

1ST GRADE GUIDE 7

GOD IS JOY FOUNDATION: GOD IS

BIG TRUTH: GOD IS JOY

Psalm 16:11; Ecclesiastes 2:6; Nehemiah 8:10; Psalm 30:5; Isaiah 29:19; Jeremiah 31:13-14; Habakkuk 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; John 15:11

BIBLE VERSE: PSALM 16:11

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

BIG IDEAS

- True joy is only found in God.
- Joy in the Lord produces joyful obedience.
- Jesus is our model for a joyful life.

BIBLE STORY: JOHN 15

True joy is found when we are connected to Jesus. When we abide in Him, we will have eternal joy that isn't dependent upon our situation. Jesus gives us an example to follow.

FOUNDATION: GOD IS

"God is" means that there is only one god in the universe. He alone is Lord over everything that exists, and He alone is worthy of our worship. This also means that every good thing that exists comes from God. All good things come from Him because goodness is a part of who He is as the one true God. It is a part of His nature and character to be good, and everything that comes from God is good. Thankfully God has not chosen to withhold His goodness from His creation, but instead gives it freely to us.

BIG AIMS



Every child should know that:

- There is only one true God, and He is good.
- We can know God because He has made Himself known.
- God alone is our source of life and joy.



Every child should be able to:

- Memorize the Bible verse each week about who God is.
- Pray that God would open their hearts and minds to know Him more.
- Tell someone else a truth about God each week.



Every child should feel:

- Loved by God, and thankful for His love for us.
- Broken over the depth of our sin against God.
- Joy in Jesus, the only Son of God who came to save us.



Every child should want:

- Learn more about the God who has made Himself known.
- Repent of their sin and of the lies they believe about God.
- Cling to God as the source of truth.

FAMILY DEVOTION: TRUE JOY

God gives true joy to His people. He alone is the source of real joy. We find real joy when we are connected to Jesus.



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BIBLE VERSE: PSALM 16:11

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

True life comes from God.

"You make known to me the path of life..."

- Because God is above all things, He holds the truth and the path to true life.
- In His goodness, He has made this known to us.
- We will only know true life, and how to walk in true life, through knowing God.

True joy is found in God's presence.

"...in your presence there is fullness of joy..."

- Joy is not just something that God has, it is who God is.
- True joy is found in the presence of God, and in God's presence, that joy is full and complete.

True pleasure is found when we are near to God.

"...at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

- Because true joy is only found in God, He is the one who holds all pleasure.
- We will know true joy and experience true pleasure when we follow God closely, because it is in Him that joy and pleasure can be found.
- When we do not follow God, we are giving ourselves over to idols that claim to offer joy but will always fall short.

BIBLE STORY: JOHN 15*Abiding in Jesus*

Supporting Scripture: Psalm 16:11; John 14:15; John 15:10

Teacher Introduction:

In John 15, Jesus makes one of His “I AM” statements. He calls Himself the Vine, meaning that He is the source of all things. The importance of believers knowing that Jesus is the Vine is knowing that He is their source of joy. All things come from Him, including our joy. When we abide in Him, we will have joy. Jesus teaches that being connected to Him means that we will bear fruit by His Spirit who lives in us. Because His Spirit lives in us, we will have His joy. The joy of the Lord is not like the joy of the world. The world’s joy is temporal because it depends upon circumstances and it changes as our situation changes. God’s joy depends upon Him and He does not change. As long as we are connected to Him, we can have joy and live a joyful life. As we find our joy in Him, we will obey Him joyfully. We will not find His commands hard or burdensome. Just like Jesus obeyed the Father and went to the cross, thinking of the joy that was set before Him, we will obey the Father with our eyes focused on the joy of Christ. This type of joy is forever and everlasting. Even when our circumstances change, our joy will not because our joy is rooted in Jesus.

Teaching Guide:

The guide below is provided to help you teach the story: Abiding in Jesus. The three points are the Big Ideas that should guide your lesson as you share from John 15 and teach the truth that God is joy. Footnotes are provided for further study of the text and God’s interaction with His people. Throughout the lesson questions are placed to help you guide the children to think about and process the truth that God is joy.

Opening Illustration:

Give each child a piece of paper in the shape of a sun. Ask them to draw a picture or write down something that brings them joy. Ask them to share what they drew or wrote. Next, tell them that God is joy and our source of true joy.

BIG IDEA: TRUE JOY IS ONLY FOUND IN GOD.¹**Joy is part of bearing the fruit of the Spirit.**

- Joy as defined by the world is not the same as joy defined by God. Joy is part of the fruit of the Spirit. When we have God's Spirit, we have joy.
- This joy is connected to knowing Jesus. It is not the same as the joy the world offers.
- The world offers a fake joy that isn't lasting. The joy of the world is fleeting and disappears as our situation changes.
- When we know God, we have His Spirit, and we have joy always.



