



The Pursuit of Happiness

Being a Christian doesn't mean we have to be serious or miserable all the time! In fact, God wants us to be happy and the Bible is filled with secrets that will help us to find real happiness. Today we are going to explore some of God's plans for our happiness.

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Before you start:

1. Prayerfully read through the whole lesson at least twice
2. Gather all the materials you need for each section (see right)
3. Work with another team member and plan who will manage each section of the session.

Leadership Personal Preparation:

Think about what makes you feel really happy. Can you remember a time when someone did something for you that made you feel especially happy? Did you feel happy after doing something kind for someone else? Or were you happy in a blissful moment of peace or beauty or when doing something fun with your friends? What has God done for you that made you feel really happy? if the Holy Spirit invites you to do so, be ready to tell the story of your experience during the welcome or the conclusion. Otherwise use the inspiration of your personal experience to fill you with enthusiasm for today's session.

You will need:

Ice Breaker:

- Smiley tokens, 'table confetti' or coloured buttons – at least 3 per person
- Funny prize for Ice-breaker winner (optional)

Exploring Happiness:

- 6 Tables and 6 table-cloths
- Happy Table cards
- Luxury hand cream or body butter
- Fun and quirky little toys and puzzles (invite people to bring some along if you don't have any)
- Box of chocolates
- A money box and the name of a well-known charity
- Copies of 'Exploring Happiness etc' sheets – 1 per person

Mission Possible:

- Copies of 'Happy Words' and 'Instruction Cards'
- 1 pair of scissors for each group
- Large sheets of flip chart paper
- Sticky tack
- Paper and pens

Word Search:

- Copies of studies - 1 set of 4 studies per person
- Paper and pens

Family Focus Time:

- Drinks and cups (fun drinks, cups or straws if possible; perhaps you could use natural colourings to serve a red drink that tastes like apple juice, or make the drink fun in some other way)
- Family Discussion Cards

- copy 1 sheet per family – don't cut them apart

Jesus and Me (JAM) Session:

- Large bag of Jelly Babies or other different mixed and amusing sweets – (use coloured counters or buttons if you would rather not use sweets)

- CD player and CD of soft worship music

- One set of Jesus and Me Journal Pages per participant

Take-away Menu (optional):

- Small tokens or gifts with a yellow smiley face

By the end of the session, the group members will:

- Know that God wants them to experience true happiness and that God's kind of happiness is found in unexpected places.
- Feel a desire to know more about God's plan for their true happiness, and to find ways to share God's happiness with others.
- Respond by looking for ways to reflect God's character by doing things that share true happiness with others.



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Trans-European Division



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Welcome and Prayer – 5 mins

Tell a funny and appropriate joke to start the session, if you wish.

Say:

“ Today we’re going to explore God’s plan for our happiness. Someone once said it was called Happiness because it is something that Happens when doing something else! Current research is also discovering that the happiest people are those who find other people to help...So let’s explore happiness together and see what we can discover about this wonderful feeling that everybody seems to want. ”

Icebreaker – 7 mins

You will need:

1. Smiley tokens, ‘table confetti’ or coloured buttons (at least 3 per person)
2. Funny prize for Ice-breaker winner (optional)

Give each person 3 tokens.

Say:

“ Each of you must try to make as many people smile as possible, but you’re not allowed to be rude or to touch each other. Every time someone makes you smile you must give them one of your smiley tokens. If you run out of tokens, try to win some back by making other people smile! ”

After 5 minutes call the group back together.

Ask:

Who received the most tokens? (Offer a funny prize if you wish)

Discuss:

- What were some of the different things that made people smile and laugh?
- What do you think God finds funny, and what do you think makes him happy?

Exploring Happiness – 7 mins

You will need:

1. 6 tables set out with items 4-9 on the Advance Preparation list, using the Happy Table cards to guide you. Place one card on each table.
 2. Cover prepared tables with Table-cloths – one per table - to avoid distraction until ready to use. Remove the cloths when you are ready to begin this section.
- Give each person an ‘Exploring Happiness etc’ score sheet to use during this activity.
 - Invite them to visit as many of the tables as possible and to score their experiences.
 - Allow 7 minutes for the activity. Then move straight into the Mission Possible Exercise.





