



FINDING A WAY TO BE HAPPY,
EVEN WHEN THINGS DON'T GO YOUR WAY



READ ISAIAH 9:6

DAY 1

It's Christmas! There are so many things that bring joy this time of year. Snowflakes, presents, lights, even crazy Christmas sweaters. But even the most wonderful time of the year isn't always joyful. That's why we've defined joy as finding a way to be happy even when things don't go your way.

God sent Isaiah as a prophet with a special message, that God would one day send His Son, Jesus! And though God made this promise long before it came true, we celebrate that special birth today. Christmas is all about Jesus—the day God sent us His one and only Son. Isaiah uses some phrases to describe Jesus, our Savior. Draw a line from the title to its definition below:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| WONDERFUL ADVISER | MORE POWERFUL THAN ANYONE OR ANYTHING |
| MIGHTY GOD | ETERNAL, OUR HEAVENLY FATHER |
| FATHER WHO LIVES FOREVER | THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN FIX OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND OTHERS |
| PRINCE OF PEACE | THE ONE WHO CAN HELP AND GUIDE US |

Circle one of the titles from today's verse, fill the following prayer and talk to God:

GOD THANK YOU FOR CHRISTMAS, THE DAY WE CELEBRATE JESUS. THANK YOU FOR SENDING HIM TO BE
 MY _____ BECAUSE _____
 (Title from above) (reason you chose that title)

READ LUKE 1:37

DAY 2

Can you imagine what it must have been like for Mary? One day, she was going about her business when an angel suddenly appeared right in front of her! And this angel named Gabriel had a message that kind of went like this:

- Gabriel: "Hey Mary, you will have a baby. And He will be the Son of God."
 Mary: "I'm sorry, what?"
 Gabriel: "Don't worry, what God says will always come true."
 Mary: "Okay, let it be as God has said."

Now, you and I know the rest of the story. God did keep His promise to Mary and to all of us. He did send His one and only son Jesus, to us. Though Mary was surprised and unsure, she trusted God and His plan. And we can remember that too. Even when we're scared or unsure about how things will work out, we can still choose joy because God keeps His promises. Ask God to help you find joy, even when things don't go your way this week, because He keeps His promises.

READ JAMES 1:17A

DAY 3

In the space to the right, write down some good things God has done for you. Set a timer for one minute to see how many you can list.

Did you know every single thing on that list comes from one place? Every good and perfect gift is from who? Yes! God! He loves you and He loves to give you good things. But of all the wonderful things—even the things you've listed—the BEST gift ever isn't one you can wrap up in a box and tie with a pretty ribbon. The best gift ever is Jesus, God's one and only Son!

We celebrate the day God gave us this best gift ever on Christmas.

Thank God for some of the things you've listed above AND for sending Jesus, the best gift ever.

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 1:20 DAY 4

Today's verse tells us that when God makes a promise, it's always "yes!" God will do what He says He will do. Always. We know this is true because of Jesus. God promised to send a Savior to us and He did.

Did you catch the second part of the verse? "Amen" means, I agree! Joy comes when we recognize how good God is and how He never changes. Next to the promises God gives us, write the word "Amen" to show that you agree that the promise is true!

GOD LOVES YOU. _____

GOD SENT HIS SON, JESUS. _____

GOD IS WITH YOU. _____

GOD WILL HELP YOU MAKE THE WISE CHOICE. _____

GOD CAN BE TRUSTED, NO MATTER WHAT. _____

As you pray today, thank God for keeping His promise to send Jesus, then end your prayer with a loud "AMEN!"



YOU
CAN HAVE JOY
BECAUSE GOD KEEPS
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READ LUKE 1:13-14

DAY 1

What did God say John would be to his mom and dad? A joy!

Though Elizabeth was old, God did the impossible and gave her a son. And this son, John, would grow up to tell everyone the biggest news ever—JESUS was here! It's a good reminder to us that nothing is impossible for God. And because of that, we can have joy.

In the space to the right, write an announcement for Jesus' birth in your own words.

Read your birth announcement aloud and then thank God for sending John to tell people about Jesus!

READ EPHESIANS 3:20

DAY 2

Think about your day yesterday. Did you say or do something you wish you could take back?

