

the  Venuues
Go Deep

Venuues Christmas at the Movies

Elf

12.3.17

*What was your favorite game to play as a kid? What is your favorite game to play as an adult?
Do you get in the Christmas spirit? Why or why not?*

How do we find joy?

Buddy the Elf finds joy through play. He finds excitement in the boring and mundane. It's hard to play when we're sad. According to the APA, 1 in 4 people experience "extreme stress" during the holidays.
Can you relate? Do you struggle with the holiday blues?

In 1966, Charles Whitman killed 13 people at the University of Austin. Researchers studied his life to figure out why:

"The committee investigating Charles Whitman's life and motives unanimously identified his lifelong lack of play as a key factor in his homicidal actions." – Dr. Stuart Brown

Play allows people to learn social behaviors, empathy, and joy. Lacking play is detrimental to our lives.

What are some ways you can play more with people in your life?

What do you think of this quote? "The opposite of play is not work, it's depression." - Brian Sutton-Smith

Do you feel pressure to be happy and hide your stress, anxiety, or sadness? Why or why not?

Read Isaiah 53:3, Matthew 5:4, and Ecclesiastes 3:4, Psalm 22:10-11

Even Jesus was called a "Man of Sorrows."

How do you express your sadness or anxiety?

Do you remember Buddy's favorite thing to do? "Smiling is my favorite!" Studies show smiling, even if you don't feel happy, lowers stress, and makes you feel happier!

In what situations will you try this? In-line at the DMV? Rush-hour traffic?

Can we have sorrow and still be joyful? Read Luke 2:8-12

The Christmas Story of Jesus' birth was joyful, because the guy who was finally supposed to make things right in the world arrived on the scene as a baby boy. It gave people hope that things are changing, that life is going to get better. That's a reason to have joy. Tomorrow will be better.

Read John 15:11, John 16:22, 1 Peter 1:8

Faith is believing that things will get better, even when it's hard to see how. God will make things right, eventually.

Buddy said the best way to spread Christmas Cheer (Joy) is singing loud for all to hear.

How do you express joy?

What songs bring back happy memories for you?

Read Isaiah 12:6, I Samuel 16:23

Can you describe a time when music soothed your soul or made you feel better?

Music has been proven to ease physical and mental pain, reducing medications, support heart-health, reduce stress, and elevate mood.

Read Ephesians 5:19-21 *What role has music played in church? What role should it play? What music/songs would you want to sing in church? Can music be spiritual, even*