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Mission Possible – 15 mins

You will need:

1. Copies of 'Happy Words' and 'Instruction Cards' from the resource section
 2. Pair of scissors for each group
 3. Large sheets of flip chart paper
 4. Sticky tack
 5. Paper and pens
- Arrange people into groups of about 4 and give them 5 minutes to work on this exercise, following the instructions on the cards.
 - Tell them to use the flip chart paper and sticky tack to help them arrange their cards.
 - After 5 minutes invite them to look at each group's definitions and word arrangements.
 - What are the similarities and differences between the groups' ideas about happiness?

Word Search – 30 mins

You will need:

1. Paper and pens
 2. Copies of Word Search studies - 1 set of studies per person
- Number the people in each feedback group from 1 to 4.
 - Then make 4 study groups: one group containing all those who were numbered 1; the next group containing all the people who were numbered 2, etc. Juggle the groups a little if one group is rather small.
 - There are four different studies: A, B, C and D. Allocate one study to each group so that all the topics are covered.
 - Allow the groups 15 minutes for their study.
 - Invite everyone back to the main group to make a mini presentation of their different thoughts and discoveries.
 - Encourage everyone to explore the other studies in their own time.

Family Focus – 15 mins

You will need:

1. Fun drinks or cups
 2. Family Discussion Cards – copy 1 complete sheet per family – don't cut them apart
 3. Large bag of Jelly Babies or other different mixed and amusing sweets – (or coloured counters or buttons if you'd rather not use sweets)
- Serve fun drinks.
 - Let the everyone re-assemble into their family groups, collecting a fun drink on the way.
 - Give each family a discussion card and a dish of assorted coloured sweets or buttons
 - Each family needs to have enough sweets/buttons for every family member to have 3 of the same colour, and for each person's sweets/buttons to be a different colour from anyone else's in their family.
 - Allow time for discussion

In one UK survey, 54% of those questioned said that "Helping others at home and abroad" is the key to true happiness.

- CAFOD, Tearfund and Theos, October 2010





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Praying together – 10 mins

- Introduce the concept of the 'popcorn prayer'.
- A popcorn prayer is where each person can say a word or phrase whenever they wish during the prayer time. Offer a short demonstration if necessary.
- Invite families to share their own 'popcorn prayer' together.
- Start with one person in the family saying 'Thank you God for the things you've given us that bring us joy and make us feel happy.'
- Then any person in the family can call out a word or a phrase, at any time, which describes something that makes them feel happy: 'sunshine' 'chocolate' 'my family' 'Your forgiveness' etc.
- End with the oldest person saying: 'Thank you God for happiness. Amen.'

Sunshine...Chocolate...
My family...Your forgiveness
...Ice cream...My pets...
Daffodils...The Bible...

Jesus and Me (JAM) session – 5 mins

You will need:

