

LESSON 3 JOY AND CONTENTMENT

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Gives Us Joy and Contentment

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2–4

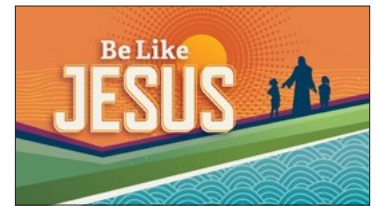
GOD'S BIG STORY: While he is in prison, Paul encourages the church in Philippi to rejoice. He teaches that when we are thankful, God's Spirit will give us joy and contentment no matter the circumstance.

WORD OF WONDER: But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself. —Galatians 5:22–23a

CURIOSITY 15 minutes • Large Group or Small Group

Hands-on activities to spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God

- Welcome Question: When are you most happy?
- Curiosity Questions
- Elementary Interactive Game: Candy Dash
- Preteen Interactive Game: Choose Your Challenge!
- Declaring God's Wonder



BELIEF 25–35 minutes • Large Group

An interactive dive into Scripture that guides kids into knowing God, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder

- Prayer of Invitation and Worship
- God's Big Story: Hear It, Watch It, Experience It!
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- In Awe of God's Wonder

FAITH 15 minutes • Small Group

An intentional conversation that helps kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own

- Word of Wonder Activity
- Discussion Questions for Elementary Kids and Preteens
- Small Group Prayer Time

IDENTITY 10 minutes • Large Group or Small Group

An interactive worship response activity that creates space for God to remind kids that they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder

- Elementary Responding in Worship: Tell God About Everything
- Preteen Responding in Worship: Dear God ...
- Blessing Your Kids

Wonder@Home™

Designed for families to engage in the wonder of God together at home. This resource includes a video, worship playlists, activities, and more!

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Gives Us Joy and Contentment

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2–4

WORD OF WONDER: Galatians 5:22–23a

In our lives as followers of Jesus, it's easy to give lip service to being joyful or content. We know that we should be joyful in everything, but we so often find our moods dependent on our finances, our relationships, or our circumstances. We know that we should be content—but we also feel that if we just get the right car, or the perfect job, or the latest fashions, our contentment would soar.

Do you struggle with joy and contentment? Where do you see this conflict in your life?

Read through Philippians 2–4 and imagine Paul sitting in a dirty prison cell. Paul had no reason to be joyful, given his circumstances. And somehow, through his painful experiences, he learned the secret to true joy and contentment. No matter his circumstances, he could trust that God was with him, that God loved him, and that God would give him strength when he needed it. Paul recognized that true joy and contentment come directly from the Lord.

As you prepare to lead kids through these truths this week, seek out the Lord. Ask Him to fill you with His joy and to give you deep contentment in your circumstances—so that you can be more like Jesus and bring glory to His name.

—Denise Morris Snyder

Spiritual Formation Pastor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Paul wrote the Letter to the Philippians. After Paul gave his life to Jesus, he traveled throughout the Roman Empire telling God's joyful big story to everyone he met. He had once persecuted Jesus' followers, but now he himself experienced persecution as a follower of Jesus.

WHAT?

In Philippians 2–4, Paul encourages the Philippians to rejoice in all circumstances, whether good or bad. In Paul's case, he has joy despite his imprisonment and apart from the gifts of financial support he was sent. He has a contentment that comes from Jesus.

WHERE?

Paul wrote this letter to Jesus-followers in the Roman colony of Philippi, located in modern-day Greece. He was in prison in Rome at the time. Roman prisons were dirty, dank, and often crowded, and the only food and supplies prisoners received were those brought by friends or family.

WHEN?

Paul most likely wrote this letter around AD 62. By all likely accounts, Paul would be executed two years later by the Roman emperor Nero.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY:

Paul's letter to the Philippians echoes the Habakkuk's message of joy and contentment in the Old Testament. Even if the fields are barren and nothing remains, Habakkuk declares, "I will still be glad because of what the LORD has done. God my Savior fills me with joy" (Habakkuk 3:18).

