

WEEK of December 12 & 15 ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE



THE BIG IDEA

Jesus came to bring joy to the world.

THE BIBLE

The Birth of Jesus Foretold: Luke 1:26-55;
(Zephaniah 3:14-20)

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

Grades 1 – 3 ACTIVITIES | Finding Joy **Supplies needed: paper, pencils.**

INSTRUCTIONS: Split kids up into two or three teams and have them think of as many songs as they can that contain the word "joy." At the end, have them sing one of the songs, or choruses of the song, together.

- There are many songs out there and even some we sing that mention joy. People are constantly searching for things that bring them joy but are often disappointed because they never last.
- Having true and lasting joy means that we know that no matter what happens on the outside, we know on the inside that we are loved by and precious to God. Our joy doesn't depend on anything else but God!

GRADE 4 AND 5 GAME Christmas Carol – Thesaurus Karoke (in PPT)

Work in teams. Teams will be shown a line of lyrics from a popular Christmas song but run each word through a thesaurus. Correctly identify the Christmas song from our synonymous lyrics and win!

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

VIDEO | Teaching Video, Episode 2

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week's video.*

BIG IDEA | Jesus came to bring joy to the world!



- Jesus came to bring joy to the world!

Grades 1 – 3 ACTIVITY | Playful Puppets Supplies needed: pipe cleaners, poms, wiggly eyes, hot glue guns, hot glue sticks.

INSTRUCTIONS: Give kids a few pipe cleaners, googly eyes, and large pom poms. Set up a hot glue gun station for kids to glue on their eyes and pom poms. Direct kids to create finger puppets. See image.

- In last week's story, we met the angel, Gabriel, Elizabeth, and baby John. This week, we'll meet Elizabeth's cousin, Mary, who was also going to receive some good news from the angel Gabriel.
- Let's create a few of the characters then wrap them around our fingers to help us remember our Bible story!

BIBLE STORY | The Birth of Jesus Foretold Supplies needed: use the Playful Puppets that you previously made.

INSTRUCTIONS: Prompt the kids to use their finger puppets from the Playful Puppets activity to follow along as you tell the story from Luke 1:26–55.

- Do you remember the name of the angel who appeared to Zechariah to tell him he was going to have a baby? That's right, it was Gabriel.
 - Everyone wiggle your Gabriel puppet.
- Today's story continues with Gabriel suddenly appearing to a young woman named Mary.
 - Show us how your Mary puppet might have reacted when she saw the angel.
- She was scared, just like Zechariah was! But the angel said, "Don't be afraid, Mary. God is with you, and you'll have a son, Jesus! He'll rule over his kingdom forever!"
- Mary didn't understand. She wasn't married yet. How could she have a baby?
- Gabriel told her that the baby would be the Son of God. This sounded unreal, but Mary trusted God and believed the good news!
 - Have your Gabriel puppet gently tap your Mary puppet to let her know everything will be okay.
- Then, Mary went to visit Elizabeth while both of them were expecting babies. Guess what happened. Elizabeth's baby started jumping for joy inside her womb!
- Imagine that. A baby jumping up and down inside his mother's tummy!
 - Make your John puppet jump!
- Mary was so filled with joy that she burst into a song about God, about how God has always done great things for people, about how God is full of love and mercy and will save them all!
 - Have your Mary puppet perform a song!

- This was a really big thing to happen to Mary, but she trusted God. So instead of being scared or worried, she became filled with joy instead!

DISCUSSION

- How did Mary respond to what the angel told her?
- What did the angel say would be special about Mary's baby?
- What happened with Elizabeth's baby when Mary greeted her?
- Read Zephaniah 3:17. What does this verse say about how God sees us?
- How does Jesus bring joy to the world?
- What are some things that might threaten to take away your joy?
- How can we hold onto the joy God gives us? How can we share joy with others?

Grades 4 & 5 OBJECT LESSON | Fizzy Joy! **Supplies needed: 1 tablespoon baking soda, 2 tablespoons of vinegar, clear glass, raisins, water.**

What is something that gave you so much joy that you couldn't hold it inside?

INSTRUCTIONS: *Fill the glass $\frac{3}{4}$ full of water. Drop five or six raisins in the glass. Add the baking soda and stir until it dissolves. Stir in the vinegar and watch the raisins. If after a minute the raisins have not started to rise, add more vinegar.*

- Sometimes when we are filled with joy, we can't contain it – we must let it show. But everyone does it differently.
- See how each how the raisins reacted? Joy can "bubble up" inside us and be expressed in many ways, too!
- When Mary was told the big news, she showed her joy by singing a song. We can also show our joy because that's why **Jesus came . . . to bring joy to the world!**

BIBLE | Zephaniah 3:14–20

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Zephaniah 3:14–20 to the group or ask a volunteer to read it in a nice, clear voice.*
- What can we be joyful about, based on these verses?
 - God has taken away our punishment.
 - God has taken away our fear.
 - God is with us.
 - God saves and rescues us.
- What are ways we can express this joy, based on these verses?
 - We can sing and shout aloud!
 - We can rejoice and be glad with all our hearts!

- The best part is it's not just us who have something to be joyful about. Zephaniah 3:17 tells us that God also rejoices over us! With singing!
- Jesus came to bring joy to the world, and that joy comes straight from God.

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

REFLECTION | Express Your Joy

- What are some different ways people expressed joy in today's Bible story?
 - Mary sang a song.
 - Elizabeth rejoiced in loud voice.
 - Elizabeth's baby boy, John, jumped for joy before he was even born!
- What are some ways you express your joy?
 - Maybe you sing in the shower, wear your favorite sweater, smile super widely, or skip when you walk.
 - Remember, there is no single way to express joy. We're all made differently, so we all feel joy differently!
- Share with someone next to you how you show your joy!
 - What are some things you have that bring you joy? Maybe it's a special gift, something you built yourself, or something you've had all your life.
 - What are some ideas that bring you joy? Sometimes joy comes from things we barely notice like smelling your favorite cookies, hearing your favorite song, or doing well on a test.

PRAYER and BLESSING

God, thank you so much for sending Jesus to bring joy to the world! Because of Jesus, we know that no matter what happens in our lives, being loved by you is the greatest joy we could ever have. Help us remember that every day is a chance to express this joy and share it with others. Amen.

Blessing – Make the sign of the cross on each child's forehead and say, "Jesus came to bring JOY TO THE WORLD and to you!"