



Rejoicing in Salvation

We can have everlasting joy because we know that Jesus saved us. Just like the Ethiopian man from Acts chapter eight, we can respond with joy when we think about the good news: Jesus has saved us!

Opening Prayer & Worship (10 min)

Spend time in prayer and worship before you begin. Sing songs focusing on God's creation. Pray that kids will understand that they have been made in the likeness of God.

Bible Story (15 min)

Read Acts 8:26-40. Highlight how joyful the Ethiopian man was to learn about Jesus.

KEY CONCEPTS: An angel of the Lord told Philip to go on the road south of Jerusalem, toward Gaza. Along the way he came across an Ethiopian man in a chariot who was reading the book of Isaiah. When Philip asked him if he understood what he was reading, the Ethiopian said, "How can I unless someone explains it to me?" and he invited Philip to come up and sit with him (Acts 8:31). Philip explained what the book of Isaiah meant and told the Ethiopian the good news about Jesus (Acts 8:34). As soon as the Ethiopian heard the good news, he wanted to become a follower of Jesus and be baptized. When they saw water on the side of the road, he asked to be baptized immediately. After Philip baptized him, the Ethiopian man went on his way full of joy because he knew that Jesus had saved him!

Discussion Questions (10 min)

1. What would you do if an angel told you to go somewhere?
2. What did the angel tell Philip to do?
3. What was the Ethiopian man reading as he travelled along the road to Jerusalem?

4. Did the Ethiopian man understand what he was reading in the book of Isaiah?
5. It says that Philip told him the good news about Jesus. What do you think Philip said?
6. After Philip told the Ethiopian about Jesus, how did he respond?
7. After the Ethiopian was baptized, what did he do?
8. Why was the Ethiopian so joyful after getting baptized?

Prayer Time

"Dear Jesus, thank you for the amazing gift of salvation! Help me to remember that I can have joy even when things are hard because I know you saved me. Thank you for saving me and giving me so many reasons to be joyful. Amen."

More Activities

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 65:8 – "The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders; where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy."

GAME: "Praise Tag" – The person who is "it" tags others. When tagged, the player must stop and shout something that makes them joyful. Then they become "it."

CRAFT: "Joyful Drawings" – Draw a picture of things that bring joy. At the top, write: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4)

HANDS-ON OPTION: "Joy Jar" – Each day, write down one thing that brings joy and put it in the jar.

Remember: These lesson plans are designed to be flexible! Feel free to add, remove, or adjust activities to best fit your schedule and the needs of your children.

For more ideas and resources, visit:
KidsOfIntegrity.com/Joy





There Is a Joyful Celebration in Heaven!

Every time someone decides to turn from their ways and follow God instead, there is a party in heaven. “In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” (Luke 15:10)

Opening Prayer & Worship (10 min)

Begin with a prayer inviting in God’s presence. Thank him for his rejoicing when we choose to follow his ways. Sing a worship song that focuses on repentance or joy.

Bible Story (15 min)

Read Luke 15:8-10. Use this Bible story to highlight how heaven rejoices when we choose to follow Jesus’ ways. Tell children: “You are like the coin. Even if you feel small or forgotten, you are so valuable to God that he will never stop looking for you – and all of heaven rejoices when you’re found.”

KEY CONCEPTS: Jesus told the story of a woman who had ten silver coins. When the woman lost one of the ten coins, she didn’t just say, “Oh well, I have nine other coins!” Instead, she lit a lamp, swept the entire house, and searched diligently until she found the lost coin. Upon finding it, she invited all her friends over to celebrate. Jesus used this story to teach people about the joyful party that happens in heaven when one person asks God to forgive their sins.

Discussion Questions (10 min)

1. What is your most valuable item? What would you do if you lost it?
2. Why is this item so valuable to you? How much do you love it?
3. Is there anything you wouldn’t do to get it back if it was lost?
4. How many coins did the woman in the story have?
5. Why do you think she cared about losing one coin if she still had nine others?

