words mean.

THANK God for sending Jesus to bring us real joy.

READ HABAKKUK 3:18

DAY 2

Joy is finding a way to be happy, even when things don't go our way. Do you get your way all the time? Probably not. But joy is possible even when things don't go your way and this verse tells us how. You can have joy because of what the Lord has done. He sent Jesus, His only Son, to save you from being separated from Him. He loves you. He made you for a purpose. And because of that, you can have joy, always, even when nothing is going your way.

Complete the statements below.

Even when it's _____, I will still be glad.

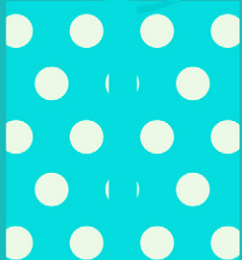
Even when I _____, I will still be glad.

Even when he _____, I will still be glad.

Even when she _____, I will still be glad.

Even when life is _____, I will still be glad.

ASK God to help you remember that you can still have joy because He sent His Son.





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WEEK THREE
K-5TH

READ 1 PETER 1:8-9

DAY 3

Do you know why Christmas is SO important? Before Jesus was born, our sin—the wrong things we do—separated us from God. We couldn't have a relationship with Him because He is perfect and we're not. So God sent Jesus to fix that problem. Jesus is a gift to us because He made it possible for our sin to be forgiven. He made a way for us to have a relationship with God forever.

Even if you cannot see Jesus right now face-to-face, you can still believe that His birth made a way for you to have a relationship with God. That's what real joy is all about.

If you have a nativity set in your home, grab Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus. Read today's verses, and then use the figurines to act out the story of Jesus' birth from Luke 1. If you don't have a nativity set, grab a piece of paper and draw baby Jesus, Mary, and Joseph in the stable.

LISTEN to these verses and know that you can have joy because God sent His son.



READ PSALM 126:3

DAY 4

What are some great things God has done for you? Can you name a few?

Gather the people in your house together (maybe around the kitchen table) and pass out a piece of paper and a pen to each person. At the top of the page, ask everyone to write "What God Has Done for Me." Set a timer for two minutes. Challenge everyone to write down as many things as they can before time is up. If you have a younger sibling that cannot read or write yet, he can draw pictures instead.

When time is up, pass each person's paper to the left so that you are no longer holding your own list. Read aloud the things that have been written (or show the pictures).

Display your lists together for the next week in a place where everyone in your family will see them. When you start to feel frustrated, angry, or sad look at these lists. Remember all that God has done for you and the people in your family so that you can feel the JOY that God gives.

KNOW that God has done great things for you and be filled with JOY!



I can have
JOY
because God
sent His son





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WEEK FOUR
K-5TH

READ LUKE 2:10

DAY 1

When the angel appeared to those shepherds out in the field, they were terrified! Wouldn't you have been scared, too? But the angel didn't come to scare them. He had good news. Jesus was here! The promised Savior had arrived. Jesus came so that we could all be part of God's story. You can have joy because God's story is for everyone.

If you had been one of the shepherds, how might you have responded to an angel appearing out of nowhere?

If you had a big announcement, whom would you tell first and why? _____

Why do you think God chose to first announce Jesus' birth to shepherds out in the field? _____

THANK God for sending Jesus so that everyone can be part of His amazing story!

READ LUKE 2:16-18

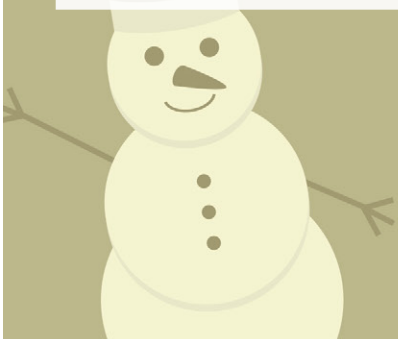
DAY 2

When the shepherds heard the news, they took off toward town, excited to see this special baby that had been born. And when they found everything just as the angel had said, they were filled with joy! They couldn't wait to tell everyone about His birth. It was the best news ever.

God wants you to share this good news with others, too! He wants everyone to have the same joy—the joy of knowing Jesus! If you have a nativity set in your home, grab the baby Jesus. Wrap it up in Christmas paper. Create a simple Christmas card with today's verse written on the inside. On the outside write, "To: Everyone From: God". Carefully sneak it under the tree when no one is looking.

It's probably after Christmas by now, but someone should notice a gift that was somehow "missed." Once it's found, encourage someone to open it. Then talk about how God sent Jesus as a gift for all of us, so that everyone could have joy knowing they can be part of God's story.

ASK God to help to help you spread the good news of Jesus birth so everyone can have joy, too!





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WEEK FOUR
K-5TH

READ 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16

DAY 3

Is it possible to be joyful *always*? What if you stub your toe? Or lose your iPod? Or get into a fight with your little brother? Or break a rule and lose your allowance? Joy *always*? Really?!

Remember, joy is about finding a way to be happy even *when* things don't go your way. Notice it doesn't say "if" things don't go your way, but "when" they do. That means that you will face stuff that's not fun. Life isn't all sunshine and rainbows and chocolate sprinkles. But when you trust in Jesus and choose to follow Him, it IS possible to find a way to have joy, even in the hard stuff. That's why Christmas—the day Jesus was born—is such a big deal.

Grab ten sticky notes. Write, "Always be joyful" on each one and stick them in ten different places around your house. As you pass by each sticky note this week, it will remind you to look for joy, even when things don't go your way.

ASK God to help you be joyful, always.

READ JOHN 3:16

DAY 4

This verse is what the Bible is all about. God loved you and so He did what people who love do: He gave. What did He give? His one and only Son, Jesus. Why? Because Jesus took the punishment for our sin or the wrong things we do. And when we believe in Him, we can have eternal life. That means we will have a relationship with God forever. When we choose to trust Jesus as our Saviour, our sin no longer keeps us from God. So Jesus' birth, which we celebrate on Christmas, is a really big deal. It's what makes real joy possible.

Grab a piece of paper and illustrate this verse, any way you'd like. You can draw a heart for love, baby Jesus in a manger for "Son," etc. When finished, choose someone in your family or neighborhood to give your drawing to. Then tell them about how Jesus' birth means that everyone can be part of God's story.

KNOW that joy is possible because God gave us His only son, Jesus!



I can have
JOY
because God's
story is for everyone.