We're far from perfect. But there is good news. When God sent Jesus, He made a way for all those mess ups, all that sin, to be forgiven. And when we trust Jesus as our Savior, we can have a relationship with God, forever.

That's why Jesus is the best gift ever. God did something we couldn't do on our own. He made a way for us to have a relationship with God, to be in His family, forever. You can have joy because anything is possible with God.

Take a minute to tell God you're sorry for one of your mess ups from yesterday. Thank Him for sending Jesus so you can be forgiven and ask Him to help you make a different choice next time.

Can you lift a car? Run from one end of a continent to another?

Some things seem impossible. And some things truly ARE impossible for us. But this verse reminds us that nothing is impossible for God. He can do anything, even make a way for us to have a relationship with Him, forever. He loves you so much that He sent Jesus on that first Christmas so that we could know Him.

Fill in the blank below with your own name.

WITH _____, THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE.
BUT WITH GOD, ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE.

Thank God for being powerful enough to do the impossible and personal enough to know and love you, always.

Think about your very favorite thing in creation. Is it a sunrise? The ocean? An animal you love? Or a tree you climb? Draw it on a piece of paper.

Did you know that God created this thing you love? Every mountain and valley, every galaxy full of stars, every animal on the earth and fish in the sea, every person in every nation that has ever walked the earth—God made it all.

Nothing is too hard for God. He can do the impossible. And it's important for us to understand this because sometimes hard things happen. And when they do, we need to remember that we are never alone. The same God who formed your favorite thing in creation made you. He knows you better than anyone and because of Jesus, you can have a relationship with Him forever. We can have joy because God is powerful enough, strong enough, big enough, to do the impossible.

As you hold your drawing, talk to God about how you're feeling. Is something hard right now? Ask God to remind you that He is with you and that His plan is best. Pray that He will help you trust in Him.



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READ PSALM 40:16

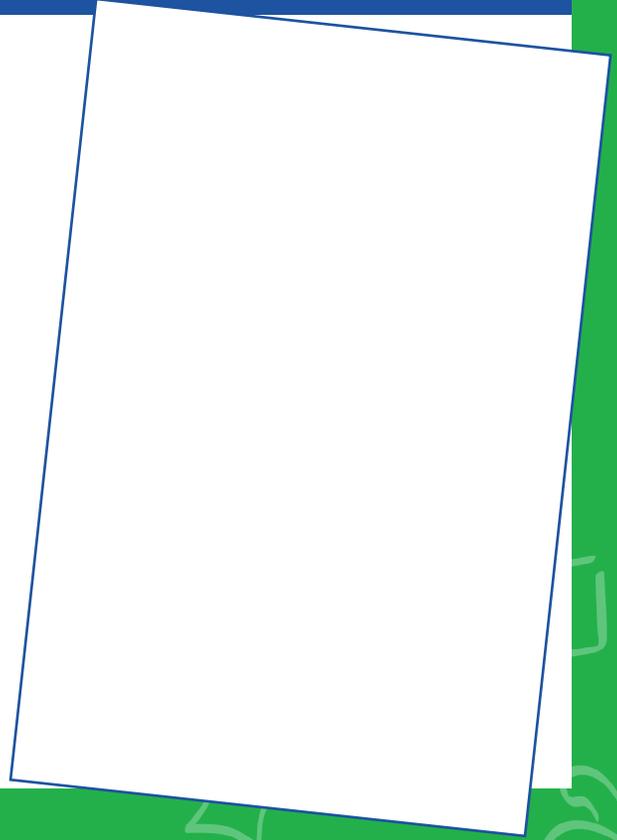
DAY 1

Name some people you can count on in the space to the right.

Today's verse reminds us that we can always count on God. He IS great because He promises He will never leave us. And He proved His love for us when He sent Jesus as a baby on that night over 2,000 years ago. God is who He says He is and He does what He says He will do. No matter what happens around you, even if you have the worst day where nothing goes the way you thought it would, you are not alone. You can have joy because God is with you.

Write this verse on a card and stick it in your wallet if you have one or tape it to the front of your piggy bank as a reminder that you can always count on God!

Read this verse out loud and thank God for being a great big, loving God that you can always count on!



READ MATTHEW 1:23

DAY 2

What does "Immanuel" mean? God with us. Jesus left His throne in heaven, where nothing bad or sad ever happens and came to earth to live with us. He experienced all the bad and all the sad things we experience so that we could KNOW Him.