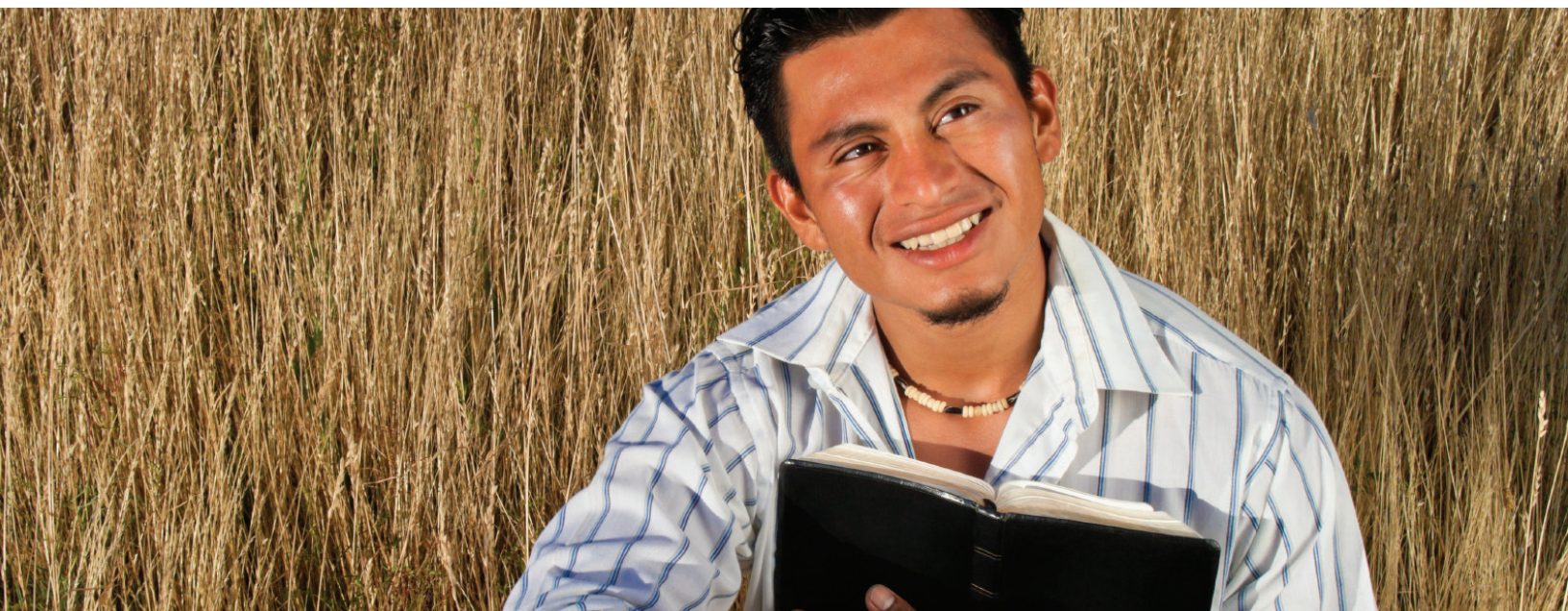
1. CD player and CD of soft worship music
 2. One set of Journal Pages per participant
- Give out the 'Jesus and Me' journal pages for this week.
 - Allow at least five minutes for people to make a start on their pages so that they will be encouraged to complete their projects during the week ahead.

Take-away Menu

You will need:

1. Small tokens or gifts with a yellow smiley face (optional)
- Give each person a small, smiley face item, or let them choose from a selection of small fun gifts.
 - Ask them to use this object to remind them to reflect God's character by doing things to make other people happy.

Closing Prayer





Playing with Toys

- Play with the toys on the table.
- Which one did you enjoy the most?
- Why did you enjoy it so much?

Sharing Chocolates

- On the table is a box of chocolates or other sweets.
- You can offer one to someone else.
- You cannot take a sweet unless someone offers it to you.



Helping Others

Please put something in this money box.

It will be used to help the following charity:



Encouraging Others

Say something encouraging to someone else.





Hand Massage

- Find someone in your family and give them a hand massage using some of this cream.
- What happens to your hands when you give a massage to someone else?



Happiness Interview

- Ask someone else about the happiest thing that happened to them in the last week.
- Then ask them about the funniest thing that happened to them in the last week.
- How were these stories different?



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KID for Teens: Handout: The Pursuit of Happiness

Exploring Happiness



Try the different activities on the tables.

Then decide for yourself which category of feeling best describes your experience.

Rate the experiences according to the kind of fun or happiness they gave you;

1, 2, 3, 4 or 5.

1 = a low level of the emotion

5 = a high level of the emotion

1 2 3 4 5

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Fun</i>	<i>Pleasure</i>	<i>Contentment</i>	<i>Happiness</i>	<i>Why?</i>
Sharing chocolates					
Encouraging others					
Playing with toys					
Hand massage					
Happiness interview					
Helping others					



Joy

Delight

Wonder

Fun

Happiness

Bliss

Cheerfulness

Pleasure

Amusement

Contentment

Instructions for Happy Words

1. As a group - look at the ten cards and write a brief definition below each of the words.
2. Cut the cards apart.
3. Then work together to arrange the cards.
4. Place the word that you think describes the greatest amount of happiness at the top of the list and arrange the others below it in a way that you think best describes how happy each of the experiences might be. (This might not be a vertical list!)
5. There are no right or wrong answers.
6. By the way – you only have 5 minutes to do this.

