

# Choose to Be Cheerful

Quarter 7 • Lesson 9

Focus on Life Skills

- 1. Connecting:** Do an activity to think about choices.
- 2. Teaching:** Learn to think about good things (Philippians 4:8; Psalm 46:1).
- 3. Responding:** Act out ways to be cheerful.

## SUPPLIES

- Bible
- Optional Supplies:*
- Memory Verse Poster
- Student Pages
- Crayons or colored pencils

## Teacher Devotion

*Finally, my brothers and sisters, always think about what is true.  
Think about what is noble, right and pure.  
Think about what is lovely and worthy of respect.  
If anything is excellent or worthy of praise,  
think about those kinds of things.*  
Philippians 4:8

Our thoughts can powerfully affect our attitude and outlook. Negative thoughts lead to anger, sadness, and bitterness. Positive thoughts lead to joy, peace, and hope. Our brains are designed to reinforce the thought patterns we use most often. That is why Paul encourages us to think about things that are true, right, and pure. As we cultivate gratefulness and train our thoughts on good things, we can have joy, even when our circumstances are difficult.

What do you think about? When you have a quiet moment to just think does your mind dwell on your worries and cares? Do you think about the ways you have been mistreated or the trials you have endured? Or do you ponder the amazing works of your wonderful God? Do you meditate on the ways He has changed your life and provided for you? When you think about the good things in your life and how good God is, you can experience the peace and joy that only come from Him.

**Family Connection:** Encourage families to talk to their children about the things they are thankful for. Ask them to think of at least 1 good thing that has come out of a difficult situation.

## LESSON TIME

### 1. Connecting: Do an activity to think about choices.

Greet the children as they come to class. Ask each child to say 1 positive thing that happened to him this week.

**Today, we will talk about choices we have in our lives and over our feelings. Let's try an activity. I will say a statement. If it is true, stand up and raise your hand in the air. If it is not true, sit down.**

**Teacher Tip:** Many children may not have choices in their daily lives. However, each of them can choose how they will think and respond to different situations. They can choose to be thankful and joyful, or they can choose to be angry and bitter. Encourage them to make healthy choices!

**I get to choose who my friends are.**

**I get to choose who my family is.**

**I get to choose what clothes I wear.**

**I get to choose what jobs my family members have.**

**I get to choose where I go during the day.**

**I get to choose what happens to me.**

**I get to choose to be happy or sad.**

That last one was a little difficult.

- **Do you think you can choose to be happy or sad? Why or why not?**

Allow 2–3 children to respond.

- **What are some other choices you make each day?**

Allow 2–3 children to respond.

**We make many choices every day. While we cannot choose what emotions we will feel, we can choose how to manage them. Our emotions can be hard to control sometimes. When bad things happen, we may feel as if we have no choice but to be sad and feel afraid. There are times to be sad, but the Bible tells us we can choose to be happy and joyful even when bad things happen. Today we will talk about how to do that!**

**Teacher Tip:** Having a positive outlook is an important part of resilience—that quality that helps someone recover after experiencing difficult things. When children learn to be resilient, it will help them to live successful lives.

### 2. Teaching: Learn to think about good things (Philippians 4:8; Psalm 46:1).

Help the children find partners to sit with for this section of the lesson.

**Listen carefully as I tell you a story. You will answer questions about it in a moment. Joseph was having a bad day. In the morning, he stepped on a sharp rock and cut his foot. In the afternoon, he argued with his older brother, which made him grumpy. In**

the evening, his father came home and told the family that he had lost his job. Joseph felt sad and angry. He wanted to scream and cry. He began to think that only bad things happened to him.

After asking each question below, give the children about 1 minute to talk with their partners about their answers. After each question, ask 2 pairs to share their ideas with the whole class.

- Do you think Joseph can be happy after having a bad day? Why or why not?
- Think of a day when you felt sad. What happened to make you feel that way?

**Teacher Tip:** If children want to talk about some of the hard things they have experienced, allow some group time to do this. Some children will struggle to see the positive parts of their situations because they are so difficult. This lesson is designed to give children practical ways to look for the good around them, their own value, and the blessings that come from God.

**Our thoughts are very powerful. Science shows that our brains build pathways based on the emotions we feel in different situations. When we respond with angry, negative thoughts, those thoughts build a pathway in our brains that makes it easier to have angry and negative thoughts again. God knows it can be difficult for us to think positive thoughts because He created us. For this reason, the Bible tells us how to choose to think about things that will help us to be cheerful.**

Read this verse directly from your Bible.

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*Finally, my brothers and sisters, always think about what is true.*

*Think about what is noble, right and pure.*

*Think about what is lovely and worthy of respect.*

*If anything is excellent or worthy of praise,  
think about those kinds of things.*

Philippians 4:8

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This verse tells us that we can always think about what is true. Here is something true for you to think about: God made us and He loves us! Because of Him we have so many good things to think about, even when we have a difficult day or something bad happens.

Thinking about the good things in your life and how good God is can help you to have a positive attitude. The more you think about things that are good, right, and pure, the more likely you will be to have those thoughts when you face a challenge or have a bad day.

Let's listen to Joseph's story again. Every time you hear something positive, stand up. Every time you hear something that is not positive, squat down.

Joseph was having a bad day. In the morning, he stepped on a sharp rock and cut his foot (squat). His mom helped him clean the wound and put a bandage on it (stand). In the afternoon, he argued with his older brother over whose turn it was to feed the animals (squat). This made Joseph grumpy until he remembered that he actually

enjoyed feeding the animals (stand). In the evening, his father came home and told the family that he had lost his job (squat). "I'm glad that I can work for your uncle while I'm looking for a new job," he said (stand). Joseph felt sad and angry. He wanted to scream and cry. He began to think that only bad things happened to him.