Large Group or Small Group

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

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Series Bumper and Countdown Videos

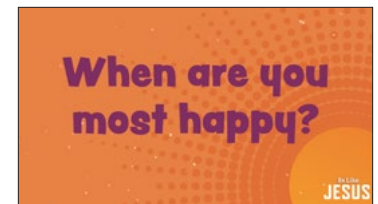
Choose between the [Be Like Jesus Series Bumper Video](#) and [Countdown Videos](#) to introduce the kids to the series.

Welcome Question

SUPPLIES: paper, coloring utensils, whiteboard (optional), dry-erase marker (optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Joy Welcome Question Slide

Before kids arrive, display the Joy Welcome Question Slide or write the following question on a whiteboard: “When are you most happy?” Set out paper and coloring utensils.



As kids arrive ...

Warmly welcome kids by name and show them the Welcome Question. For younger kids, you may read them the question out loud. Encourage kids to share their answers with one another. If kids prefer to draw a picture of their answer, invite them to do so. Feel free to share your answer as well!

At your start time ...

Greet all kids and ask them to answer the Welcome Question: When are you most happy? If kids are slow to volunteer, ask anyone with brown hair to answer the question first.

Being happy is pretty awesome! But all of us know that sometimes life is hard, and our circumstances aren't very happy at all. Today we'll hear in God's big story about how God can give us joy and contentment even during hard times. But first, it's time to be curious!

Curiosity Questions

Ask the following “I’m curious” questions. Say, “I’m curious ...” before each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each one.

I’m curious ...

- **Does anyone know what it means to be content?** (If needed, help kids understand that to be content is to be at peace and satisfied.)
- **Can you think of a time when you had a good attitude even though nothing was going your way?**

Leader Tip: Kids will be exploring the idea of joy and contentment throughout this lesson. Refer to these definitions as needed: Joy—deep gladness because of Jesus; Contentment—being satisfied and at peace.

Elementary Interactive Game: Candy Dash

SUPPLIES: large bowls (2), small candies (1 handful per kid), paper plates (1 per kid), markers (1 per kid), timer, chair (optional), hand sanitizer (optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Candy Dash Slide, Joy Wonder Truth Slide

Allergy Caution: This activity includes possible food allergens!

Ahead of time, pour small candies into one of the large bowls. You’ll need about one handful of candies for each kid. Candies that don’t melt easily work best, such as round, fruity rainbow candies.

Leader Tip: To minimize the spreading of germs, consider using small, individually wrapped candies for this activity.

Display the Candy Dash Slide and gather the kids on one end of the room. Give each kid a paper plate and a marker. Invite kids to write their names on their plates and then set their plates on the floor against the wall. Collect the markers. **Let’s play a game called Candy Dash! Sounds pretty delicious, huh?** Show kids the large bowl of candy and set it on the floor or on a chair on the opposite side of the room from the kids and their plates. Set the empty bowl off to the side (it will become the “discard” bowl later in the game).



In a moment, I’ll set the timer for an unknown amount of time. Show kids the timer. **Until the timer goes off, you’re free to run to the bowl, grab one candy, and bring it back to your plate. You can do this as many times as you’d like before the timer goes off, taking just one candy to set on your plate each time. But here’s the catch! You can only keep the candies on your plate if you’re touching your plate when the timer goes off, and your plate must remain in the same spot the whole time. If you aren’t touching your plate when the timer goes off, you lose all your candy! Any questions?** Answer kids’ questions. Consider passing around hand sanitizer before starting the game, especially if using unwrapped candies. Set the timer for about 1–2 minutes (don’t show it to the kids!) and begin: **Ready, set, go!**

Some kids will be pretty cautious, only grabbing one or two candies before staying in one spot with their plates. Others will risk it all over and over for one more candy! Both styles of play are OK. Have fun cheering all the kids on! When the timer goes off, instruct all the kids to stop where they are. Those who are touching their plates can eat their candy now or save it for later. Those who aren't touching their plates can return their candy to the bowl (if it's wrapped) or into the empty "discard" bowl (if it's unwrapped).