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6. Who does the woman in the story represent? Who does the coin represent?
7. Would you throw a party if you lost your most valuable item then found it?
8. Why did Jesus tell this story?

Prayer Time

“Dear God, thank you for searching for us like the woman searched for the coin. Help us to remember that you are waiting for us to ask for forgiveness so that you can throw a joyful party. Fill our hearts with the desire to follow your ways. Amen.”

More Activities

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 5:11 – “But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you.”

GAME: “Joy Relay” – Divide kids into teams. Each child runs, picks up a card with a Bible truth, says it aloud joyfully, and runs back to tag the next teammate.

CRAFT: “Party Hat” – Staple paper into a cone to make a party hat. Decorate it with pom poms, markers, and stickers. Wear it to remember that there’s a joyful party in heaven when one person is found.

HANDS-ON OPTION: “Lost and Found” – Play hide-and-seek by hiding a favourite toy or stuffed animal. Emphasize your child’s joy when they find their valued item by connecting it to Luke 15:8-10.

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Looking for Joy in all the Wrong Places

There are lots of things that can make us happy, but only God can give us everlasting joy. Just like the son in Jesus' parable, we might become happy when we buy awesome things or look cool in front of our friends, but those things are small compared to the type of joy we can have when we experience God's love.

Opening Prayer & Worship (10 min)

Spend time in prayer and worship, focusing on songs about joy. Thank God for giving joy through the power of his Holy Spirit (Psalm 66:1-5). Thank God for the everlasting joy he lets us experience.

Bible Story (15 min)

Read Luke 15:11-32. Emphasize the sad son in ragged clothes, hungry, and feeding pigs. He wishes he could eat the pig's food. This scene helps kids understand how the son's happiness did not last when things got hard and he ran out of money.

KEY CONCEPTS: Jesus told a story about a son who wanted his portion of the family's money so he could move away and do his own thing. He thought he would be happier like that. For a while, he was right. The son bought tons of cool things and felt very happy doing whatever he wanted. Then, one day, the son's money ran out! He had to get a job feeding pigs. He ended up being so hungry that he wished he could eat the pigs' food. He began to think that living at home might not be so bad after all – doing his own thing had not led to happiness like he thought it would. When the son returned home, he apologized to his father and expected to be ordered around like a servant. Instead, the loving father was so joyful that his son had come home that he threw a huge party! The son found true joy by experiencing his father's love and forgiveness, not by doing whatever he wanted.

Discussion Questions (10 min)

1. Why do you think the son wanted to leave home?
2. Where did the son go looking for happiness?
3. How do you think the father felt when his son left home?
4. Did the son find joy in spending money and living wildly?

5. Why did the son decide to return home?
6. Why did the father have a big party for his son?
7. Why do you think Jesus told this story?
8. Is it better to have temporary happiness or everlasting joy?
9. Who can give you everlasting joy?

Prayer Time

"Dear God, your ways are right and they give me joy in my heart (Psalm 19:8). Help me stay on track when I'm tempted to look for joy in the wrong places, like the son in the story Jesus told. Remind me that only you can give me everlasting joy through your love and forgiveness. Amen."

More Activities

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 66:1 – "Shout for joy to God, all the earth!"

GAME: "Obey When I Say" – Children must follow commands only when you say, "Obey when I say to _____" Model what it means to obey someone joyfully.

CRAFT: "Rejoicing Smiles" – Cut out circles and draw smiley faces on them. On each one, write something that will make God rejoice like the father from Luke 15:11-32 (e.g., share, be kind, tell the truth). Decorate with joyful colours.

HANDS-ON OPTION: Pick one "Rejoicing Smile" and live it out. For example, if it says "help someone," go help out a family member.

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Rejoicing When Things Go Wrong

Because of our hope in Jesus, we can rejoice even when things go wrong. In Acts chapter 16, Paul and Silas got thrown into prison because their preaching was causing a commotion in the city of Phillipi. Even when they were in prison, Paul and Silas rejoiced and praised God.

