

Alley SG - December 7-8, 2019

Bible Story: The Weary World Rejoices (The Coming Birth of John the Baptist) • *Luke 1:5-25; 57-80*

Bottom Line: You can have joy because anything is possible with God.

Key Question: What's the most amazing thing you've ever seen?

Memory Verse: Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! (Philippians 4:4 NIV)

1. Just for Fun

What You Need: Christmas Lights Necklace (1 per group)

What You Do:

- **Give** one kid the Christmas Lights Necklace to wear.
- **Take turns** sharing something they remember from the Christmas, such as a gift they gave to someone, a tradition their family continues to do, what the coolest gifts were in stores during any Christmas they can remember, and so on.
 - **NOTE:** *Set the boundary for your group that only the student wearing the necklace can share.*

2. Take a Snapshot

What You Need: Red and green plastic cups (20 of each color, per group)

What You Do:

- **Form** two equal lines facing each other a few feet apart.
- **Give** the person at the head of one line a stack of green cups and one red cup.
- **Give the other team** a stack of red cups and one green cup.
- **Check** to make sure the odd-colored cup is on the bottom of each team's stack.
- **Explain** that teams will race to restack the cups by taking one from the top and moving it to the bottom and then passing the stack to the next person, who does the same.
 - Continue all the way down the line.
 - When the stack reaches the end of the line, reverse the passing order and continue.
 - The first team to get the odd-colored cup to the top of the stack is the winner.
 - Remind kids that they can only move ONE cup at a time.
- **Ask** each team to take two of the cups from their stack.
- **Invite** the group to share examples of things that are possible with God.
 - For each example, have them place their cup on their team's stack.
 - If kids need help coming up with examples, help them consider people and events in today's story as well as other stories in the Bible or situations from life today. (Also remind them of all God has done in creation and in nature.)
- **Continue** until each team's cups are all stacked.
- **Replay** the stacking game if desired.

What You Say:

"God does His best work in impossible situations, and the story of Christmas is filled with them. Look at how God worked through the problem of sin that separated us from God and made it impossible for us to be with Him. Think about the miracle of a woman having a baby even though she was old, and no one believed it could happen. How about the way an angel appeared out of nowhere with a promise from God to answer an impossible prayer? And let's not forget the obstacle of figuring out how to communicate an unbelievable story when you suddenly can't speak. Wow! God didn't go small when it comes to Christmas. He not only gave the best, biggest, and most costly gift ever by giving us His Son, but He did it in a way that was miraculous and amazing. He wrapped the gift of a Savior in a whole bunch of miracles to help us believe that He truly is God and can do the impossible."

3. Bible Story Extension

What You Need: Bible

What You Do:

- **Remind** your group that after the angel appeared to him, Zechariah was not able to speak until after John was born.
- **Challenge** the kids to communicate their answers to the following review questions without speaking.
 - They will have no more than 30 seconds to help the rest of the group guess their answer.
 - Everyone except the person answering the question can speak.
- **Questions:**
 - What do you think was the best part of today's story?
 - Tell about something happy that happened in the story.
 - Who was your favorite character?
 - Tell about something sad that happened in today's story.
 - When he got home, how do you think Zechariah communicated with Elizabeth all that had happened at the temple?
 - What was the scariest part of today's story?
 - Talk about something that was old in the story.
 - What do you think Elizabeth's reaction was when she finally understood what Zechariah was telling her?
 - Talk about something that was probably loud in the story.
 - How does knowing God can do the impossible help us have joy?
- **Give** kids their voices back and ask the group to share their answers to the following question: "If you hadn't been able to speak for nine months, what do you think your first words would be?"
- **Invite** someone to read aloud Luke 1:68, explaining that the words of this verse were some of the first things Zechariah said once he could speak again.
- **Ask:**
 - What stands out to you most in these words spoken by Zechariah?
 - When we experience God doing something amazing and when we truly believe He can do the impossible, what should our response be?
- If time allows, let the kids take turns reading more of Zechariah's song of praise in Luke 1:69-79 and note the references he makes to God's promises about the Savior.

4. Discussion Questions

Ask:

- What are some everyday ways God shows us how amazing He is?
- Why is it important to know that God can do the impossible?
- If God can do anything—even the most impossible things—why *doesn't* He do some of the things we ask Him to do?
- What seemingly impossible situation would you like to see God change?

5. Verse to Take with You

What You Need: "Matthew 19:26b Word Strips" Activity Page (5 prepared sets per group)

What You Do:

- **Give** partners a set of shuffled "Matthew 19:26b Word Strips".
- **Challenge** teams to race to arrange the strips in the order that makes most sense without them knowing the verse ahead of time. Clue them in that the verse is something Jesus said.
- **Read** the verse and let teams check their order to see how closely it matches the verse.
 - Some people can do truly amazing things, but even the most gifted, talented, strong, or brilliant person that ever lived cannot do what God can do. Name three things only God can do.
 - How do those three things help you have joy?
 - When would remembering this verse help you have joy?

6. Make it Personal with Prayer

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- **Invite** the group to use a favorite Christmas carol, such as “Joy to the World,” as a prayer focus.
- **Explain** that you’ll pause after each phrase of the first verse of the song and give them time to respond together in prayer.

What You Say:

“Joy to the world! The Lord has come . . .’ We can have joy because Jesus came into the world to be our Savior and Lord. Let’s ask God to give us joy that goes beyond Christmas gifts or fun celebrations—a joy that finds a way to be happy, even when things don’t go our way.” *(Pause for kids to pray silently or out loud.)*

“The next part of the song says, ‘Let earth receive her King . . .’ Jesus wants to be the King of your life and help you find the joy that comes in following Him. He waits for you to invite or receive Him. Think about whether Jesus is your King.” *(Pause)*

“The song continues, ‘Let every heart prepare Him room . . .’ God wants us to give Jesus the place He deserves in our heart—FIRST PLACE. Let’s ask God to show us how to give Him more room in our life and to forgive us when we haven’t been following Him the way we should.” *(Pause)*

“The first verse ends with the words, ‘And heaven and nature sing . . .’ Imagine every part of creation singing praises to God all at one time. That would be an AMAZING sound. Let’s close our prayer time by giving thanks to our great God and remember that nothing is impossible for Him.”

“Dear God, You are the song of Christmas. Help us to not get so caught up in the lights and gifts that we lose sight of what is most important—YOU. You bring ‘joy to the world,’ and we are so glad You came to save us. Amen.”

BEFORE DISMISSAL: AT “COMMUNION CALL”

HAND OUT “GOD TIME” CARDS TO EACH STUDENT BEFORE DISMISSING AND ALLOW THEM TIME TO BEGIN WORKING ON THE WEEKLY ACTIVITY

IF STUDENTS BRING THEM BACK THE FOLLOWING WEEK, THEY RECEIVE \$3 IN ALLEY CASH!