If time allows, play additional rounds, setting different time limits on the timer each round.

Gather the kids back together. **To be content means to be at peace and satisfied. Some of you were content with a little bit of candy on your plate, and some of you decided to risk it all for one more piece! Are you happy with the decisions you made in this game? Why or why not?** Allow kids to share freely.

Display the Joy Wonder Truth Slide. **Today in God's big story, we'll learn about a Jesus-follower named Paul who was content even when he faced a situation that was a whole lot harder than anything we faced in this game. Paul discovered that the key to having joy and contentment isn't having enough candy or even being in happy situations. He discovered that, as our Wonder Truth states, **GOD GIVES US JOY AND CONTENTMENT.****

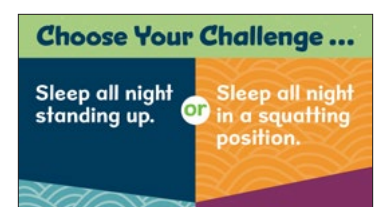
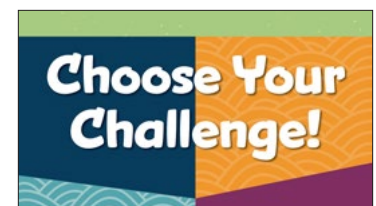


Make It Inclusive: Some children with developmental or neurodevelopmental conditions might experience big emotions when they have to give up the candy they've collected. This could also cause anxiety for any kids who live with food insecurity. Be sensitive to the needs of every kid and consider setting aside candy (or a more nutritious treat) for all the kids to enjoy at the end of the game.

Preteen Interactive Game: Choose Your Challenge!

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Choose Your Challenge! Slides, Joy Wonder Truth Slide

Display the first Choose Your Challenge Slide and gather the kids. **Let's play a game called Choose Your Challenge! Here's how it works ... Two challenges will appear on the screen. They might both be pretty unpleasant, but you need to decide which you would rather do and indicate your choice by moving to that side of the room. Let's get started!** Advance to the second Choose Your Challenge Slide and read it aloud: **Choose Your Challenge ... Sleep all night standing up or sleep all night in a squatting position. If you would rather sleep all night standing up, move to this side of the room.** Point to the side of the room. **If you would rather sleep all night in a squatting position, move to this side of the room.** Point to the opposite side of the room. Once all of the kids have made their choice and moved, invite 1–2 kids from each side to explain why they chose that challenge. Then have everyone gather back in the center.



Advance through all seven Choose Your Challenge! Slides. Invite kids to indicate their choices by moving to one side of the room or the other each time and give kids a chance to explain their choices. For your reference,

here is a list of the challenge choices included on the slides:

Sleep all night standing up or sleep all night in a squatting position

Eat crickets or eat (non-poisonous) flowers

Take a bath in slime or take a bath in a tub of (non-venomous) worms.

Drink a whole jar of pickle juice or eat a whole jar of mustard

Brush your teeth with mayonnaise or brush your teeth with ketchup

Eat soup with a fork or eat spaghetti with chopsticks

Gather the kids back together. **How many of you are glad you didn't actually have to do any of these challenges?** Invite kids to respond freely. **Me too! If I had to brush my teeth with ketchup or sleep all night standing up, I don't think I'd be very happy!** Today in God's big story, we'll learn about a Jesus-follower named Paul who was content and filled with joy even when he faced a serious and very unpleasant situation. Paul discovered that Jesus gives us joy and contentment in every circumstance, even the really hard ones. Display the Joy Wonder Truth Slide. **Today's Wonder Truth is GOD GIVES US JOY AND CONTENTMENT.**



Make It Inclusive: If any kids in your ministry have limited mobility, modify this game by giving each kid a sheet of paper with an arrow drawn on it. Invite them to point their arrow one way or the other to indicate which challenge they choose.