That's why Christmas is such a big celebration. God didn't have to send His one and only Son. But He did because He wanted us to know Him. Because of this precious, perfect gift, we can have a relationship with God.

Draw a picture of Jesus in the manger and put it in your backpack or in the car. Every time you look at the picture you've drawn, thank God for the reminder that He is with you, always. Write down a simple prayer thanking God for sending Jesus as our Immanuel, God with us.

READ LUKE 1:28

DAY 3

Grab a piece of paper and draw your reaction if an angel suddenly showed up in your bedroom.

Did you make a scared or surprised face?

When the angel appeared to Mary, she was both of those things. She was upset because she didn't understand what was happening and she was surprised that God would choose her for such an important role. Being a mom is a big deal. Being a mom to the King of all Kings, well, that's on a whole other level.

But Gabriel's answer was simple. He said, "Do not be afraid."

Guess what? The same is true for you. When you are scared, you need to remember one big truth. God is with you. He sent His only Son Jesus so that you could know Him. We can have joy, even when we're uncertain, because God is in control and we are never alone.

Take a look at the face you drew. Ask God to help you remember that He is with you, even when you feel like the picture you're holding.

READ MATTHEW 1:21

DAY 4

When the angel appeared to tell Joseph this big news about Jesus, he was so confused. He hadn't even married Mary yet and already they were going to have a baby? But this baby would grow up to do what no one else could do! Did you catch the last part of the verse? He would be called "Jesus" because He will save people from their sins.

Sin is anything we do that we know is wrong. We all sin. However, God never sins. He is perfect. That means that our sins separate us from Him.

God sent Jesus as one of us so that He could rescue us. That's why we celebrate Christmas!

Read this verse with a trusted adult and talk about what it means. Spend some time praying together, thanking God for sending Jesus!

YOU
CAN HAVE JOY
BECAUSE GOD IS
WITH YOU.





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READ LUKE 2:11

DAY 1

SHEEP FACTS:

A female sheep is called an "ewe."

A male sheep is called a "ram" or "buck."

Sheep are social creatures, raised in herds or groups.

Sheep have a 300 degree line of sight, allowing them to see behind themselves without turning their heads!

It's crazy to think about a group of shepherds hearing the news of Jesus birth before anyone else. God sent an angel to those shepherds with a very special announcement – "Today a SAVIOR has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord."

A Savior has been born to who? To you! Jesus didn't come just for the rich or famous people. God sent Jesus for everyone. We can have joy because God sent His Son to everyone!

Grab the nativity set from your living room. Write out today's verse and hang it near your nativity. If you don't have a nativity set, you can draw a simple picture of the manger with Mary and Joseph and write the verse on the top of the page.

Take a look at the shepherds in your nativity and thank God for sending Jesus for everyone!

READ JOHN 3:16

DAY 2

Grab a piece of paper and write out this verse in big block letters. What is the first thing that this verse tells you about God? God LOVED. Draw a big heart over the word 'Loved' on your piece of paper. What is the second thing this verse tells us about God? That God gave. What did God give? Yes! His one and only son, Jesus. Draw a big gift over the word gave. But we're not done yet! Once you understand that God loved you and that He gave His Son Jesus, there's something you and I need to do in response.

The next part of the verse says, "Anyone who _____?" Yep, believes! Anyone who chooses to put their trust in Jesus and what He did for us on the cross, can have a relationship with God, now and forever. That's the eternal life part. God loved. God gave. We believe. That gift, given to everyone on that first Christmas, is the reason we can have joy, no matter what!

Thank God for this WONDERFUL gift; the gift of Jesus!

READ 1 JOHN 5:11

DAY 3

When God sent Jesus, He made a way for us to know Him. Before Jesus came, people had to make sacrifices at the temple to be forgiven of their sin. But because God loved us, He put a plan in place to do away with that whole system.

Imagine making a list of every wrong thing you've ever done. Now imagine everyone all over the world making the same list. Now imagine every single person that has ever lived before you and every single person that isn't even alive yet one day making a list. Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection took care of every single thing on ALL of those lists. Forever.

That's why Christmas is such a big deal. It's the day God sent Jesus to forgive our sins and make a way for us to be a part of His family forever.