Opening Prayer & Worship (10 min)

Start with grateful prayer and worship. Ask God to help us be joyful no matter the circumstances.

Bible Story (15 min)

Read Acts 16:16-34. Highlight how everything went wrong for Paul and Silas when they were thrown into prison. Even in chained up in jail, Paul and Silas were joyful, singing and praising God.

KEY CONCEPTS: When Paul and Silas arrived in the city of Phillipi to tell the people there about Jesus, they met a slave girl who had a spirit in her that let her predict the future. Paul prayed for the slave girl and asked Jesus to set her free from the spirit, and Jesus did it! But when the people who owned the slave girl realized they could no longer make money from her predictions, they became angry and took Paul and Silas before the city authorities. They accused Paul and Silas of throwing the city into an uproar and put them into prison. Instead of getting angry that God allowed others to punish them, Paul and Silas prayed and praised God joyfully while in jail. Suddenly, God sent an earthquake to open the prison doors. The jailer panicked when he realized that all the prisoners might escape, but instead of running away, Paul and Silas stayed to talk to the jailer and calm him down. They told him that Jesus had saved him, and the jailer believed the good news and got baptized alongside his whole family!

Discussion Questions (10 min)

1. Was the spirit in the slave girl the Holy Spirit or a different spirit?
2. How did Paul make the spirit leave the girl?
3. Why were the owners of the slave girl angry?
4. What did the owners of the slave girl accuse Paul and Silas of doing?
5. How were Paul and Silas punished?

6. What did they do when they were in prison?
7. Is it easier to be angry when things go wrong or to rejoice?
8. What were the results of Paul and Silas's joy when things went wrong?

Prayer Time

"Dear God, please send the Holy Spirit to help me to be joyful when things are hard. I want to be like Paul and Silas and praise you joyfully, even when things go wrong. I pray that others will see me rejoicing when things are hard and will want to follow you too when they see how much joy I have. Amen."

More Activities

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 28:7 – "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy and with my song I praise him."

GAME: "Thankful Toss" – Toss a beanbag or soft ball. When a child catches it, they must try to recall a time where they chose joy and gratitude even when things were going wrong.

CRAFT: "Joy Card" – Think of someone you know who has been joyful even when things went wrong. Decorate it with colourful drawings and write a message pointing out how their joy inspired you to follow God, just like the jailer from Acts chapter 16.

HANDS-ON OPTION: Write "rejoice always" on your hand with a marker or a makeup pencil as a reminder to rejoice when things go wrong. Next time your child gets frustrated or discouraged, take a moment to intentionally sing a song of praise or speak a prayer of gratitude.

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Stay Connected to the Vine to Grow Joy!

Just like a fruit tree's branch is attached to a vine, we can grow fruit when we stay attached to Jesus – and the fruit we grow is joy! If we remain in Jesus by keeping his commands, we will grow all the fruits of the Spirit.

Opening Prayer & Worship (10 min)

Spend time in prayer and worship. Ask God to help you remain in him through loving others. Pray that he will fill us with his Spirit and produce the fruit of joy in us.

Bible Story (15 min)

Read John 15:4-17 and Galatians 5:22-23. Talk about how the illustration of a vine and a branch is like Jesus and his follower, and how the Spirit grows fruits in us when we stay connected to the vine.

KEY CONCEPTS: Just like a branch needs to stay connected to a vine in order to grow any fruit, Jesus tells us to “remain in him” so that we can “bear fruit.” If we stay connected to Jesus, we will naturally grow lots of good things in our lives that are listed as the “fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians chapter five. One of the fruits we are sure to grow when we stay connected to Jesus is joy! However, Jesus warns us that if we try to live our lives apart from him and don’t obey his command to love one another, we will not be able to grow everlasting joy – or any of the good fruits from Galatians chapter five – at all.