Declaring God's Wonder

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Joy Declaration Slide

Display the Joy Declaration Slide. Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

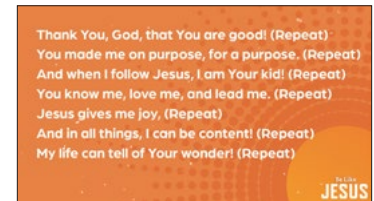
And when I follow Jesus, I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

Jesus gives me joy, (Kids repeat.)

And in all things, I can be content! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)



LESSON 3 ELEMENTARY & PRETEEN

Large Group

Guide kids into knowing God, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Gives Us Joy and Contentment

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2–4

WORD OF WONDER: Galatians 5:22–23a

Prayer of Invitation

Lead kids in a prayer of invitation before entering into worship and God's big story: **God, thank You for this time together in the Bible. Help us to understand how much You love us. We invite Your Holy Spirit to guide us to live like Jesus and to fill us with the joy and contentment that only You can give. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: songs from the [Be Like Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Today we'll hear how God gives us joy and contentment, even during hard situations. Let's praise God now for loving us and for always being with us through His Holy Spirit! Play songs from the [Be Like Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#) and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

Hear It, Watch It, Experience It!

This lesson includes three opportunities for your kids to enter the story—each one reinforces the others! **HEAR** it read directly from the Bible. **WATCH** it in a video. **EXPERIENCE** it through the live script.



SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Joy Title Slide, [Joy and Contentment God's Big Story Video](#)

Display the Joy Title Slide and gather the kids together. Explain that today's story comes straight from the Bible, God's Word, and can be found in the book of Philippians, one of the letters the apostle Paul wrote to Jesus-followers in the early church. Invite everyone to turn to Philippians 3. Encourage volunteers to help kids find this passage.

Let's start by reading part of God's big story directly from the Bible. Afterward, we'll watch and experience more of the story!

Read Philippians 3:1; 4:4–7, 10–13 aloud while the kids follow along or invite three confident readers to each read one section of the passage. Then do one or both of the following:

- Use the following Joy and Contentment Experience It! Script
- View [Joy and Contentment God's Big Story Video](#)

LESSON 3 JOY AND CONTENTMENT EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid), cardstock, brown paper lunch bags (7), permanent marker (prep only), dirty gym socks (2), bite-sized cracker or bit of bread (1), pen, paper, single-serve bag of chips, empty ice cream carton, small gift box, money (such as a single bill), table

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: God Sheet

Allergy Caution: This activity includes possible food allergens!

Before kids arrive, print the God Sheet onto cardstock. Gather brown paper lunch bags and props. Number each bag 1–7 with a permanent marker, distribute the props in the appropriate bags, fold the tops over to close, and place them on the table in numerical order.

Bag #1—dirty gym socks

Bag #2—bite-sized cracker or bit of bread

Bag #3—pen and paper

Bag #4—single-serve bag of chips

Bag #5—empty ice cream carton

Bag #6—small gift box with money inside (such as a single bill)

Bag #7—God Sheet



Gather the kids and explain that when you point to them during today's part of God's big story, they can repeat what you just said.

After the Holy Spirit came as a powerful helper to Jesus' disciples, Jesus appeared to a man named Paul and changed his life completely! Paul went from being an enemy of God's people to being a devoted follower of Jesus who traveled many places sharing the good news of Jesus and starting churches. Paul often wrote letters to the people in those churches, and many of those letters are now books in the Bible.

At the time of today's story, Paul was in prison. Pause to sniff the air with a disgusted look on your face. **Do you smell something?** Allow kids to respond. **Seriously! Do you smell that?** Sniff the air again and allow kids to respond. **It smells disgusting—stinky, nasty, and old. You don't smell it?** Pause for kids to respond. **It seems like the smell is coming from over there.** Walk toward the table, continually sniffing the air and acting like you smell something terrible.

