

CITY LG July 6-7, 2024

Today's Bible Story: Tidings of Comfort and Joy (Shepherds and Angels) • *Luke 2:8-20*

Today's Bottom Line: Jesus brings joy to the world.

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

Monthly Virtue: Joy—Choosing to celebrate what God is doing

CAMPUS SUPPLIES NEEDED: 4 BIG BOWLS AND 1 TABLE

CENTRAL SUPPLY PROVIDED: CANDY CANES

WORSHIP

Soldier On

Nothing Is Impossible

Have kids get into their small groups Before you start Large Groups.

SLIDE: Theme

Hey, everybody! My name is [your name] and I'm so glad you're here in The City. We're doing something kind of different today—we're celebrating Christmas in July! Because, well, what better way to talk about joy?

SLIDE: Virtue

Joy is about **choosing to celebrate what God is doing.**

SLIDE: Theme

I don't know about you, but I think Christmas is the most joyful time of the year. At Christmastime, we celebrate the good news that God sent Jesus to be our Savior!

There are so many ways to celebrate Christmas, but one of my favorites is eating yummy Christmas treats! Shout out some of your favorite Christmas goodies. *(Pause for responses.)* Yum. Those are all really great! Personally, I really love candy canes. And I've got a fun candy cane game for us to play.

I'll need two of you to be our contestants—one from each side of the room. And each contestant can bring up their Small Group Leader. Raise your hand if you want to play!

Bring up two kids who have their hands raised, and have each kid bring up their leader. Have the contestants stand next to the table with the two bowls full of candy canes.

All right, friends. Each of you will be representing your side of the room. As you can see, each team has a bowl full of candy canes. You'll work with your leader to try to move these candy canes from THIS bowl to the bowl on the other side. *(Reference the empty bowls on the table on the other side of the room.)*

But here's the thing. You can't use your hands! You and your leader will each hold a candy cane in your mouth like this.

Demonstrate by peeling the plastic wrapping off of the straight end of the candy cane, then putting the uncovered straight end in your mouth.

You'll use the hook end of the candy cane to pick up a candy cane from the bowl and move it to your team's bowl on the other table. *(Demonstrate.)* If you drop one, don't worry—just pick it up, hook it back on your candy cane, and keep going.

Both you and your leader will be playing at the same time. Both of you will be picking up candy canes from this bowl and carrying them across to your other bowl. Make sense? The team that moves the most candy canes into their empty bowl in one minute, wins!

Now, before we get started, each of you can go ahead and unwrap the straight part of a candy cane, because that's what you'll put it in your mouth. Your leader can help you if you need it. *(Give them time to do this.)*

(To audience) Everyone, be sure to cheer for your team. Let's get started. On your mark, get set, go!

VIDEO: 60 second Christmas Countdown

When time's up, count how many candy canes are in each team's second bowl. Congratulate the winning team and acknowledge both teams' efforts. Dismiss the contestants to their seats.

SLIDE: Theme

Wow! What a minty good time! I love celebrating Christmas with fun party games.

I also love to talk about the Christmas story . . . in July! How fun! As we tell the story, I think you'll see why the birth of Jesus was all about joy.

When we look at God's Big Story in the Bible *(hold up Bible)*, we see how God had a plan to bless the whole world through Abraham's family. Abraham's family grew and became a nation called the Israelites. Sadly, the people kept turning away from God. Eventually, they were attacked by other nations. But God still had a good plan!

God spoke through people called prophets who shared messages from God. These prophets explained that, when the time was right, God would send a Rescuer. Hundreds of years passed. But then, God sent an angel to a young woman named Mary. The angel told Mary that she would give birth to God's very own Son, Jesus.

Let's check it out...

VIDEO: Bible Story

If you think about it, the shepherds were just living their everyday lives out in the fields . . . but then, ANGELS showed up to tell them about Jesus! At last, the Savior had been born.

The shepherds were so amazed and so full of joy to see Jesus that they went out telling everyone they knew about Him. Jesus definitely brought joy to their world. That was true back then, it's true today, and it will always be true. Stand up and check out our bottom line:

VIDEO: Bottom Line

SLIDE: Bottom Line

Jesus brings joy to the world.

When Jesus came into the world, He filled the world with JOY! Jesus is still bringing joy to our world today—and just like the shepherds, we can share that good news with everyone.

“When things happen in our lives that don't feel very joyful, we can think about what God did for us by sending Jesus to be our Savior. We can remember that we can trust God no matter what. We can think about the way Jesus lived, and the way He showed us how to love the people around us. When we remember that Jesus came to bring love, joy, and forgiveness into the world, we can find lots of opportunities to spread that joy to others.

Our Memory Verse for this month comes from Paul's letter to the Philippians. Paul wanted to remind the believers who lived there to be joyful because of Jesus. Here it is—Philippians 4:4:

SLIDE: Memory Verse

Always be joyful because you belong to the Lord. I will say it again. Be joyful! (Philippians 4:4, NIV)

Let's say that together.

Always be joyful because you belong to the Lord. I will say it again. Be joyful! (Philippians 4:4, NIV)

Great job! We can always find joy because of what Jesus has done for us. Let's pray.

Dear God, thank You for sending JOY into the world when You sent Your Son, Jesus! Jesus brought joy to the world then, and Jesus brings joy to our world today. Help us to carry that joy and share it with others. Please remind us to live with joy, no matter what is happening around us, because we know how much You love us. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

SLIDE: Theme

CHECK THE TIME: There should be 20-25 minutes for small group. If LG is running late, skip the next part and just have kids bring up their money.

OFFERING:

SLIDES: Hope Mobility 1-3

Starting this week we are raising money for an organization called Hope Mobility. It was founded by Michael Panther who grew up as a child with a disability in Sudan. Hope Mobility collects and distributes wheelchairs in Africa while teaching families and communities to care for and to include people with disabilities. Our focus will be raising money for wheelchairs for kids. Each pediatric wheelchair costs \$275 and we will see how many wheelchairs we can purchase to help kids in Africa!

*****AT YOUR COORDINATOR'S DIRECTION, YOU WILL EITHER DISMISS TO SMALL GROUP OR DO ACTIVITIES TOGETHER.***