Instructions for Happy Words

1. As a group - look at the ten cards and write a brief definition below each of the words.
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5. There are no right or wrong answers.
6. By the way – you only have 5 minutes to do this.



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Handout: Word Search: How to be Happy The Pursuit of Happiness - A



Read Matthew 5:3-4 together.

Read Matthew 5:3 in several different versions of the Bible, including 'The Message'. The word 'blessed' is often translated as 'happy'.

What do you think this verse tells us about happiness?

Rewrite this happiness secret in your own words:

Read Matthew 5:4 in several different versions of the Bible, including 'The Message'.

What do you think this verse tells us about happiness?

Rewrite this happiness secret in your own words:

These concepts of happiness are different from the usual ways that people understand happiness. Why do you think the ways in which Jesus describes happiness are so different from what most people today think about happiness?

**Romans 12:15 'Laugh with your happy friends when they're happy; share tears when they are down.'
The Message.**

Why is this suggestion an important guideline for good friendships?





Handout: Word Search: How to be Happy The Pursuit of Happiness - B



Read Matthew 5:5-6 and Philippians 4:8.

Read Matthew 5:5 in several different versions of the Bible, including 'The Message'. The word 'blessed' is often translated as 'happy'.

What do you think this verse tells us about happiness?

Rewrite this happiness secret in your own words:

Read Matthew 5:6 in several different versions of the Bible, including 'The Message'.

What do you think this verse tells us about happiness?

Rewrite this happiness secret in your own words:

These concepts of happiness are different from the usual ways that people understand happiness. Why do you think the ways in which Jesus describes happiness are so different from what most people today think about happiness?

Read Philippians 4:8.

Paul wrote this when he was on Death Row. How do you think this approach to his thoughts helped him to remain cheerful and positive in a grim situation?





Handout: Word Search: How to be Happy The Pursuit of Happiness - C



Read Matthew 5:7-8 together.

Read Matthew 5:7 in several different versions of the Bible, including 'The Message'. The word 'blessed' is often translated as 'happy'.

What do you think this verse tells us about happiness?

Rewrite this happiness secret in your own words:

Read Matthew 5:8 in several different versions of the Bible, including 'The Message'.

What do you think this verse tells us about happiness?

Rewrite this happiness secret in your own words:

These concepts of happiness are different from the usual ways that people understand happiness. Why do you think the ways in which Jesus describes happiness are so different from what most people today think about happiness?

Philippians 4:4: 'Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean, revel in him!'

How can we celebrate God in our lives and completely enjoy everything about him?





Handout: Word Search: How to be Happy The Pursuit of Happiness - D



Read Matthew 5:9-10 together.

Read Matthew 5:9 in several different versions of the Bible, including 'The Message'. The word 'blessed' is often translated as 'happy'.

What do you think this verse tells us about happiness?

Rewrite this happiness secret in your own words:

Read Matthew 5:10 in several different versions of the Bible, including 'The Message'.

What do you think this verse tells us about happiness?

Rewrite this happiness secret in your own words:

These concepts of happiness are different from the usual ways that people understand happiness. Why do you think the ways in which Jesus describes happiness are so different from what most people today think about happiness?

Proverbs 17:22: 'A cheerful heart is good medicine.' NIV

Why do you think this suggestion is an important guideline for good health?



I feel happy when something funny happens	I feel happy when I feel at peace with myself and others
I feel happy when I'm with people who love me	I feel happy when I do something kind for someone else
I feel happy when I know I have done something really well	I feel happy because God has good plans for my life
I feel happy when I see something beautiful	Something else makes me happy (describe it)