Here it is—right here in this bag! Wow! This sure stinks! Open bag #1 and pull out two dirty, smelly gym socks. **This smell reminds me of an ancient Roman prison! Those prisons were horrible places.**

Close your eyes and imagine you're in a Roman prison cell long ago. It's the most disgusting, smelly place you can imagine. Everyone, plug your noses! Pause for kids to plug noses. They can unplug them after a few moments. **Roman jailers rarely took care of the prisoners, and prisoners only got food if their friends visited and gave it to them.** Invite kids to open their eyes.

I'm hungry! Point at kids to repeat the phrase, allowing them to respond.

I'm thirsty! Point at kids to repeat the phrase, allowing them to respond.

Maybe we should check out the next bag to see if someone brought us some delicious food! That would beat the smelly socks! Set down the socks and invite a volunteer to come up, open bag #2, and pull out the one bite-sized cracker or bit of bread. **It looks like no one is visiting us in prison today. One measly bite for dinner.**

In circumstances like this, most people would lose hope. But despite these horrible circumstances, Paul was content or satisfied. What do you think Paul was doing while he sat in his prison cell? Allow kids to respond. **Let's check our next bag and see if it'll give us a clue.** Open bag #3 or invite a volunteer to do so and pull out a pen and paper. **I knew it. Paul wasn't griping or complaining about the smell or the food. He was writing letters!**

Paul's letter to the Philippians is filled with joy!

Say what? Point at kids to repeat the phrase, allowing them to respond.

You heard it right. In the middle of a nasty jail cell, Paul writes to his friends, "Always be joyful because you belong to the Lord. I will say it again. Be joyful!" (Philippians 4:4). He even encourages the people in Philippi not to "worry about anything" and to "tell God about everything" (Philippians 4:6). That's a surprising statement from someone in a Roman prison who didn't know if he would ever be free again!

But Paul wasn't just telling the Philippians to have a positive attitude.

Chin up, sonny! Point at kids to repeat the phrase, allowing them to respond.

He was encouraging them to ask God for help in their difficult circumstances.

God, please help me. Look up to heaven as though praying. Then point at the kids to repeat the phrase, allowing them to respond.

Instead of grumbling or worrying, Paul tells them to pray for what they need and give thanks to God for what He has given them. When they do that, their hearts will be filled with God's peace. God will replace their worries with a sense of calm and a confidence that He will care for them in their time of need. Then they will be able to endure whatever comes their way.

This might have been a hard thing for Paul's friends in Philippi to accept. Having joy when things are bad—being content, at peace and satisfied—in all circumstances?

Whoa, kid! Point at kids to repeat the phrase, allowing them to respond.

So, Paul decided to show the Philippians an example of joy and contentment. I wonder what it was. Open bag #4 or invite a volunteer to do so and reveal a single-serve bag of chips. **Do you think this was what brought Paul joy and contentment?** Allow kids to respond. **Maybe this bag will show us what Paul's example of joy was.** Open bag #5 or invite a volunteer to do so and hold up an empty ice cream carton. **Do you think this was it?** Allow kids to respond. **Well, there are only two bags left. One of these has to reveal Paul's secret! Let's try this one.** Open bag #6 or invite a volunteer to do so and reveal a gift box. **Do you think we should open it?** Allow kids to respond. Carefully open the box and reveal the money inside.

Whoa, kid! Point at kids to repeat the phrase, allowing kids to respond.

While Paul was in prison, the church in Philippi sent him money to help take care of his needs. Paul could have let himself be discouraged. (After all, he was stuck in the worst prison of all time!) Instead, Paul chose to thank God and to thank the Philippians for their generous gift to him. Paul rejoiced despite his difficult circumstances.

The gift of money from the Philippians made Paul very joyful, yet he explains that his joy doesn't depend on the gift. For years, Paul had been taking long journeys around the Mediterranean region. He had experienced times of great need and times of great abundance. Sometimes he taught in the homes of rich people and ate all the food he wanted. Other times he went hungry for days as he traveled the long roads between towns. Some of Jesus' disciples helped Paul, while others ignored him. Through it all, Paul remained joyful and content.

