



LOW-ENERGY GAME

Set the Table

[10 min]

Supplies

- paper plates (1 for every 2 kids)
- 8-ounce foam cups (1 for every 2 kids)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Carry the Dishes

Say: The people we read about in the Bible had a big feast to celebrate what they were learning from the Bible. It must've taken a long time to set the table for all those people. Let's play a game where we'll carry some dishes and pretend to get ready for a big feast.

- Form two groups, and have the groups stand on opposite sides of the room.
- Give the cups to one group and the plates to the other.
- Show kids how to carry a plate with a cup balanced on top without touching the cup.
- Have kids pair up in their groups. Each pair will work with a pair in the other group to form a team of four.
- On your cue, have one child from each team carry a plate to a teammate who has a cup.
- The teammate with the cup will take the plate, stack the cup on it, and carry it carefully to a teammate who has a plate, trying not to touch the cup while traveling across the room.
- Play continues, relay-style, with kids adding their cups or plates to the stack until all the cups and plates for a team are stacked. Younger preschoolers can stack plates together and cups together to make the balancing easier (plate/plate/cup/cup). Older preschoolers can try to stack them plate/cup/plate/cup.



- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play.

Talk About It

Say: **We worked hard today to get ready for our pretend feast. It's fun to celebrate something special with a meal, even if it takes some work.**

Share an example of a special meal that *you* enjoyed. It may have been a holiday dinner, going out to celebrate a new job, or a meal celebrating the birth of a new baby. Explain what you were celebrating and why the meal was special.

Ask: • **What's a special meal you've shared with your family or friends?**
Kids may say a special birthday celebration, Thanksgiving, or Christmas dinner. Encourage kids to share why the meal was special.

Say: **We have lots of ways to celebrate special times in our lives. God gives us so many reasons to celebrate and be joyful. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit, and it's always a gift from God. Sharing a meal with our friends and families is a great way to celebrate, just like God's friends in the Bible did.**



TALK-ABOUT VIDEO

Joy in Africa

[10 min]

Supplies

- “Joy in Africa” teaching video

Discuss and Watch “Joy in Africa”

Say: **We’re learning that joy is a fruit of the Spirit.**

Ask: • **Tell about something that makes you really happy.** Share your own story first.

Say: **Usually we associate being *happy* with having everything we want. But joy is a little different! Let’s see how God brought joy to a school in Africa...even when the kids didn’t have everything we might think makes us happy.**

Watch “Joy in Africa.”

Ask: • **Which of the things that we said make us happy were in the video?**

- **What were some things the kids experienced that seemed really hard?**
- **How do you think the kids in the orphanage were able to have joy even though they had hard lives?**
- **After watching this video, how would you describe the difference between happiness and joy?**

Say: **We don’t need to have everything we want to have joy. That’s because joy doesn’t come from what we have. Joy comes from God, because joy is a fruit of the Spirit.**



DEEPER BIBLE Down in My Heart to Stay

[15 min]

Supplies

- Bible
- white construction paper (1 piece per child)
- large craft sticks (1 per child)
- washable markers

Easy Prep

- Cut a large construction-paper circle for each child. Tape each circle to a craft stick to create a round sign.

Talk About Joy

Give each child a round sign.

Say: **Today we're learning that joy is a fruit of the Spirit. When God's friends got together to learn more about God, they celebrated. When good things happen, it's easy to feel joy.** Help kids use the markers to draw a smiley face on one side of each sign.

Tell about a time something really good happened in your life and *you* felt joy. You might share about getting married, celebrating a special birthday, or going on a special trip.

Ask: • **Tell about a time you felt really joyful.** Kids may share about going someplace special with their families or getting a special gift.

Say: **But sometimes sad things happen and we don't feel very joyful.** Help kids draw a frowning face on the other side of their signs.

Share about something sad that happened to *you*. You may have lost a loved one, moved away from friends, or not gotten a job you were hoping for.

Ask: • **Tell about a time you were sad.** Kids may share about losing a pet, breaking a favorite toy, or not getting to go someplace special.

Practice Finding Joy

Say: **Let's play a game with our signs to see how God can give us joy even when sad things happen.**

Say: **When someone really special, like Grandma, comes for a visit, how do you feel?** Encourage kids to show you with their signs. **When it's time for her to leave, how do you feel?** Encourage kids to show you with their signs.

Say: **If you feel sad, you can remember that Jesus has put joy in your heart that never goes away. Because we know how much God loves us, we can have joy even when our hearts are sad. Listen to this.** Read aloud Psalm 47:1.

