

**Key Verse:** *"The joy of the Lord is your strength."* — Nehemiah 8:10

### **SUMMARY**

This week we learned that happiness and joy are not the same thing. Happiness comes and goes depending on circumstances, but joy is something deeper. Joy comes from God and lasts through the ups and downs of life. While happiness fades when things go wrong, joy gives us strength to endure because it's rooted in God's love, mercy, and faithfulness. Joy isn't about ignoring life's problems—it's about having peace and strength no matter what we face.

### **ICEBREAKER**

What's something small that always makes you laugh or smile, no matter what kind of day you're having?

### **DISCUSSION STARTER**

Think about the difference between happiness and joy. Happiness depends on what's happening, but joy lasts even when things go wrong. Can you think of a time when you still felt peace or hope even though things were difficult?

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What's the biggest difference between joy and happiness in your opinion?
2. Why do you think happiness fades so quickly?
3. How can joy help us see things differently when life gets tough?
4. Nehemiah said, *"The joy of the Lord is your strength."* What do you think that means for you personally?
5. Serving others can help us experience joy. Can you think of ways you could serve someone this week?

### **ACTIVITY:**

- Give each student a small slip of paper (or have them use their phone).
- Have them write down 2 things that bring them happiness and 2 things that bring them lasting joy.
- Share a few answers as a group.
- Then ask: *"If the happiness things disappeared, would the joy things still remain?"*  
This helps students see how joy is deeper and more secure than happiness.

### **WRAP-UP**

Joy is not about ignoring hard times—it's about finding strength in God to get through them. Happiness is great, but it comes and goes. True joy lasts because it comes from God.

**Final thought:** This week, when something goes wrong and you feel frustrated, stop and remind yourself: *"The joy of the Lord is my strength."* Choose one small way to serve someone else, and notice how it shifts your perspective and fills you with lasting joy.

