Philippians 4:4

AGAIN



PRE-GATHERING BIBLE STUDY

GOAL

While we all aim for happiness, God invites us to have joy. Joy is more than a feeling. It is more than something to keep to ourselves. The joy we have overflows because of everything Jesus secures for us.

Kansas District Youth Gathering
Nov. 20-22, 2026

WHAT IS JOY?

Start with this question:
"When have you seen someone else extremely happy? What caused that?"
Then ask:

- Should we expect that level of happiness all the time?
- Can you say you are happy without that feeling?

You can write answers on a whiteboard or just keep it verbal.

READ IT TOGETHER: ACTS 16:25-34

Background to the story: Paul and Silas have been arrested for casting out a demon from the slave of important people in town. They are being punished unjustly for proclaiming Jesus.
Ask:

- How are Paul and Silas acting in jail? Is that normal?
- What did the jailer expect to see when he looked into the jail cell with an open door?
- Why do you think the jailer felt desperate?
- How did Paul and Silas share their joy with the desperate jailer?
- How did the jailer and his family act after being baptized?

LET'S TALK:

JOY IS MORE THAN A FEELING

Ask:

- Where does our joy come from as Christians?
- Is there anything/anyone that can take away our Christian joy?
- Where do we look to when we don't feel that joy?
- Is it possible for our Christian joy to be shared with others who haven't known or experienced it? How?
- Is our Christian joy able to be experienced as a group? Or is it only for ourselves to feel individually?

Lead into this idea: Because joy is more than a feeling, Christians can say they are joyful no matter the circumstances. Our joy is grounded in the death and resurrection of Jesus, which guarantees for us eternal life. Part of feeling that joy, more than just knowing about it, is experiencing the gifts God gives us in the community of believers.

DIGGING IN: REAL TALK

LAW:

It is easy for Christians to be driven by our emotions, especially of sadness. That's the human way. If every part of my life tears me down and leaves me desperate, I want to feel like there is no hope and nothing to rejoice in.

I am driven into being self-focused and self-centered instead of focusing on how God continues to care for me and my future.

GOSPEL:

God has always given me a reason to rejoice – no matter how I might feel. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus my hope leads me to thank God for His goodness and praise Him for His mercies.

More than that, God gives us a community in the church where we can bear each others burdens and help one another rejoice even in sadness.

We are reminded not only to rejoice once; or twice; or when we feel like it; or when its convenient. We are invited to rejoice AGAIN; and AGAIN; and AGAIN.

REFLECTION: A PERSONAL PAUSE

Quiet time or written reflection. Prompt with:

- Have you been joyful lately? Why or why not?
- What is one way you can add rejoicing to your daily schedule?
- What is one way you can help a friend or a family member rejoice?

Closing Prayer

Lord God, You have called Your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go but only that Your hand is leading us and Your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.