Ask your family to think of one NEW way to celebrate Jesus' birthday this week. You could bake a cake and sing "Happy Birthday." Or blow a party horn and yell "Happy Birthday, Jesus!"

After you celebrate, tell God you love Him and thank Him for sending Jesus!

READ 1 PETER 1:8-9

DAY 4

Have you celebrated Christmas yet? Is there a gift that you were super excited to receive? Draw it in the space to the right.

As cool as the gift you've drawn is, did you know that one day, it will wear out? One day it will break or get lost. But the gift that God gave to us on that first Christmas, will last forever. Because God sent Jesus to you and to me so that we could know Him, forever. And though we cannot see God face to face, we can love Him. We can believe in Him. We can have joy—a joy you can't even explain—because God sent Jesus so that we could know Him.

As you play with your new favorite gift this week, remember to thank God for sending the best gift ever, the gift of Jesus, on that very first Christmas!



YOU
CAN HAVE **JOY**
BECAUSE GOD SENT
HIS SON.





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READ MATTHEW 2:10-11

DAY 1

When you look up at the stars, can you find the North Star? It's the brightest star in a group of stars called the Little Dipper. Because the North Star stays in an almost constant position, sailors once used it as a navigational point. Think of it like the first GPS.

Thousands of years ago, a group of wise men used a special star in the sky to guide them too. These men followed a star to find a King! Do you know who it was? Yes—Jesus! When they arrived, they worshipped Jesus and presented Him with royal gifts. Just imagine how joyful they must have been after months of searching?

We can find joy too, even when things don't feel super joyful, when we look for God! We can find Him in the things He's made, like a sky full of stars. We can read about Him in His word and we can talk to Him, all the time in prayer.

Look up at the stars tonight before you lay your head on the pillow and thank God for sending Jesus to bring us joy.

READ ACTS 17:26-28

DAY 2

From one man—Adam, all people were made. Now they live everywhere from Alaska to Australia. But God didn't just make us, place us on the earth at a certain time and place and then leave us on our own to figure it out. What does verse 27 say? God created you and placed you exactly where you are right now so that you would seek Him! You are His child and He loves you more than you can possibly imagine. He sent His only Son, Jesus, on that first Christmas to prove His love for you!

Do you have a world map? If so, close your eyes and move your finger over the map, count to five and then stop! If you land on an ocean, move your finger to the closest continent. Did you know that God sent Jesus for the people that live there? Did you know that God sent Jesus for you?

Spend a few moments praying for the people in the country you landed on, that they would hear the good news about Jesus and seek to follow Him. Then, thank God for sending Jesus so that you can have joy, always.

READ JEREMIAH 29:13

DAY 3

Today's verse promises that when we look for God we will find Him. But how do you seek God? How do you look for God when you can't see Him face to face?

HEAR – You can hear from God when you read His word, the Bible. Ask questions about what you read and memorize what it says.

PRAY – You can talk to Him anytime, anywhere about anything.

TALK – You can talk about God with people who follow Him, like your parents, your small group leader, and the friends in your small group at church.

Pick ONE of these ways to seek God and make a plan this week to work on it. Ask God to help you spend time hearing from His word, praying throughout your day and talking about Him with the people around you that follow Him too.

READ PSALM 70:4

DAY 4

What is the very last word of today's verse?
Yes—GREAT! Would you describe this week as great? You're probably on school break with your family, right? Maybe your little brother is driving you crazy. Maybe you're bored and ready to get back into the routine of school. Or maybe all the sleeping in with unlimited time to play with new toys is making for the best week ever.

The word "great" in our verse today isn't describing your week. It's describing our awesome, amazing heavenly Father! God is great! And one way you can find joy, even if this week isn't so great, is to remember who is really in charge of it all.

Write the words "God, you are great!" on a sticky note and place it next to your sink. Each time you wash your hands, read that phrase out loud in a different voice. You'll find some suggestions in the box below. Thank God for being the GREATEST and for helping you find joy because of His love for you!

VOICES:

BABY, SCREAMING, WHISPERING, OPERA,
SUPER LOW, SUPER HIGH, GROUCHY, SURPRISED,
SCARED, EXCITED, OUT OF BREATH, LIKE YOUR
MOUTH IS FULL OF MARBLES.

YOU
CAN FIND JOY
WHEN YOU SEARCH
FOR GOD.

