



ELEMENTARY
July & August

PARENT GUIDE SUMMER 2024

JULY 2024

WEEK 1

We begin the month with **Luke 15:1-7**, a story that fills our hearts with joy. It's about a shepherd who embarks on a journey to find his lost sheep. The shepherd's love for the missing sheep is so immense that he leaves the other 99 sheep to search for it. Can you imagine the joy he feels when he finally finds his sheep? He's so overjoyed that he invites his friends to join in the celebration!

Bottom Line: *We can have joy because of Jesus.* In Jesus' story, the shepherd finds his lost sheep and is filled with joy. He shares this joy with his friends. When we realize that we are like the lost sheep, we can experience joy because we understand that God sent Jesus to rescue us! This joy isn't something we keep to ourselves. We can spread the good news about Jesus and celebrate when others also put their faith in Him.

WEEK 2

In week 2, we see how God set aside times and rhythms for the Israelite people to reflect on and remember everything God had done for them. In Deuteronomy **16:13-17**, we read about one celebration called the Feast of Booths. Scripture shows how God's people celebrated this feast on several vital occasions throughout history.

Bottom Line: *Make a habit of choosing joy.* Whether it's a birthday party, slumber party, or festive holiday, kids love celebrating with their family and friends! Just as those celebrations are a part of our everyday rhythm, we hope that kids will learn how to find moments of celebration throughout their lives that will help them remember what God has done for them.

WEEK 3

For week 3, we head to **Ezra 3:10-13**. At the time, God's people lived as captives in Persia when the new king, Cyrus, allowed them to return home to Jerusalem. However, when they returned, everything was broken down and destroyed. The people got to work rebuilding the temple . . . but before they got far, they stopped to worship God and celebrate the ways that God had helped them.

Bottom Line: *Celebrate each step of the way.* Some tasks seem to take longer to complete than others. Whether kids learn how to ride a bike, bake a cake, solve a math



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problem, or talk to new people, they discover that each step is essential. The same thing is true about our relationship with God. We can choose to trust God and find joy, even when we can't see the whole picture. We can celebrate how God works in our lives with every step.

WEEK 4

In week 4, we look at some of David's Psalms—specifically, **Psalms 8, 16, and 19**. David wrote a lot about the things he observed in nature and the world around him that God had created. Through creation, we notice how God is at work—even if sometimes we struggle to see God's work in our own lives. Joy is all around us. We just have to look.

Bottom Line: *Find joy in what you see around you.* God has given us the fantastic ability to use our senses to find joy through the beauty of God's creation. When kids tap into these senses, they can discover God in a completely new way. Even if not all of our senses work perfectly, we can find ways to see how God is at work in the world around us.

WEEK 5

We finish the month in **Habakkuk 3:17-18**. Habakkuk wrote these words as God's people were about to be taken captive. Everything was going wrong in Habakkuk's world, but he still chose to trust God and choose joy. Habakkuk ultimately found joy because of God's faithfulness and love that nothing could take away.

Bottom Line: *There's always a reason to celebrate.* Even when we face tough challenges, we can celebrate because we know that God sent Jesus to be our Savior. That doesn't make our current troubles any less complicated. But it means we can find peace and joy in their midst. We can find joy in knowing that God is ALWAYS up to something good—even when we can't see it.



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WEEK 6

We start the month in **Luke 2:8-20**. While shepherds were watching over their flock, an angel suddenly appeared, bringing great news: Jesus was born! The shepherds rushed off to see Him, telling everyone about Him afterward. Everyone who heard the news was amazed and filled with joy!

Bottom Line: *Jesus brings joy to the world.* We kick off the month with a Christmas party! Christmas may feel like the most natural time of year to celebrate the birth of Jesus, but we can celebrate Jesus any time of the year! Jesus was a gift that brought joy to everyone who heard the news and can still bring us joy even today.

WEEK 7

In week 2, we see Jesus' first recorded miracle in **John 2:1-11**. Everyone was laughing, talking, and having a good time until...the wine ran out! Jesus knew the importance of celebrating and how it would impact that family to run out of wine when the celebrations weren't finished. So Jesus did something about it, which allowed the party to keep going.

Bottom Line: *Jesus showed us how to have joy.* Not only did Jesus heal and teach crowds of people, but he also knew how to celebrate! We hope that kids will remember that when it comes to joy, they can look to Jesus for the best example.

WEEK 8

For week 3, we head to **Romans 12:15**. Paul wrote to the church in Rome about what true love looked like. Part of sharing the love of Jesus means showing empathy and being sad with others who were unhappy or joyful with others who were joyful. When we do that, we can help others see our love and the love of Jesus.

Bottom Line: *You can help others find joy.* Can you think of a time when you went through something difficult, but someone was there for you? What about when you received the best news ever? Knowing someone was there for you during the ups and downs helped improve that situation. The same is true the other way around. We can be there for others and help them experience joy, too.



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WEEK 9

We wrap up the month with the most significant celebration in **Revelation 21, 22:1-5**. John received visions from God about all the things that would one day come. However, John wrote that one day, there would be no more pain and sadness and that God would live with us forever.

Bottom Line: Celebrate what God will do. Looking at life through current situations may make it harder to find joy and celebrate, especially if you don't see a way out. However, focusing on what God has already done for us can help us remember all that God can and will do in our lives. Now that's something to celebrate!