

Inside Out Jesus - Happy Jesus

Text: Luke 19:1-10

Supplies:

2-3 large hula hoops (1 per team)

Scrabble tiles (available on Amazon)

Glue

Cardstock (1 per person)

Paper and pens

Bibles

Large Group

Introduction: Say "let's play a game!". Divide your group into two or more teams of at least 6-8 kids. Teams will line up and hold hands. The hula hoop will start on the ground and at "go" the first person will pick it up and the team will pass it down the line and back again. When finished the whole team sits on the ground to signal victory. (video if you are visual: https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcafee_e-26860_3pc-ls&p=hula+hoop+line+game&type=F211US1494G91841MAhHmvMC2%2BC4yzE9Us3FXtvBEn2dOTt39ORCIVXsfCsQ%3D#action=view&id=8&vid=1ba3ceea4209a43380bf65af95e6db37)

*If you have a sensory sensitive kiddo they can be the cheerleader or judge and not be on a team.

Question: Those of you on the winning team, did you like being on the winning team? Why or why not? How did it feel to be on the losing team? What things make you happy? Which activities make you happiest? Who are the people in your life that make you happy?

Say: Today we are talking about being happy. We will look at what happiness is in our lives and look at a time Jesus was happy.

What is the emotion in the world?

Say: The word “happy” makes us think of all sorts of things. Some people think of big smiles, or fun things they like to do. Some people think of laughing, or times when people are nice to you. I wanted to talk to you about happiness today, so I looked up the word happy in the dictionary. Here is what it said. Happy can mean “favored by luck or fortune.” It can mean “enjoying well-being or contentment.” It can also mean “having good fellowship.” Those are a lot of big words, but I bet we all know what it feels like to be happy sometimes, and that is what we are going to talk about today. It turns out being happy isn’t just something that happens to us if we are lucky...there are actually choices we can make that will help us be happier. Did you know that some scientists even studied happiness to find out what makes people happier?¹ In their studies, they figured out what some of these choices are that people can make that will make them happier! We are going to talk today about what some of the choices are that we can make that will bring more happiness both to ourselves and to those around us. And, we are going to learn from Jesus how he did this, so we can do it too.

Watch Video: Science of happiness:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHv6vTKD6lg>

Questions: Where did you see happiness in this video? Did it surprise you? How does it make you feel when someone shares kind words with you? Who do you think experienced more happiness – the one who wrote the gratitude note and read it or the one that listened to the words on the phone? Why?

Where is the emotion in Jesus?

Read Bible Story: Start by singing the Zacchaeus song that many sang as children

https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcafee_e-26860_3pc-ls&p=zacchaeus+was+a+wee+little+man&type=F211US1494G91841MAhHmvMC2%2BC4yzE9Us3FXtvBEn2dOTt39ORCI VXsfCsQ%3D#action=view&id=6&vid=ba44795c756ee151d761026f24743bee

Say: I am going to read the story to you and I want you to close your eyes and listen and try to visualize the scene: Read the story:

Zacchaeus the Tax Collector

19 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. ⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." ⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. ⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner." ⁸ But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Questions:

- Where did Jesus encounter Zacchaeus? (Jericho)
- Why did Zacchaeus climb the tree? (to see Jesus)
- What was Zacchaeus' job and did he have a lot of friends? (he was a tax collector and not liked by the people because he overcharged them)
- Where the others in the crowd happy that Jesus was going to Zacchaeus' house? (no because he was not liked because of his dishonesty)
- Think about this, after Jesus told Zacchaeus he was coming to his house Zacchaeus came down and welcomed him gladly, then the people grumbled and immediately Zacchaeus stood up and talked about he was changing his life. Why do you think Zacchaeus decided to be so generous? (Jesus' acceptance changed his life)
- When Jesus told Zacchaeus to come down from the tree do you think he used a scolding voice (which often comes out in the little song) or a friendly "one of the guys" voice? (opinion)
- Do you think it matters what tone of voice we use with people? Why? (tone of voice does matter and can set the stage for the whole conversation)

- What did Zacchaeus announce he was going to do immediately after Jesus invited himself over for dinner? (give half his money to the poor and repay anyone he cheated 4x)
- What do you think Jesus and Zacchaeus talked about at dinner? Remember that Zacchaeus had already committed to changing his ways and paying back all of the money he took. (answers vary)
- Where do you see yourself in the story? (answers vary)

Small Group

Reaction to the emotion in the world?

Say: Happiness is a wonderful part of life. Like we talked about earlier, there are things we can choose to do that will help make us happier, and make those around us happier. Once we create happiness we can share it, kind of like when you light a candle you can just keep sharing the fire from that candle and it grows and grows! Jesus both experienced happiness in seeing Zacchaeus changed, but also shared happiness with Zacchaeus by choosing to spend time with him and treating him like he mattered when some of the other people around Zacchaeus weren't doing that.

Ask: What activities make you happy? Who are people that make you happy? How can you spend more time with the people that make you happy and doing the things that make you happy? What are some ways you can share happiness with others in your life?

Activity: Scrabble Art

Use scrabble tiles to create a piece of art, by using the letters to spell out the words of activities and people that make you happy. This will be used in our prayer time at the end.

Reaction to how Jesus handled the emotions?

Say: Jesus experienced all of the emotions, including happiness. God created us in His image so we too get to experience all of those emotions as well. I think it is significant to notice that Jesus shared happiness with everyone. He chose to be a friend to all people, and sometimes especially to people who felt like they were on the outside and didn't have very many friends. Jesus' happiness came from them living their lives loving and serving others.

Ask: How can we share happiness like Jesus? Have you ever felt like you were on the outside of a group and someone welcome you in? How did that make you feel? Or, have you ever noticed that someone is on the outside of a group and welcomed them in? How did that make you feel? Is there someone you can invite to join you for a meal, or a conversation or just share a smile with?

Activity: Letter Writing

In our video we saw how happiness and gratitude go hand in hand. Choose either Zacchaeus or Jesus and write them a letter sharing your thoughts from their interaction. You can tell them where you saw happiness in their interaction

Prayer

Use the scrabble activity words in your prayer.

Thank you Jesus for these people _____

Thank you for these activities _____

Help me to share happiness with _____

Amen

¹ <https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/happy-life.html>

Scrabble tiles (1000 for \$20)

https://www.amazon.com/GXXMEI-1000PCS-Scrabble-Spelling-Crossword/dp/B0CDW78WSR/ref=sr_1_9?crid=39B7XNUW401G9&dib=eyJ2IjojMSJ9.p5aOHGH4_fwuiPd-I2EhvEYgEXPa3b-eVcUZ74gOUtI9nYzlikgefHgZi0bkZJ9NTtGQf9izfD-Zbr3ViMleLPMcA0go9ESUMI5NdKlw3IMg_jYXerZ7fbp26RUxeYaL14UEak5wNojD9svBJh3G08tKrGpLgu32ryPx1okb5gl2eiEBJdV_uD4_Ojyi8ZxzRemdFPs8VZEiurzFALLO8A.QjJNpKCVXVKKZCLKhAu2E1690jITTEyZ6R5cQ0QozZM&dib_tag=se&keyword=s=scrabble%2Btiles&qid=1725600193&srefix=scrabble%2Caps%2C126&sr=8-9&th=1

