

Got Fruit?

Joy

Ready (*Plant the seed*)

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. –Romans 15:13

Set (*Get the conversation started*)

When we think of joy, we think of happiness; but they are actually two different things. Happiness is a temporary emotion. It's conditional. Happiness is based on something else creating it: a toy, video game, a movie, favorite food or fun with your friends. Happiness has to be created. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit, a gift from God. It grows inside you and is always there. It doesn't depend on anything else. Having a joyful heart means that you choose God's joy through the gift of the Holy Spirit at all times, especially in times of pain, struggle or defeat. True joy comes from the presence of God, who is always with you.

As an athlete, you will find yourself in difficult situations often. You will be injured and have to decide if you can go on playing. You will be up against a tough opponent and struggle to play your best. You will be defeated and have to choose to lose with grace. James 1:2-3 says, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know the testing of your faith produces perseverance." Notice that he didn't say if *you face trials* he said *whenever*. You will face trials. This is how we grow. When you are on your second game of the day, and you're tired, and you're facing a really tough team, you will persevere because God will strengthen you to do your best. When you play for the joy of the Lord, you deepen your relationship with Him and grow in your fruit of the Spirit. Joy isn't temporary, it's always within you. When you spend time with God, through prayer and reading the Bible, your joy becomes stronger and will sustain you through the trials you will face.

Grow (*Take it away*)

- What are things that make you happy? What brings you joy?
- Have you faced any trials in your life? How did you respond?
- What does it look like to have a joyful heart on the field?
- How can we maintain a relationship with God to strengthen our joyful hearts?

Pray

Heavenly Father, we love you with our joyful hearts. We thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit continuing to grow within us. We are sorry that we sometimes choose more of what makes us happy and less of your joy. We ask that you strengthen us so that when we face trials of many kinds that we can persevere with joy in our hearts for the great love you show us. Amen.

Overtime (*Optional lessons as time allows.*)

Option #1-

Read Acts 16:16-40

Discuss how Paul and Silas chose Joy even when they were wrongfully imprisoned.

Do you think it was hard for them to choose joy?

What happened when they did?

How did their choice affect the other prisoners and the jailer?

How does this show that what you choose can shape others?

Option #2 – attached object lesson using a clear plastic cup, plate, water bottle(s) and small rocks or marbles.

Happiness or Joy?

Directions

Tip – Make sure you have enough water to fill the cup.

Set up- Sit in a circle. Place the empty cup on the plate in front of you.

1. Ask players for things that make them “happy”(Ex. Video games, toys, candy, tv, movies, etc.). Add a little water to the cup for each one. Take enough answers to fill the cup $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way full.

Say: Yes, those are things that definitely make us happy. Is our cup full yet? No.

2. Next ask them for things that come from God and bring them joy. (Ex: the Bible, prayer, the Earth, Sun, going to church, etc.). As they answer, add a rock or marble to the cup. Continue filling until the water spills over the top.

Say: Wow, which filled our cup faster? Yes, things that come from God fill our cup with joy much faster than all of those little things that make us happy. And look! Some of our happiness poured out.

If I left this plate out, just like this, all week, what do you think would happen to the water on the plate?

Yes! It would evaporate!

That’s because happiness is temporary. These things that we mentioned only make us happy for a short time.

Will the rocks still be there at the end of the week?

Yes! That’s because joy is always with us. It is a fruit of the Spirit dwelling within us forever.