Allow 2–3 students to respond to each of the following questions.

- **What are some "good things" Joseph can choose to think about?**

His mom cares about him and helped him when he hurt his foot. He likes spending time with animals. His dad has temporary work until he finds a new job.

**Here are some tools you can use to help you focus on the good things in your life.**

**1. Find the good in the situation.**

When something difficult happens, you can choose to see the good in the situation. Maybe the good is a caring friend who helps you. Maybe the good is feeling God's love in a difficult situation. In the story I read to you today, we discovered that a few good things happened to Joseph. When you try to find good in a difficult situation, you will feel happier.

**2. Smile.**

Smiling, even when you do not feel like it, can make you feel happier, make you worry less, and even make you healthier. When you feel sad or angry, try smiling!

**Let's take a moment to practice smiling. I will read a list of things that might make you smile or laugh. When you hear something that would make you feel happy, smile!**

**Teacher Tip:** You may choose to change any of the following examples to those that better fit the children in your class.

**A friend tells you a funny story.**

**Your friend tells you a story about her sick brother.**

**You go to the market with your mother and she buys you a sweet!**

**You play with a friend and get hurt.**

**Your friend helps you up after you fall.**

**Hopefully at least one of the examples you heard made you smile. Even when you do not feel happy, smiling can make you feel good.**

**3. Think about what you are thankful for.**

Being thankful for what you have helps you think about good things and reminds you of all that God has already provided. When you are feeling sad or angry, make a list of the things you are thankful for and praise God for them!

**Think about something you are thankful for. What has God given you? Who in your life encourages you and makes you feel good about who you are and what you are doing? Tell your partner at least 3 things you are thankful for.**

Give the children 1 minute to talk to their partners. After 30 seconds, ask the children to switch so both partners have time to share. Give the children another 30 seconds to do this.

It is amazing to hear all of the things you are thankful for! Before we talk about the last tool to help you focus on the good things in your life, let's listen to this verse from the Bible.

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*God is our place of safety. He gives us strength.  
He is always there to help us in times of trouble.*  
Psalm 46:1

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#### **4. Go to God.**

When life seems difficult and you feel as if everything is going wrong, pray about it. You have heard me say many times that God is our safe place. This means that He wants to listen to your fears and your troubles. You can trust Him to listen and to give you strength.

Take a moment to think about something difficult that has happened to you in the last week. Let's say a prayer together. When I pause, say a thought prayer about something difficult.

Lord, we thank You for listening to us  
We thank You for being our safe place.  
We come to You today to ask for help with (pause for the children to think about the difficult thing).  
We ask that You would give us the strength we need to focus on You and all of the good things in our lives.  
In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

As you go through each day, practicing these 4 tools can help you to focus on the good things in your life so that you can be cheerful. Let's practice using these to help us through a pretend day.

### **3. Responding: Act out ways to be cheerful.**

Let's gather together and talk about some things that might happen to us in a day. You will decide how you will choose to be cheerful!

Ask the children to sit in a circle in the middle of your teaching space. Ask the children to act with you as you talk about the events.

**Let's pretend it is Saturday morning and you just woke up.**

Pretend to stretch your arms and yawn.

- **What do you do every morning to get ready for the day? Stay in your place in the circle as you show me with your actions what you might do.**

Allow the children to act out their morning routines. Call out any actions you recognize, like eating, getting dressed, and helping siblings get ready.

**Next, it is time to go to the market.**

Lead the children in standing up and marching in place. Then have the children sit down again.

You need to buy some things for your home, but you do not have much money to spend. You worry that you will not be able to buy what you need.

How would you choose to be cheerful in this situation? I will read 4 things you can do. Choose 1 and act it out.

1. Smile.
2. Find the good in the situation.
3. Think about what you are thankful for.
4. Go to God.

Pause for the children to act out how they would choose to be cheerful.

You search the market for the items you need at the price you can pay. You do not find what you need. You choose to talk about what you are thankful for as you walk home.

When you get home, you play with your friends. Suddenly, it begins to rain. It is raining so hard that you have to go inside!

How will you choose to be cheerful? Show me what you might do with your actions.

1. Smile.
2. Find the good in the situation.
3. Think about what you are thankful for.
4. Go to God and pray.

At the end of the day, you say a prayer and go to sleep. It has been a busy day!

Life can be like the day we just acted out. We must choose every day to smile, be thankful, think about good things, see the good in our lives, and be cheerful. As you think about these things and choose to use the tools you learned today, you will be happier.

*Optional:* If you are using Student Pages, give the children crayons and allow 3 minutes for them to draw pictures of what they can do to be cheerful.

**When bad things do happen, God will help you manage difficult emotions and choose to be thankful. Our memory verse today reminds us to think about things that are true and good.**

If you are using the Memory Verse Poster, show it to the students.

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*Finally, my brothers and sisters, always think about what is true.*

*Think about what is noble, right and pure.*

*Think about what is lovely and worthy of respect.*

*If anything is excellent or worthy of praise,  
think about those kinds of things.*

Philippians 4:8

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Sing or chant the first part of this verse using the following motions.

**Finally, my brothers**—Hold your arms out at your hips with your palms facing down. Turn the palm of 1 hand up.

**And sisters**—Turn the palm of your other hand up.

**Always think about what is true**—Point to 1 side of your head and smile.

Have the children sing or chant with you as you repeat the words to the memory verse 3 times. End class by saying this blessing, based on Philippians 4:8, over the children.

**Blessing: May you think about what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, excellent, and worthy of praise. May you choose to be cheerful as you live each day.**

Lead the children in singing this quarter's song, if possible.

Raise a Hallelujah" by Bethel Music [https://youtu.be/JvXBf\\_dEiHU](https://youtu.be/JvXBf_dEiHU)