

City SG - December 14-15, 2019

Bible Story: Born to Be Our Friend (The Coming Birth of Jesus) • *Luke 1:26-56*

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

Memory Verse: *Always be joyful because you belong to the Lord. I will say it again. Be joyful!*
Philippians 4:4 (*NIRV*)

1. Dear Friend!

What You Need: Colored Cardstock (1/2 sheet per child), Markers, Stickers

What You Do:

- Provide each kid with a piece of paper, markers, and stickers.
- Tell your group that you will be making Christmas cards for their family or friends.
 - If possible, help kids understand what their cards will mean to those who receive them.
- Instruct kids to fold the paper in half to make a greeting card.
- Encourage them to write messages of joy on their cards, such as “Thank you for being YOU!”, or, “I pray you have a JOY-filled Christmas!”
- Help kids know what kinds of messages to write.
- Allow kids to make more than one card if time and supplies allow it.
- Children may take their cards with them, and give them to the recipient of their choosing.

What You Say:

“You all really outdid yourselves! Can you imagine how happy the people who receive these are going to be? I think your cards will remind them that no matter what their Christmas looks like, they can have joy.”

2. Gabriel, May I?

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Divide your few into two teams.
- Explain that you will be playing an old game called “Mother, May I?” except today’s version is, “Gabriel, May I?”
 - You will be “Gabriel,” standing about 15 feet away from the kids.
 - The goal is for the teams to get every person on their team to you on the other side.
 - Kids and teams will take turns asking if they can move forward.
 - For example, the first kid on Team A will ask, “Gabriel, may my I take two steps forward?” Gabriel could say yes. Gabriel could say no. Gabriel could say, “Only if you get this question correct!”
 - If they get the review question wrong, Gabriel can tell that kid she has to take a step (or two) backward.
 - After the first kid moves (or gets denied), then it’s Team B’s turn.
 - Continue in this way, alternating teams and making sure each kid gets the same amount of chances to ask Gabriel if they can move forward.
 - Keep the pace of the game fast, by answering their requests quickly and moving on to the next kid.
 - To keep it fair, you may want to turn your back to the kids for the last few rounds, so each team has an equal chance at getting to the front.

Sample review questions:

1. Who was Mary engaged to? (*Joseph*)
2. Who came to visit Mary unexpectedly? (*Gabriel*)
3. How did Mary feel at first when Gabriel came to visit her? (*Scared*)

4. What did Gabriel say was going to happen to Mary? (*She was going to have a baby, Jesus*)
5. What happened to Elizabeth's baby when she heard Mary? (*The baby jumped*)
6. How did Elizabeth know that Mary was pregnant? (*God's Spirit spoke to her*)
7. How long did Mary stay with Elizabeth? (*Three months*)
8. What did Mary do after she realized what was happening? (*She sang a song*)

What You Say:

"That was a pretty fun game to watch! What did you find discouraging or challenging about the game? (*Allow time for answers.*) You guys are right! I can only imagine how scared and discouraged Mary must have been when others didn't understand what was happening or maybe when people were not so nice to her. What a very big job God gave to Mary!

"You know, God has big plans for our lives as well. It could start with being nice to our sister or brother or that kid at school who doesn't have any friends. It could begin with donating some of your toys this Christmas season to those who don't have as much as you do or being grateful no matter what you do or don't receive Christmas morning. No matter what job God has placed in front of us, **[Bottom Line] you can have joy because God is with you.**"

3. Even When

What You Need: "Even When" Sheet (1 sheet per kid, per service) and Even When Labels (1 label per child), Scissors; Markers; Brown Paper Bags, Christmas decorating supplies

What You Do:

- Give each kid an "Even When" Activity Page, scissors, and markers.
- Encourage your group to color the illustrations on the Activity Page.
- When kids are finished, instruct them to cut each picture out.
- As your few are coloring, prompt them with questions such as:
 - "What do you think is happening in this picture?"
 - "What would you do if that was happening to you?"
- When kids are finished coloring and cutting, provide each kid with a brown paper bag, label, and decorating supplies.
- Encourage them to color the label and place it on front of the bag.
- Next, instruct them to decorate their bag with markers and the provided decorating supplies.
- Lastly, encourage your few to put their squares inside the bag.

What You Say:

"Look at that! It looks like you are going home with a gift from church today. Okay, maybe this isn't quite the gift you were hoping for. But my hope is that you will use this bag to BE a gift to others! We have lots of different scenarios inside our bags: someone who is sad, someone who is moving, someone who is not having the perfect Christmas, and more. And you can even create more of your own pictures to put inside when you get home. What kinds of things might happen this week to steal your joy? (*Let a few kids answer.*)

"When you see someone struggling to have joy, take one of these pictures out and give it to them. Remind them that **[Bottom Line] you can have joy because God is with you.** Who knows, maybe you could be the person who helps turn their Christmas around!" **[Make It Personal] (Share a personal example from a time you were able to encourage someone and remind them that God is with them.)**

4. Messages of Joy

What You Need: Cards from the "Dear Friend" activity, Bibles, markers

What You Do:

- Recite Philippians 4:4 together out loud.
- Hand out the cards the kids made earlier.
- Provide them with markers and a Bible. (Kids may need to share Bibles.)

- Instruct them to open up to Philippians 4:4 and to write out the memory verse on the back of the cards.
- Ask kids to share some situations they've experienced where it was hard to have joy.
- Remind kids about who their cards will go to and what kinds of difficult situations the card receivers might be going through.

What You Say:

“God’s Word is meant to be shared with others! It’s the best gift you could ever give someone this Christmas season. So, way to go! You can cross ‘best gift giver’ off your to-do list. These cards are going to people who may have a little less joy than all of the rest of us, but thanks to you, you are reminding them that **[Bottom Line] you can have joy because God is with you.** Our verse is going to remind them that no matter what they are facing or what their circumstances look like, they can always have joy because of who they belong to. I can’t wait for our friends at *[organization’s name]* to receive these!”

5. Pray and Dismiss

What You Need: Cards from previous activity

What You Do:

- Encourage your few to hold their cards in their lap.
- Tell kids you are going to pray over the people who will be receiving these cards.

What You Say:

“Dear God, we lift up each person who will be receiving one of these cards. We pray that from the moment they are given this card they would see Your love for them and how important they are in Your heart. We know that their Christmas might look different than they wanted it to, and so we pray that no matter what this Christmas season has been like for them, these cards would be a reminder of how **[Bottom Line] you can have joy because God is with you.**”

PARENT CONNECTION: As adults arrive to pick up, have each kid display their “Even When” gift bag. Ask them, “Who is one person you think you’ll be able to encourage with your bag this week?”

BEFORE DISMISSAL: AT “COMMUNION CALL”

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

IF CHILDREN BRING THEM BACK THE FOLLOWING WEEK, THEY RECEIVE A PRIZE!