How did he do that? Point at kids to repeat the phrase, allowing kids to respond.

Do you want to know Paul's secret? Allow kids to respond. Open bag #7 or invite a volunteer to do so and reveal the God Sheet. **The secret, Paul says, to being satisfied in every circumstance is to let Jesus be our source of strength. Through Jesus, we can endure and thrive in every circumstance. No matter how challenging our situation is, God will provide the strength to get through it. He will give us peace in our hearts and help us to see all the good things He has given us. He will help us become more like Jesus.** Hold up the God Sheet. **Life will be hard sometimes, but when we look to and rely on Jesus, God gives us joy and contentment.**

Connecting the Wonder Truth

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Joy Wonder Truth Slide

Display the Joy Wonder Truth Slide. **Our Wonder Truth today is GOD GIVES US JOY AND CONTENTMENT. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in action in the story?** Allow kids to answer freely.

Hundreds of years before Paul wrote to the Philippians from a Roman prison cell, a prophet named Habakkuk wrote in the Old Testament about being filled with joy in difficult circumstances. He wrote that even if the fields are barren, the crops are dead, and our food and money are gone, "I will still be glad because of what the LORD has done. God my Savior fills me with joy" (Habakkuk 3:18).



In Awe of God's Wonder

Spend a few moments allowing kids to think about the wonder of God's story.

What surprised you most in God's big story today? Allow kids time to think through the story. If they need prompting, help them review.

What about today's story do you think you'll remember one week from now? What about one year from now? Give kids time to share with a partner before sharing with the whole group.

LESSON 3 ELEMENTARY & PRETEEN

Small Group

Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Gives Us Joy and Contentment

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2–4

WORD OF WONDER: Galatians 5:22–23a

Word of Wonder Activity

WORD OF WONDER

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

—Galatians 5:22–23a (NIV)

But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself.

—Galatians 5:22–23a (NIRV)

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid), paper (1 sheet per kid), coloring utensils

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Word of Wonder Slide (optional), [Elementary Word of Wonder Video](#) (optional)

Our **Word of Wonder for the Be Like Jesus series** lists the fruit of the Spirit, which are the good traits the Holy Spirit grows in us when we follow Jesus. Paul talks about one of them in today's part of God's big story: the fruit of joy! Let's say the verse together. Open your Bible to Galatians 5:22–23a. If possible, display the Word of Wonder Slide or watch the [Elementary Word of Wonder Video](#). Practice saying Galatians 5:22–23a with the kids by reading it several times together.

Hand a sheet of paper to each kid and assign each a different fruit of the Spirit. Invite kids to draw a picture or symbol on their paper to represent their assigned fruit. For example, if a kid has the fruit of love, he might draw a heart. (If a group has fewer than nine kids, some kids can draw more than one fruit. If it's larger than nine, assign some of the fruit to pairs.) After kids finish their drawings, practice saying the Word of Wonder together, having each kid stand and hold up her drawing when the group says her fruit.

Elementary Questions

- **Where was Paul when he wrote his letter to the Philippians?** (in a Roman prison)
- **According to Paul's letter, what can we do instead of worrying?** (pray, "tell God about everything" [Philippians 4:6])
- **What was Paul's attitude like when he was in prison?** (Paul was joyful, thankful, and content.)
- **What (or who) did Paul say is the secret to being satisfied and content in every situation?** (Possible answers: Jesus, God, letting Jesus be the source of our strength.)
- **When things aren't going your way, what can you do to have joy and peace like Paul had?** (Possible answers: Pray, ask God for help, tell God everything, think about the good things God has given us, ask God for peace, etc.)
- **What is something you must do that is hard where you need God's strength to do it?**

Sometimes we find ourselves in hard situations. Thankfully, God can give us joy and peace just like Paul had when he was in prison. Let's thank God in prayer for giving us these good gifts.

