

The Epistle of Joy

Paul accomplished much from prison. This letter to the Philippians is one of four letters he wrote from prison. You might expect a man in prison to be depressed and to bemoan his condition. This was not Paul; he found joy in his condition. Prison did not put his Christian walk or ministry on hold--quite the opposite--his imprisonment furthered the gospel! In his letter to the Philippians Paul provides the model of a Christian life; keeping his eyes on the furtherance of the gospel, not his own condition.

Let's find out what this Joyous Christian life is all about.

This Joyous Christian Life

Practice love, model Christ, understand your marching orders, feel peace and joy.
Gain insight into our own faith.

Objectives: Practice praying and communicating with each other.
Praise God as a family.
Have fun with your family.

Number of Players: 4 or more

Length: 20 minutes - 1 hour for each round (you can divide this game up over time to spread out the lessons)

Set up: Explain the play and divide everyone into equal teams of 2 or more people. Everyone should have their Bible available for use.
Assign one person as timekeeper (they can still play, they just need to be aware of the time and let teams know how much time they have throughout the play.)

The Play:

There are 4 rounds in this game. Each team will do each round. There are no winners or losers, no need to keep score--you can plan a celebration for the entire family once all rounds have been completed.

Round 1) practice love -- Each team should pick one or more verses from Philippians chapter one to play out an example of love. You will have 5 minutes to find your verse and plan your example, then you will have 5 minutes to act it out for all the teams. Be creative! You can act it out exactly or plan an activity to perform an act of love that emphasizes the lesson from your verse(s) (i.e. saying loving words to each other, or perform a kind deed for someone on yours or another's team) Each team will take turns performing examples of LOVE.

Round 2) model Christ -- In chapter two, Paul points out how Christ is a model for our life. That model is humility, "but made Himself of no reputation..." Phil 2:6. This round will be played individually. Each individual should take 10 minutes to plan a humble, lowly act to perform. The act should be something that can be performed under 15 minutes. Once you have your plan, take turns performing your humble act. (if the act of humility is something that is private between two family members, please allow the space/privacy for that to take place if needed.)



FAMILY STUDY

Round 3) Forward MARCH! -- It's hard to move forward if you are looking back. Set up an area where you have a good 10 feet to walk between 2 points (point A and point B). Have all the team members from one team stand at point A. Then one of the team members will attempt to walk to point B while continually looking back over their shoulder at their team members. The team members can shout instruction and encouragement. But, the team member who is walking to point B must always be looking back at their team. Have each member of the team and each team go through this exercise.

Round 4) Peace and Joy -- "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;" Phil 4:6 "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!" Phil 4:4 Each of us has things that we are anxious for. God does not want us to be anxious for anything. Have everyone find a comfortable spot in the room. Think about and then share with each other one thing that you are anxious about and one praise. If you are not anxious about anything, that is wonderful! Then spend your time telling about something that you were anxious about in the past, gave to God, and what the result was and the praise from that situation. Pay close attention (you can take notes) to what your family members share, you will be praying for each other. You can set a time limit for the sharing time if needed. Once everyone has shared, then pray for the person on your right. Give everyone a chance to pray out loud in an orderly fashion. After the prayer, sing a song to the Lord, praising him for all he has done and continues to do.

Discussion: How did it make you feel when you saw the acts of love performed? How did you feel being humble? Was it hard or easy? What made it hard/easy? Were you able to get from point A to point B while looking backwards? Decide as a family on one or more things you can do this week to put into practice what you have learned about love, humility, march forward as a Christian and having peace and joy.

Prayer: Close in prayer thanking God for His provision and for all that you have learned and the fun you had with your family.