



This past Sunday we kicked off our new sermon series titled “Smile,” where we’ll be focusing on the joy of the Lord. This is a great series to invite our unchurched friends to so please encourage your folks to consider who they might be able to invite!

FAMILY TIME

Take some time to share prayer requests and praise reports with each other and encourage folks to keep praying for each other’s prayer requests throughout the week and to believe that these will become future praise reports.

PRAYING FOR THE REFUGUES AND FOR BERLIN

As you are aware, millions of refugees have fled/are fleeing from Syria and other parts of the Middle East due to the war in Syria and the threat of terrorist organizations. This has led to refugee camps springing up all throughout Europe as these refugees try to attain legal entry into new homes. Germany is one country that has risen to embrace these refugees in their time of need by making available thousands of places for them. In response to this crisis, many people from our church will be going to Berlin, Germany this summer to love and serve these refugees. Let’s take time to pray for these refugees and these short-term trips!

Here are two videos you might consider showing as you enter into prayer. The first is a more personal look into what these refugees are going through and the second provides an overview of what’s going on:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41qFFuB5ttA&feature=youtu.be>
- <https://vimeo.com/152458150>

Here are some prayer points:

- that God would protect the refugees as they are fleeing from their homelands in search of new homes all throughout Europe,
- that these refugees, who are predominantly Muslim, would come to know who God is and place their trust in him,

- that God would raise up more people to go to Berlin and other parts of Europe this summer to provide love and assistance in such a chaotic moment in history.

SEEKING GOD'S JOY

Intro Question: What is one thing that happened this past week that brought you joy?

On Sunday, Pastor John spoke about how God is the author of joy and desires us to be filled with joy. In this lesson we'll be focusing on a key verse from Nehemiah 8:10 where Nehemiah tells the people, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." Have your group declare that to each other.

Then break them up into small groups of 3-4 and lead them through the following discussion questions one at a time that they can discuss in their small groups:

- What do you think it means that the joy of the Lord is our strength?
- In what ways have we experienced the joy of the Lord being our strength?
- If it is true that the joy of the Lord is our strength, what would it look like for us to seek the joy of the Lord? In other words, what is one way we can intentionally seek God's joy this week?
- Are there people in our life who need to experience more of God's joy? If so, how might we be able to help them do that?

You might also consider providing index cards for folks to write the key verse on one side and their one way to intentionally seek joy on the back. That way they can put it up somewhere to remind them about the truths that God is the author of joy and desires us to be filled with joy.

Close this time by having the groups pray for each other to intentionally seek God's joy this week and to help others around us experience God's joy as well.