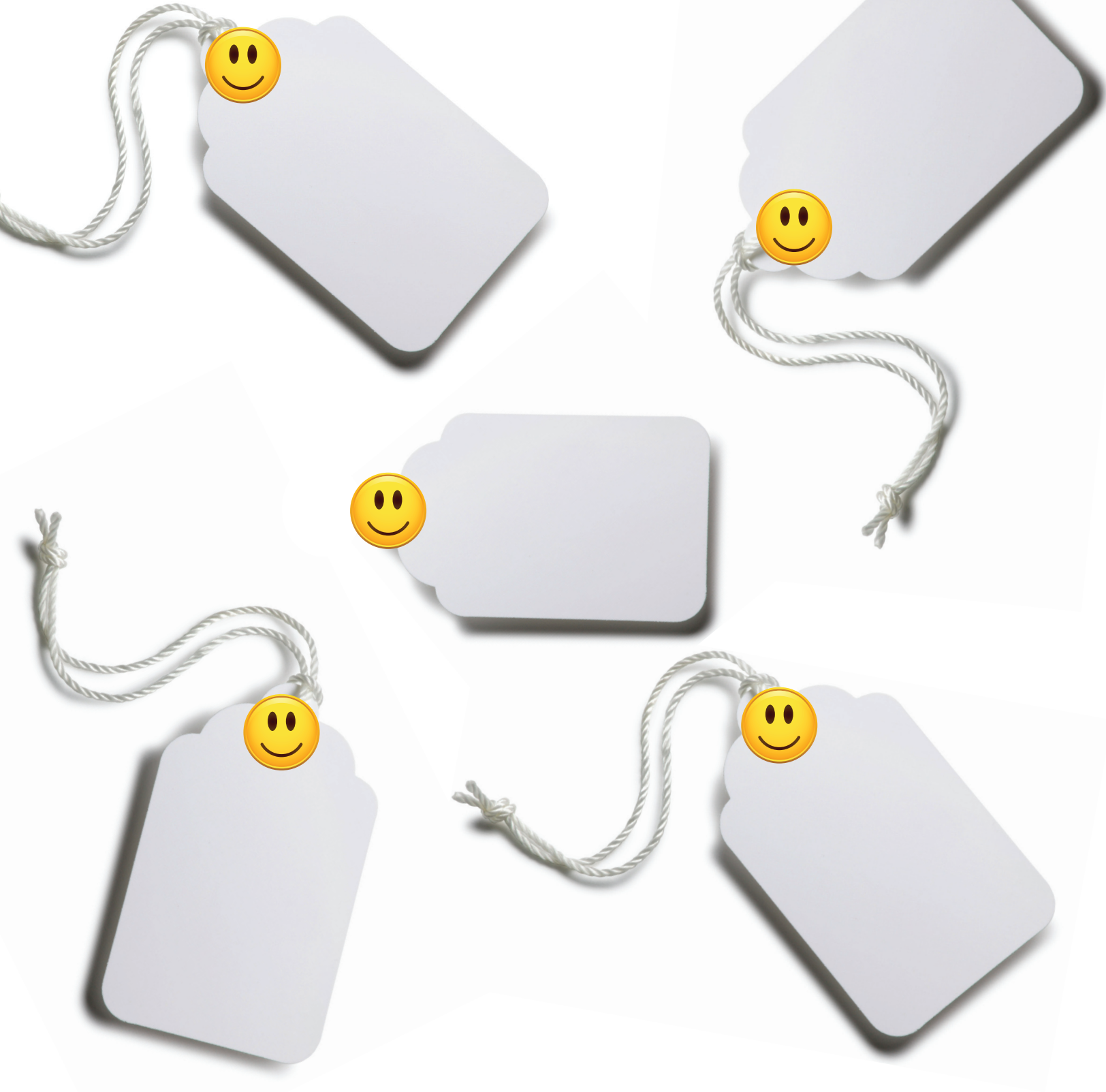
- Choose three Jelly Babies or sweets that are the same colour, but a different colour from everyone else in your family.
- Place them on the squares that best describe what makes you feel happy. Talk together about your answers.
- What have each of you discovered about real happiness today? (Try seeing whose Jelly Babies can last the longest...)



17 Handout: Jesus and Me Journal Lesson 17 The Pursuit of Happiness



What special things has God done to add to your happiness?
Write some of them on the smiley gift tags...