Play a game of musical bean bag. The child holding the bean bag when the music stops gets to name one thing that brings them joy. Once you finish playing, tell them that true joy is found in God alone.

Knowing God brings real joy.

- In John 15, Jesus taught when we are connected to Him, we will know Him.
- When we know Him, we will have joy that is eternal.
- Knowing God brings us joy because it brings us hope. This hope is everlasting because God's promises of eternal life are true.
- As we grow in our knowledge of God, we will grow in our joy.
- This is real joy that can't be taken away by our circumstances.

The world's joy is temporary and fading.

- The joy the world offers is always temporary. When we look to our situation or the things in this world, we will be disappointed.
- When we find joy only in our situation or circumstances, our joy will fade because our situation will always change.
- We have to find our joy in Jesus and Jesus alone in order for our joy to be real and not fake.
- Otherwise, our joy is temporary and will fade away.

How is the world's joy temporary? (It is dependent upon situations that change.)

1. Psalm 16:11: Our joy is found in Jesus and a life lived for God is a joy-filled life.

BIG IDEA: JOY IN THE LORD PRODUCES OBEDIENCE.²**Followers of Jesus obey Him.**

- When we abide, or stay connected to Jesus, we grow in our understanding of Him.
- When we grow in our understanding of Him, we want to obey Him.
- As we obey Him, our joy will grow.
- We will want to do what His Word tells us to do because our love for Him will grow.
- Jesus taught His followers that as they abide in Him, they would obey Him.
- Part of being His follower is obeying Him.



Gather the children in a circle and pass a heart-shaped piece of paper around the circle. The child holding the circle gets to name one way they can obey Jesus. Help them think of ways they can obey. Remind them that we should obey Him with joyful obedience.

Joyful obedience is different from obedience out of duty.

- There is a difference between obeying God out of a joy for Him and obeying Him out of duty.
- The Pharisees obeyed God because it was duty to them. They did it to show the world they were obedient, not because they found joy in obeying God.
- Jesus taught in John 15 that His followers find joy in doing His Word.
- When we love Jesus, we will joyfully obey Him.
- We will do what He commands out of love for Him. This will produce joy inside of us.

Jesus is worth our joyful obedience.

- When we know Jesus, we will learn that He is worth our joyful obedience.
- As we learn about His willing sacrifice for us, we will learn that He is worthy of our joyful obedience.
- We will grow in our understanding of His love for us and His obedience to the Father.
- As we grow in our love, we grow in our joy.

Why does our joyful obedience matter? (We should obey Jesus with joyful obedience because He is worthy of our obedience.)

2. John 14:15: When we love Jesus, we obey Him. Obey Jesus produces joy.

BIG IDEA: JESUS IS OUR MODEL FOR A JOYFUL LIFE.³**God's definition of a joyful life is different from the world's.**

- The world has a different idea of what a joyful life should look like. It involves a lot of things, like material things.
- God's idea of a joyful life doesn't involve these things. It involves obedience to Him and being connected to Jesus always.
- When we live a life connected to Jesus, we can have joy always because we are always connected to our source of joy.
- When we are with Jesus, we can always be filled with hope.
- Jesus gives hope and being connected to Him reminds us of this hope we have.



Write the word "joy" on a piece of paper and place it on the floor. Next, ask the children to take turns trying to roll a small ball towards the paper on the floor. Play this several times. When you finish, remind them that Jesus lived as an example for us.

Jesus lived a life of joy because He obeyed the Father.

- Jesus' life was not always good in the world's eyes. He faced persecution and even died a terrible death, but He had joy.
- His joy was not based on His circumstances. His joy was because of His obedience to the Father.
- His is our example of what it looks like to live a joyful life.
- When we follow His example, we will have joy in this life.

Jesus lived for the joy set before Him.

- Jesus lived obediently and suffered many things because He was living for eternity.
- He was living for the hope that was before Him, not for the temporal things of this world.
- When we live for eternity, we are living for the hope before us, not for the temporary things of this life.
- When we have this perspective, we can live a joyful life like Jesus.

How did Jesus live a joyful life on earth? (He lived for the hope set before Him which was the salvation of the world.)

3. John 15:18: Jesus obeyed the Father perfectly and He is our example to follow.

HOOKS

**True Joy**

Bring in several items of toy food. Ask the children to identify these items as true or fake. Tell them that true joy is found in God alone. Ask them to name some of the ways that we have true joy in God, such as peace when life is hard. Remind them that the joy the world gives doesn't last.

**A True Vine**

Give the children a piece of paper with a vine drawn on it. Ask them to color or draw pictures of things that help them think about Jesus. Help them think of some things that would help them think about Jesus. Tell them that abiding in Jesus is what helps us have joy always.

**Joy Everlasting**

Lead the children in a time of prayer thanking God for giving us joy everlasting. Model thanking Him for sending Jesus as our example.

