

# A Recipe for Happiness



**Theme:** Jesus gave us the recipe for happiness — the Beatitudes. (Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany.)

**Object:** The ingredients for making trail mix. (healthy choice of whole-grain cereal, raisins, dried fruit like cranberries or banana slices, walnuts or almonds, sunflower or pumpkin seeds, chocolate chips or M&Ms. etc.)

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:1-12

Today, we are going to fix a tasty snack treat. Oh boy, that sounds like fun. The first thing we need is a recipe. You know what a recipe is, don't you? A recipe is a set of instructions, including a list of all of the ingredients, that tells you how to prepare a dish. Here is my recipe to make a delicious and healthy trail mix snack (hold up the recipe. And here is a bag with all of the ingredients we will need and a bowl to mix it up in. (Have the ingredients measured and placed in plastic bags ahead of time to make the preparation of the mix go quickly.)

First, we will pour in some nuts, next some raisins. Let's see, next we put in some sunflower seeds, and then some M&Ms. (Continue until all ingredients have been added, commenting about each one.) Well, the trail mix is all finished, so now we have a tasty snack to enjoy at the close of our lesson today.

Did you know that Jesus gave us a recipe for living a happy life? In the book of Matthew, it says, "Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them." What did he teach them? He taught them a lesson which we call "The Beatitudes." Each one of the beatitudes starts with the words, "Blessed are they. . ." Some translations of the Bible use the word happy instead of blessed. Let's see what Jesus said about what is needed for a happy life full of God's blessings. (Read these from the Bible.)

- Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.
- Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
- Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.
- Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
- Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
- Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.
- Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

You may think that some of those things that Jesus taught sound pretty difficult, and you are right. Even when you have a recipe, it may be difficult to follow, but if you follow the instructions to the letter, you can be assured of a good outcome. Jesus did not promise that life would always be easy, but he did say if we follow the teachings in today's lesson, we can be assured that we will receive

God's blessing and we will be happy indeed!

Dear Father, we thank you for the teachings of Jesus. Even though life may not always be easy, we know that if we follow his teachings, we will be blessed. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Interactive Group Activities

by Carol Williams & Charles Kirkpatrick

Sermon Title: ["A Recipe for Happiness"](#)

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:1-12

**HAPPY BUBBLES:** Have the children sit on the floor with a paper plate and a straw. Put a few drops of dish soap in the middle of each plate and add a little water. Tell the children to make HAPPY BUBBLES by blowing through their straws into the soapy mixture.

**HAPPY FREEZE:** The children will gather in an open space and the teacher will play or sing, *IF YOU'RE HAPPY AND YOU KNOW IT*, while the children move and dance around in a HAPPY way. When the music stops, the children are to FREEZE with a happy look on their face (the bigger the smile the better), until the music starts to play again.

**HAPPY RECIPE CARD:** Each child can be given a colorful recipe card with the letters for HAPPY as an acrostic down the left side. Children can write a word next to each letter that helps them be happy in Jesus. (Ex - H - Hands (to serve Jesus); A - Always (tell people Jesus loves them); P - Prayer; P - Pleased; Y - YES (to Jesus), etc.

**BEATITUDE PUZZLES:** Give each an envelope with one of the beatitudes written on a slip of paper and then cut into pieces. The child will arrange the pieces of paper in the correct order and read the beatitude to the class.

**HAPPY BOOKLET:** Give the children pieces of construction paper with circles drawn on them to be cut out (already drawn for children so all circles are the same size). The circles can be placed together to form a booklet and hole punched and tied together with a piece of string or yarn through the hole to hold the circles together. Each page can be a HAPPY page -- with Happy stickers of all kinds, or drawings of various type of HAPPY faces. Encourage them to use words from our lesson today that make us happy in Jesus. Encourage children to take their books home and look at their HAPPY BOOKLET throughout the week!

**HAPPY HEART:** Give the supplies needed to make a happy heart to each child — a piece of construction paper and a heart to decorate with stickers and glitter, then glue it to the sheet of construction paper. BLESSED means HAPPY or other words from our lesson today may then be written on the paper in colorful markers.

**HAPPY HEARTS POSTER:** The children can pick at least 15 various sizes and colors of hearts that the teacher will provided to the class. They can be cut out hearts or stickers. The poster will have HAPPY ARE THE PURE IN HEART written in large letters in the center. All the various colorful hearts and stickers will then be placed around the edge of the poster to form a heart border!