Leader Tip: As kids explore what it means that God gives us joy and contentment, refer to these definitions as needed: Joy—deep gladness because of Jesus; Contentment—being at peace and satisfied.

Preteen Questions

- **What situation was Paul facing when he wrote his letter to the Philippians?** (Possible answer: He was in a dirty, unpleasant Roman prison cell.)
- **If you were in Paul's situation, do you think you would've been content? Why or why not?**
- **What was Paul's attitude like when he was in prison?** (Paul was joyful, thankful, and content.)
- **Why was Paul able to be content even in a horrible prison?** (Possible answers: Jesus was Paul's source of strength and joy; Paul prayed to God about everything; God filled him with joy.)
- **If you could ask God for help to be content in one area, what area would you ask Him for strength?**

God is a good God who can give us joy and contentment. He hears us and will help us to be content in every situation, even the hard ones. Let's talk with God in prayer now.

Leader Tip: Sadly, some kids in your ministry may be experiencing trauma or abuse. It's important to help kids understand that being content in every circumstance does not mean that every situation is OK or permissible. Hurting or mistreating another person is always wrong. God loves every one of His kids very much and is especially near to us when we're hurting. If you suspect a child may be in danger, talk right away with your ministry leader.

Small Group Prayer Time

Invite kids into a time of prayer. Give kids a chance to volunteer to pray for each other and those areas of their lives where they would like God to give them joy and contentment. If kids are slow to volunteer, you can pray for each kid and her requests. End by praising God for giving His joy and contentment to those who ask!

LESSON 3 ELEMENTARY & PRETEEN

Large Group or Small Group

Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Gives Us Joy and Contentment

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2–4

WORD OF WONDER: Galatians 5:22–23a

Elementary Responding in Worship: Tell God About Everything!

SUPPLIES: cardstock, scissors (prep only), whiteboard or butcher paper, dry-erase marker or permanent marker (prep only), sticky notes (several per kid), writing or coloring utensils, painter's tape (optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Philippians 4:6 Cards NIV or NIV (1 per 4 kids), Tell God Everything! Slide, music from the [Be Like Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

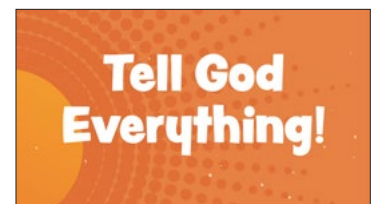
Ahead of time, print one copy onto cardstock of the Philippians 4:6 Cards NIV or NIV for every four kids. Cut the cards apart. Each kid will need one card. Set the cards aside to hand out at the end of Responding in Worship.

Also, on one end of a whiteboard or sheet of butcher paper, write this prayer prompt in large letters: "God, I ask You to ..." On the other end of the whiteboard or butcher paper, write this prompt: "God, I thank You for ..."

Kids will be writing and drawing prayers on sticky notes and placing them near the prayer prompts. If using butcher paper, use painter's tape to tape the prompts to a wall.



Display the Tell God About Everything! Slide and gather the kids. **Today in God's big story, a Jesus-follower named Paul was in a very difficult situation. Where was Paul? Invite kids to answer. Yes, he was in a Roman prison cell! What were Roman prisons like? Pause for kids to share freely. Ancient Roman prisons were horrible, filthy, stinky places. While in prison, Paul wrote a letter to the Philippians encouraging them to be joyful! He told them to not to "worry about anything" and to "tell God about everything" (Philippians 4:6). We can do the same thing today! No matter where we are or what we're facing, we can pray and tell God about everything!**



Give each kid a sticky note and set out writing and coloring utensils. **Let's spend time telling God about everything in prayer now. God hears our prayers and loves when we tell Him what we're feeling and what's going on in our lives, and when we ask Him for what we need. I invite you to write or draw a prayer on your sticky note that starts with the words, "God, I ask You to ..." Point to these words on the whiteboard or butcher paper. Tell God whatever is on your heart and what**

you need from Him today. Give kids time to write or draw their prayers. Set out extra sticky notes for kids who want to write or draw multiple prayers. Quietly play music from the [Be Like Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#) during this time. After a couple of minutes, invite kids to come up and stick their prayers to the whiteboard or butcher paper near the words, “God, I ask You to ...” As they do so, encourage them to talk with God in prayer by reading their notes and telling Him anything else that’s on their hearts and minds.