Say: **That reminds me of a fun song about joy.** Sing "I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy Down in My Heart." (If you aren't familiar with this song, you can find it online.) Have kids all turn their signs to the smiley sides as they sing.

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart. (Where?)

Down in my heart. (Where?)

Down in my heart.

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart. (Where?)

Down in my heart to stay!

Say: **Let's try another example. When you get a special toy for your birthday, how do you feel?** Encourage kids to show you with their signs. **If that toy gets lost or broken, how do you feel?** Encourage kids to show you with their signs.

Say: **But remember, Jesus is always with us, and he puts joy into our hearts because joy is the fruit of the Spirit.** Sing the song again. Have kids all turn their signs to the smiley sides.

Say: **Let's try one more. When you're going to play in the park, how do you feel?** Encourage kids to show you with their signs. **When it starts to rain and you can't go, how do you feel?** Encourage kids to show you with their signs.

Say: **Let's sing our song one more time to remember that God puts his joy deep in our hearts to stay.** Sing the song again. Have kids all turn their signs to the smiley sides.

Say: **When sad things happen, we don't *feel* happy. But because we know God loves us, we can trust that he's always with us. That gives us joy because joy is a fruit of the Spirit.**



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Jump and Shout

[5 min]

Cheer for God

Say: **Today we found out that joy is a fruit of the Spirit. We heard how God's friends were filled with joy. One way we show joy is by jumping and shouting. Let's think of things that make us feel joy and happiness, and then we'll jump and shout and cheer for God because God gives us every single good thing we have!**

Share about one thing that brings *you* joy, and then lead kids in jumping and shouting "Thank you, God!" for the good thing God gave you. You can share about anyone or anything that brings you joy.

Ask: • **What brings you joy?** Preschoolers might share about family members, toys, foods, or things they love to play. Lead kids in cheering "Thank you, God!" after each example a child shares.

Continue as time allows.

Pray

Say: **There are so many things we can be joyful about. And God brings us all that joy! Joy is a fruit of the Spirit, so when we're friends with God, he fills us with joy. Let's talk to God once more to thank him for giving us joy.** Lead kids in a brief prayer, thanking God that joy is a fruit of the Spirit.

Say: **I feel joy today that you came to church. I hope you'll come back next week so we can learn more about being best friends with our amazing God!**



ACTIVITY PAGES WITH A POINT

Joyful Noise

[10 min]

Supplies

- “Fruit of the Spirit: Joy” Color PG
- pencils
- crayons

Older Kids: Do an Activity Page

Say: **Today we’re learning about the fruit of joy. When Ezra read God’s Word, the people were filled with joy. Let’s fill our room with joy as we do a puzzle.**

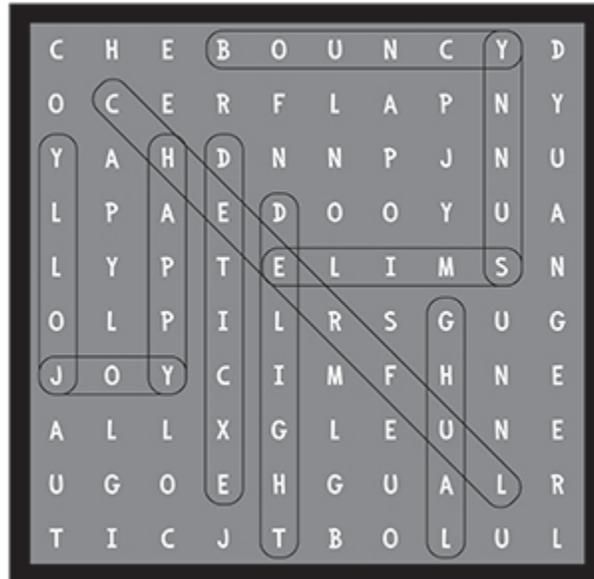
Distribute the activity pages and pencils. Kids will look for words in the word search. When they find one, they’ll announce it by saying something like “I just found happy!” Then everyone will cheer.

Ask: • **Describe how our room felt as we did this puzzle.**

• **What else makes you feel that way?**

Say: **Joy is a fruit of the Spirit. We can rejoice when God brings us good things *and* when God brings good things to others. And we can rejoice when we read the Bible! It’s full of God’s truths that won’t ever change.**

ANSWER KEY:



Younger Kids: Color a Coloring Page

Distribute the coloring pages and crayons. Say: **Today we learned that joy is a fruit of the Spirit. One thing that can bring us joy is the Bible! When the people in our Bible story read God's Word, they were full of joy! Let's color that.**

Allow time for kids to color.

When kids finish coloring, three-hole-punch their pages and put them into binders, if desired.