**HAPPY HUNTING:** Before class, the teacher will write the Beatitudes on slips of paper and hide them around the room for the children to search for after the lesson is finished. When a child finds one, it will be taped to a poster board at the front of the room. If children are older or have a helper, they may try to put the beatitudes in the correct order. If they need additional help, they could look up Matthew 5:1-12 and use that to put them in the correct order.

# The Happy Puppy



**Theme:** Happiness is not brought about by what happens to us, it is brought about by what happens within us. (Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany)

**Object:** The song, "If You're Happy"

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:1-12 (The Beatitudes) and Happy is he who trusts in the Lord. Proverbs 16:20 (RSV)

Probably every one here this morning has sung the song, "If You're Happy." You know the one I'm talking about -- "If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. If you're happy and you know it clap your hands. If you're happy an you know it, then your face will surely show it. If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands."

I wonder how that song would go if it were sung by a bunch of birds? Maybe it would go like this, "If you're happy and you know it, flap your wings. (flap, flap) " What do you think a dog would do to show that he was happy? Wag his tail? "If you're happy and you know it, wag your tail. (swish-swish) If you're happy and you know it wag your tail. (swish-swish) If you're happy and you know it, then your tail will surely show it. If you're happy and you know it, wag your tail. (swish-swish)"

I heard a story about a little puppy that noticed that whenever he was happy, his tail wagged, so the thought he had found the secret to happiness. One day he shared the secret of happiness with an older dog. He said, "I have learned that the best thing for a dog is happiness, and that happiness is in my tail. So I am going to chase my tail; and when I catch it, I shall have happiness!" The old dog replied, "I too, believe that happiness is a marvelous thing for a dog, and that happiness is in my tail. But I have noticed that when I chase it, my tail keeps running away from me; but when I go about my business, it follows me wherever I go."

The Bible has a lot to say about being happy. It doesn't say, "Happy are they who have a lot of money" or "Happy are they who live in big houses and drive fancy cars." It doesn't even say, "Happy are they who only have good things happen to them." What the Bible does say is, "Happy are the merciful, happy are the peacemakers, and happy are the pure in heart." The Bible also says, Happy is he who trusts in the Lord. Many of us are like that little puppy chasing his tail -- trying to find true happiness that is always just out of our reach. What we need to do is learn that if we will just go about our business and trust in the Lord, happiness will follow us wherever we go.

Dear Lord, help us to place our trust in you so that we may experience the happiness that only you can bring. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 5:1-12

**HAPPY MUSICAL CHAIRS:** Play musical chairs with some fun Christian kids' music and when the music stops, the children try to find an empty chair and everyone will say, I'M HAPPY. Continue to play as time allows.

**HAPPY PUPPY RACING:** Have all the children line up on one line. When the teacher says, "PUPPIES RUN," the children will get on all four's on the floor and race like a happy puppy to the other side of the room. Make sure children make happy puppy sounds while racing to the finish line.

**HAPPY STICKERS:** Give the children happy face stickers to decorate a card and color around the edges. Give a magnet to stick to the back or punch holes in the card add a ribbon or yarn as a hanger.

**HAPPY INK PRINTS:** Give the children ink pads to make many finger prints. Children can then have a contest to see how many different happy faces they can make on each print. Label or title

the Ink prints TRUST IN THE LORD FOR HAPPINESS.

**HAPPY FACE PAINTING:** The teacher will paint a happy face on the childrens' faces or on their hands, depending on the desire of the child. The teacher might have a sheet with various styles of happy faces for the children to choose from for their own face painting.

**HAPPY FINGERS:** Give each child a thin marker or pen to draw a different happy face on each finger and to tell parts of our story using their fingers. As an alternative, have the children trace their own hand and draw a happy face on each finger or write things that Jesus said would make us happy on the fingers on the paper drawing. (Poor in Spirit, Pure in Heart, Merciful, Peacemakers, Gentle, etc.)

**HAPPY FEET:** Trace the child's feet and hang on the classroom wall with their names on the feet. Have the children write or draw a picture of ways to use their happy feet go and tell others about trusting in Jesus for Happiness.

**HAPPY EYES:** Give the children pieces of construction paper cut in various shapes to tape or glue onto a full size of construction paper. Have the children draw the shape of an eye on the pieces of paper they have glued onto the larger sheet and inside the circular part of the eye (the iris) use a colored marker to draw a smiley face and hang the "happy eyes" around the room.

**HAPPY PLATE:** Give each child a paper plate to decorate and color with happy faces, happy stickers, and happy words from today's lesson. Tape the decorated happy face to a dowel or long stick.