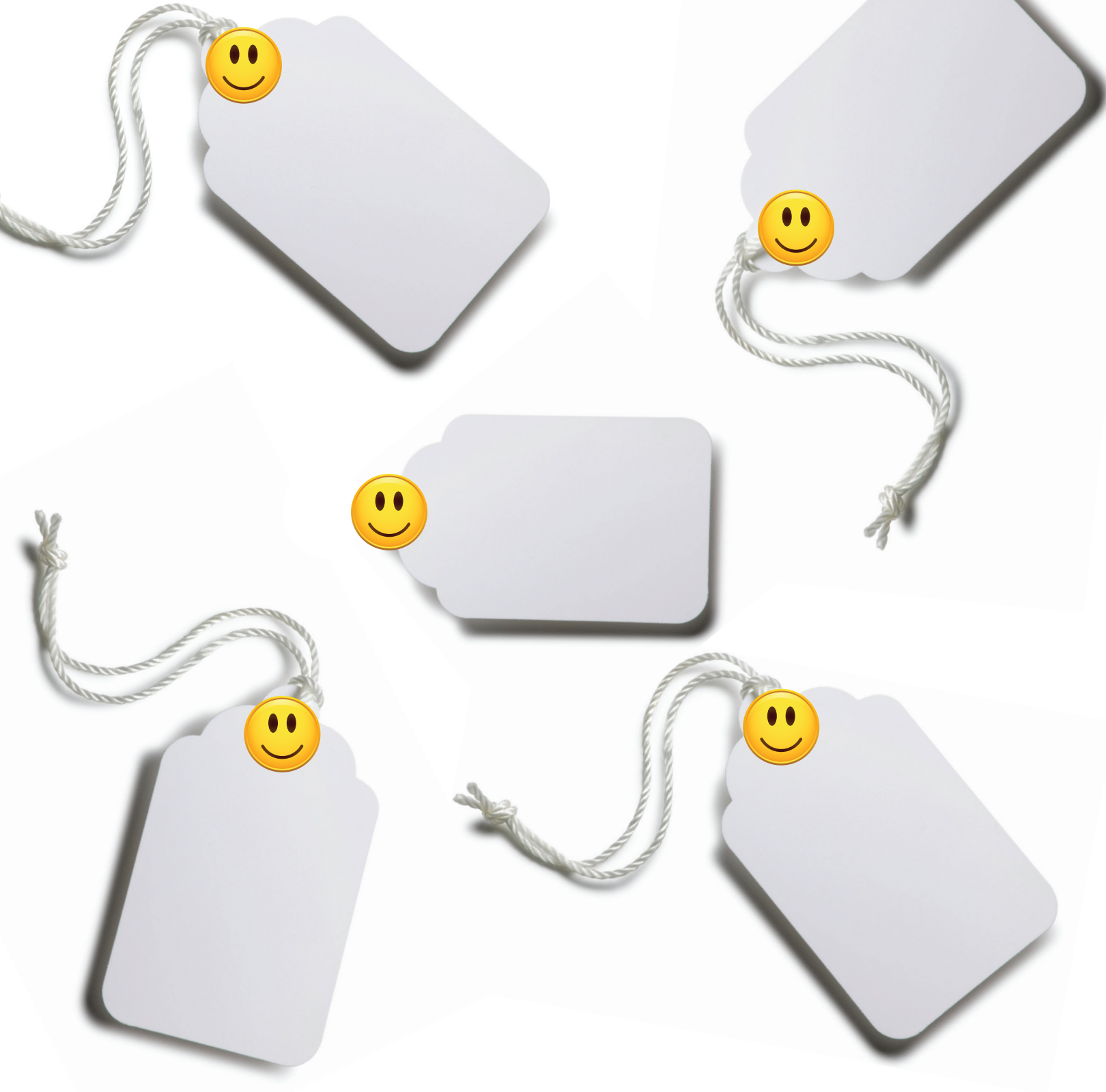




17 Handout: Jesus and Me Journal Lesson 17 The Pursuit of Happiness



What special things have you done to try and make other people happy?
Write some of them on the smiley gift tags...





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Handout: Jesus and Me - Journal Lesson 17 The Pursuit of Happiness



Happy Moments Life Map

- Create a road map of your life.
- Draw it on the page below, including the special and happy events that happened along the way.
- Then, write a thank you note to God for the happy moments in your life.



God's Happiness Secrets

This week we've learned about God's happiness secrets. These secrets are often very different from the way most people understand happiness and try to find it. Write down some of the special happiness secrets you've discovered.

How will you make sure that these secrets will change the way you live your life? Ask God to help you incorporate these happiness secrets into your life, and ask him to help you to share these secrets with others, too.