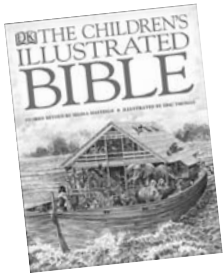


Seventh Sunday of Easter



The Children's Illustrated Bible

Jesus prayed to God: "I have revealed your name to those whom you gave me from the world. Now they know that all things you have given to me are from you, because the words that you gave me, I gave to them. They believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am praying for those you have given me, because they are yours. Holy God, protect them by your name so that they may be one just as we are. While I was with them, I was protecting them by your name. I guarded them, and not one of them is lost. Now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy completed in them. I have given them your word. I am not praying that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. Just as you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. I sanctify myself for them, so they may also be sanctified by the truth.

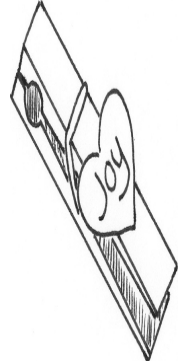
—John 17:6–19 adapted

Clothespin Prayer

Before class, create a prayer for the children similar to Jesus' prayer for his disciples. Make a joy clothespin before class by writing "joy" on a heart with a black marker, and glue the heart to clothespin as in the design shown. Read Jesus' prayer for his disciples in John 17:6–19. Discuss: What did Jesus pray for? (protection, joy for the disciples, asked God to "sanctify" the disciples). What does "sanctify" mean? (to set apart as holy or to be free from sin). Jesus prayed that God would bless the disciples so they would be free to feel God's joy.

Who prays for other people? What kinds of things do you pray for? Share the prayer that you have written for the kids. When you pray for others, your heart is filled with joy for that person. Clip the clothespin to your collar or shirt. What do you think this clothespin means? It is a "joy in our heart" clothespin, and it reminds us that we need to pray for one another. When we pray for others, we not only bring God's joy to them but to ourselves. Have kids make "joy in my heart" clothespins for themselves or to hand out.

A clothesline may be strung across the room (or in the hallway) for kids to clip their joy clothespins to. On small slips of paper, kids may write the names or situations they wish to pray for, then clip the paper to the clothespin.



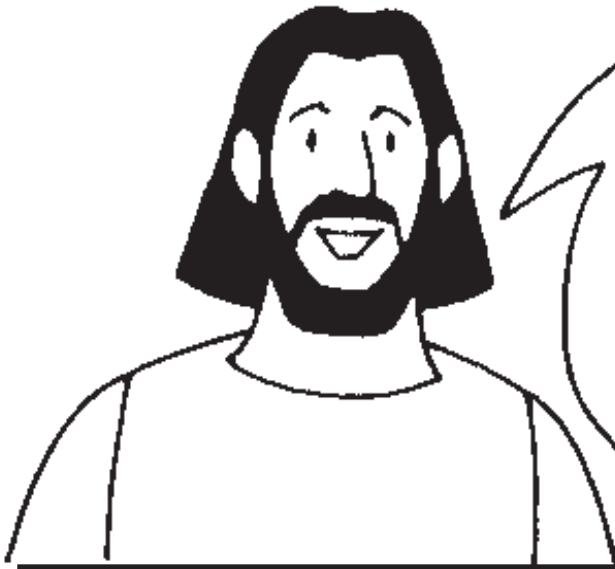
Joyful Fruit Kabobs

Read and discuss the scripture from Psalm 1:1–3. Those who follow the teaching of the Lord are like trees that bear fruit (show the apple, orange, and banana). These fruits all come from trees. They are fulfilling God's purpose by bearing fruit. When we do what God wants us to, we are fulfilling God's purpose. If you are following God, how does that make you feel?

Each of the trees that grew these fruits was different, but they are fulfilled by the same purpose: To create fruit. Each of us is different, but we have the same purpose: To do what God wants us to. (Cut up the fruit into small pieces. Have each child create his own fruit kabob by stringing the fruit pieces and marshmallows on a skewer.)

Joyful Relay

Divide kids into two groups, giving each a fabric bedsheet and placing the groups on each side of the room. When you say, "Go," the first person on each side is to lay down on the sheet, roll up in it, and roll across the room without becoming undone. On the other side, the next person in line rolls up in the sheet and rolls back across the room. When all have had a turn, discuss: Did you like the relay? Did it bring you feelings of joy? Having fun with others and being active is always a joyful time!



You shall
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when the Holy
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—John 17:6–19 adapted

Draw joyful pictures and cut them out. Attach them to dowel a rod and wave them joyfully.

JOY