Next, give each kid another sticky note. **God is so good and loves each of us so much! What would you like to thank Him for?** Pause for kids to respond. **On your sticky note, write or draw a prayer to God that starts with the words, “God, thank You for”** Give kids time to write or draw their prayers. Leave out the extra sticky notes for kids who want to write or draw additional prayers. After a minute or two, invite kids to come up and stick their prayers to the whiteboard or butcher paper near the words, “God, I thank You for” As they do so, they can talk with God in prayer by reading their notes and telling Him whatever’s on their hearts.

Give each kid a Philippians 4:16 Card NIV or NIV to take home. Encourage kids to place the card somewhere they will see it often and to read the verse out loud as a reminder that they can tell God about everything!

Make It Inclusive: Provide a variety of drawing utensils to benefit kids of varying fine motor skill abilities. For example, markers require less muscle strength/pressure than crayons or colored pencils. If possible, also have simple and adaptive tools on hand, such as pencil grips.

Preteen Responding in Worship: Dear God ...

SUPPLIES: large cardboard box, scissors (prep only), permanent marker (prep only), writing utensils, letter-sized envelopes (1 per kid)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Letter to God (1 per kid), Dear God Slide, music from the [Be Like Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, print a copy of the Letter to God for each kid. Carefully cut a slit in the top of the cardboard box large enough for kids to slip their envelopes in. Write “To God” in permanent marker on the front of the box and set the box at the front and center of the room.

Display the Dear God Slide and gather the kids. **Today in God’s big story, a Jesus-follower named Paul was in a very difficult situation. Where was Paul?** Invite kids to answer. **Yes, he was in a Roman prison cell! What were Roman prisons like?** Pause for kids to share freely. **Ancient Roman prisons were horrible, filthy, stinky places. While in prison, Paul wrote a letter to the Philippians encouraging them to be joyful! He told them, “Don’t worry about anything. No matter what happens, tell God about everything. Ask and pray, and give thanks to him” (Philippians 4:6). This invitation is for all of us! Let’s spend time writing letters to God, telling Him about what we’re facing in life, asking for His help, and giving thanks to Him!**

Dear God,
One hard thing I'm facing is _____

Right now, this is how I feel about it: _____

I ask you to: _____

Please help me to be thankful and to feel Your peace.
Please fill me with _____ even on hard days.
Today I want to thank You for _____

Love, _____

Wonder Ink LESSON 3 LETTER TO GOD

Dear God ...

Give a Letter to God and an envelope to each kid, then set out writing utensils. Invite kids to tell God about everything going on in their lives by filling out the prompts on the letter or by writing or drawing their prayers to God along the edges and on the back of the paper. Play music from the [Be Like Jesus Spotify playlist](#) quietly during this time.

As kids finish, invite them to fold their letters and seal them in their envelopes. They can bring their letters up and slip them inside the box as a physical symbol of releasing their prayers to God. Or if they would like, they can bring their letters home as a reminder that God invites them to tell Him about everything. During this time, encourage kids to talk with God in prayer about anything that's on their hearts and minds.

Make It Inclusive: Provide simple and adaptive tools such as pencil grips and jumbo or triangular pencils to help kids with delayed motor skills.

Blessing Your Kids

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Joy Blessing Slide

Display the Joy Blessing Slide. Speak this blessing over your kids, as a group or as individuals. If you bless kids individually, insert each name into the blessing.

Blessing: As Paul wrote to the Philippians, may you “always be joyful because you belong to the Lord. I will say it again. Be joyful!” (Philippians 4:4). May God give you joy and contentment in every circumstance today and always!