Discussion Questions (10 min)

1. What does it mean for Jesus to be the vine in this illustration?
2. What does it mean for us to be the branches in this illustration?
3. How do tree branches get the nutrients they need to grow fruit?
4. Can a branch still grow fruit when it breaks off the vine?
5. How can we “remain” in Jesus?

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6. Can you list the fruit of the Spirit?
7. Why does staying connected to Jesus grow joy in our lives?
8. Can we grow everlasting joy apart from Jesus?

Prayer Time

“Dear Jesus, I can only grow good fruit in my life when I stay connected to you. Help me to remain in you by following your command to love others. Open up my eyes to the best ways to love the people around me. Amen.”

More Activities

MEMORY VERSE: Galatians 5:22-23 – “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

GAME: “Fruitful Hopscotch” – Sketch nine fruits on the sidewalk with chalk and write the fruits of the Spirit on them. See how fast kids can jump from fruit to fruit while reciting the name of the fruit, or make it a relay.

CRAFT: “Picture the Lesson” – Draw a picture to illustrate the lesson from John 15:4-17 and Galatians 5:22-23. Draw a vine and label it “Jesus,” draw a branch and label it your child’s name, and draw fruits growing from the branch and label them with the fruits named in Galatians chapter five.

HANDS-ON OPTION: “Joyful Snacking” – Have kids make a “fruit of the Spirit” themed snack by cutting up their favourite fruits, writing the fruits of the Spirit on toothpick flags, and sticking them in the fruits. Enjoy together or serve someone else joyfully.

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God's Joy Gives Us Strength

We can overcome hard things because we have strength that comes from the joy Jesus gives us. When Jesus died on the cross for our sins, he was scared and very sad, but the Bible says he also had joy because he was doing it to save us. Jesus' joy strengthened him to go through hard things.

Opening Prayer & Worship (10 min)

Start with prayer and worship. Sign songs about relying on God's joy to be our strength.

Bible Story (15 min)

Read Mark 15:16-32, Hebrews 12:1-2 and 1 Peter 1:3-9. Emphasize Jesus's pain and sadness on the cross, but also emphasize that he was joyful because everything he was doing was to save us.

KEY CONCEPTS: Jesus was scared and sad when he died on the cross, and it hurt him very badly. Even though the cross was the most difficult thing for Jesus to face, the Bible says in Hebrews chapter 12 that Jesus still had joy. The "joy" that helped Jesus choose to die on the cross was knowing that his death would allow everyone to experience forgiveness for their sins so that we all can have a close friendship with God. The Bible also says in 1 Peter chapter one that everyone who believes in Jesus will be able to have "glorious joy," even when they go through hard things, just like Jesus did.

Discussion Questions (10 min)

1. What in your life has been a difficult challenge?
2. Is it hard or easy to have joy when you have to face a challenge?
3. Did Jesus find it hard or easy to choose to die on the cross?
4. What did Jesus know that allowed him to have joy when he died on the cross?
5. How did having joy give Jesus strength?

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6. What is a hard situation in your life where you can choose to rejoice?
7. How does joy help you get through a difficult challenge?

Prayer Time

"Dear Jesus, even when life is hard, I want to rejoice. Thank you for joyfully choosing to die on the cross so that I could have forgiveness, even though it was the most difficult thing you had to face. Help me to be joyful when I face hard things, just like you. Amen."

More Activities

MEMORY VERSE: Nehemiah 8:10b – "Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

GAME: "Joy Hunt" – Write Bible verses about joy (look at memory verses from our joy lesson plans for inspiration) on cue cards and tape them around your house. Kids can search for them and read them out loud with a big smile and actions.

CRAFT: "Joy Cross" – Cut out a cross, decorate it with a smiley face, and write the memory verse (Nehemiah 8:10b) on the cross as a reminder that God's joy can give you the strength to face your hardest challenge, just like it did for Jesus.

HANDS-ON OPTION: "Joy Walk" – Take a "joy walk" around your neighbourhood. Point out joyful things in creation and thank God aloud for the joy they bring.

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