



Helping Kids Choose Joy God's Way

When Happiness Fades, But Joy Remains

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Retell the story of Paul and Silas in prison.
2. Explain that joy comes from God's presence, not from things going well.
3. Identify one way they can choose joy this week.

Scripture Focus

- "About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them," (Acts 16:25, *ESV*)
- "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice." (Philippians 4:4, *ESV*)

Lesson Flow (25 min)

1. Connect (3 min)

- **Opening Thought:** Ask: "Have you ever had a bad day when nothing seemed to go right? What helped you feel better?"
- **Explain:** Happiness can disappear when something goes wrong, but joy is different. Happiness is like a bubble—it pops when life gets tough. Joy is like a brick—it's strong and steady because it comes from God.
- **Assessment:** Teacher observes student attentiveness and willingness to share.

2. Teach (7 min)

Read or retell the story of Paul and Silas in Prison (Acts 16:16–34).

Paul and Silas in Prison

Paul and Silas traveled to many cities to tell people about Jesus. In Philippi, they helped a young girl who was being treated unfairly by men who made money from her fortune-telling. Paul prayed in Jesus' name, and Jesus set her free. But the men were angry and had Paul and Silas beaten and thrown into prison.

The prison was dark and cold. Their feet were chained, but instead of complaining, Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns to God. The other prisoners listened in surprise.



School Lesson Plan | The Fruit of the Spirit: Joy

Suddenly, the ground shook! An earthquake opened the doors and loosened everyone's chains. The jailer woke up and thought everyone had escaped, but Paul shouted, "Don't worry! We're all here!" The jailer asked, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved." That night, the jailer washed their wounds, brought them into his home, and he and his whole family were baptized.

Paul and Silas showed that joy doesn't depend on things going right. Joy comes from trusting that God is with us, even in hard times.

- **Discussion Questions:**

1. What did Paul and Silas do in prison that was surprising?
2. What happened because they chose joy and trusted God?
3. How can you choose joy when something doesn't go your way?

- **Explain:**

- Joy is a Fruit of the Spirit. It doesn't depend on what happens—it grows when we remember that Jesus is with us.

- **Assessment:** Teacher checks understanding through answers and engagement.

3. Model (7 min)

- **Teacher shares:** A time you were disappointed but still chose joy by trusting God.
- **Student activity:** Play Pictionary, Charades, or short role-plays about moments that feel disappointing—like a canceled event, a lost game, or a broken toy. After each, ask: "How could we choose joy in this situation?"
- **Assessment:** Teacher notes participation and ability to apply "choosing joy" to daily life.

4. Pray (2-3 min)

- *"Lord thank You for giving us joy that lasts. Help us choose joy in every situation because You are always with us. Thank You that Your joy is never fades."*
- **Assessment:** Teacher observes participation and reverence during prayer.

5. Closing/Reflection (5 min)

- **Key Takeaway:** Joy comes from knowing God loves us no matter what.
- **Student Reflection:** Ask each student to name one way they can choose joy this week—at home, at school, or with friends.
- **Teacher Closes:** Remind students that happiness can come and go, but God's joy is here to stay.
- **Assessment:** Teacher observes if students can explain that joy comes from God's presence, not from circumstances.

Optional Extension: Independent Practice

- **Joy Journals:** Students write or draw one situation that might feel disappointing and one way they could choose joy in that moment.