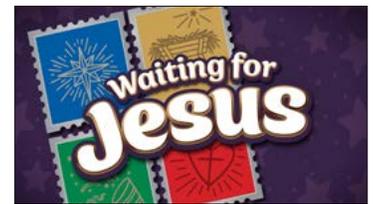


**LESSON 3**  
**JOY****LESSON AT A GLANCE****WONDER TRUTH:** Jesus Is Our Joy**SCRIPTURE:** Isaiah 35; Luke 2**GOD'S BIG STORY:** After many years of waiting, the Savior is born. His name is Jesus, and He brings joy to the world!**WORD OF WONDER:** Faith is being sure of what we hope for and being sure of what we do not see.  
—from Hebrews 11:1**CURIOSITY****BELIEF****FAITH**

- Welcome Question: What makes you joyful?
- Curiosity Questions
- Curiosity Activity: Joy Gift
- God's Big Story
- Word of Wonder: From Hebrews 11:1
- Discussion Questions
- LARGE GROUP
- Responding in Worship: Joy Parade
- Cosing Game: Jump for Joy



[Waiting for Jesus Elem Spotify playlist](#)

### INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** Jesus Is Our Joy

**SCRIPTURE:** Isaiah 35; Luke 2

**WORD OF WONDER:** From Hebrews 11:1

I think joy can best be learned from kids. There's nothing like hearing children laugh at silly songs or watching tiny babies giggle at funny faces people make at them. Or if you'd like to shed tears of joy, watch a clip of a child hearing her mother's voice for the first time. These are simple joys.

Joy is the ability to experience deep gladness no matter the circumstances of life.

Sometimes as we grow up, we take things like funny faces and silly songs for granted, or even the sound of the voices of people we love. Sometimes we can be so overwhelmed by our circumstances that joy seems hard to find.

*How are your circumstances impacting your joy this season?*

The people hearing the words of Isaiah, and those later described in Luke's Gospel, lived in difficult times. Read Isaiah 35 and note that it describes a day when God will overwhelm His people with joy. Next, read Luke 2:6–18. Notice the angel's words to the shepherds that this news will bring "great joy for all the people" (v 10).

Born into difficult circumstances and laid in an animal feeding trough, this new baby probably still had funny faces made at Him. And at some point, He heard the voice of His mother for the first time. The difference in this story is that Jesus doesn't just teach us about joy; He is the source of it!

Jesus is our joy!

—**Matt Irvine**

Pastor and Editor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS**

**WHO?**

Isaiah was God’s messenger to the nation of Judah during an unstable time who foretold of the coming Savior. The shepherds near Bethlehem were the first to hear of Jesus’ birth and the first-ever evangelists, who told everyone about the child.

**WHAT?**

Jesus fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecy that “the eyes of those who are blind will be opened” when He came (Isaiah 35:5). Jesus showed what the kingdom of God is like when He healed many who were sick. When Jesus returns, He will fix and restore all that is broken and disordered.

**WHERE?**

At the time of Jesus’ birth, the shepherds lived in fields near Bethlehem, located about six miles south of Jerusalem in the region of Judea. Jesus was born in the humble setting of Bethlehem, instead of the glamorous palace of a king.

**WHEN?**

Jesus was born about 700 years after Isaiah wrote about God’s “coming” to save His people. At the time, Isaiah’s audience probably thought about how God would save Judah from physical destruction. But God “comes” to His people in physical form when Jesus is born.

**CONNECTING TO GOD’S BIG STORY:**

When sin entered the world, God put a plan into motion—He would redeem His people and fix all that was broken by sin. In the Old Testament, we see God working through one family—Israel—to bring about this plan of salvation, but this would not be clearly unveiled until the arrival of Jesus.

## LESSON 3 EARLY ELEMENTARY

### Small Group

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** Jesus Is Our Joy  
**SCRIPTURE:** Isaiah 35; Luke 2  
**WORD OF WONDER:** From Hebrews 11:1

### Pre-Service Connection (15–20 min)

**RESOURCES:** *it or ost r r or utc r r riti ut sis or sor s*  
**G s Activiti s Gui**

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*ctiviti s r yto c i r occu i you isti isi ort t to ui*  
*r tio s i s co i s structur i t roo you s ou ctiv rtici t*  
*it t L r t i s s sur t y o yours too*

#### As kids arrive ...

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*Us t co u stio t fo o i Curious*  
*u stio sto i s S y'I'm curious.." for c u stio iv*  
*i s c c tot i for s ri c o Aft r c u stio co si r vi i s s r*  
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*Co si r vi it o r or ost r for i sto rit or r s rs to y of t u stio s:*



- How would you define the word joy to someone who has never heard it?
- Do you think happiness and joy are the same thing? Why or why not?

### Small Group Begins

*Aft r t O i Activity or L r Grou L r i i s rou ti yr i t*  
*co u stio ou i viti v ryo too t ir i s i*

## Curiosity Activity: Joy Gift

**SUPPLIES:** baby blanket (or any baby accessory), party horn or hat, small gift box or gift bag, wrapping paper, tape, gift bag (optional), small treats or prizes (1 per kid, optional)

Ahead of time, put the baby blanket (or any baby accessory) and party horn in a small gift box and wrap it with wrapping paper (or use a gift bag and tape it shut).

Encourage kids to sit in a circle and show them the wrapped present.

**Who likes presents?** Allow kids to answer. **We have a present today! Do you want to see what's inside?** Allow kids to answer. **I wonder what it is.** Shake the present. **Maybe we should wait to open it.** **Are you curious about what is inside?** Allow kids to answer. **It has to do with our story today and the greatest Christmas gift of all. Do you think we should open it now?** Allow kids to answer. **I think we should wait a little longer.** Allow the kids to pass the present around (without opening it or peeking!).

**What if we tried to shake it and guess what's inside?** Let kids shake the present and take guesses. **Should we open it now?** Allow kids to answer. **Let's wait a little longer.** Invite the kids to walk in a circle around the present (stalling a little so the anticipation builds). **This present is wrapped so beautifully. Let's open it!** Let the kids help you open the gift.

**Interesting ... a baby blanket and a party horn (or hat). I wonder what these things have to do with our story today. We're going to hear how these things have something to do with the greatest Christmas gift ever given. What do you think the greatest gift was?**

## Word of Wonder

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, small candy cane, cups (3)

### WORD OF WONDER

Faith is being sure of what we hope for and sure of what we do not see.

—from Hebrews 11:1

**Our Word of Wonder for the Waiting for Jesus series is from Hebrews 11:1. Let's practice saying the Word of Wonder together.**

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

- **FAITH**—Make prayer hands.
- **IS BEING SURE**—Make a fist with one hand and put it down on your other hand (open palm).
- **OF WHAT WE HOPE FOR**—Put your fist down onto your open palm once for each word (what, hope).
- **AND SURE**—Hands on your hips.
- **OF WHAT WE DO NOT**—Hold one finger up and shake it back and forth (“No, No”).
- **SEE.**—Put your hands by your eyes like binoculars.
- **FROM HEBREWS 11:1**—Hands open like a book.

**This candy cane is in the shape of a J.** Hold up the candy cane to look like a J to the kids. **That’s the first letter in Jesus. It’s also the first letter of the word joy. It even kind of looks like a shepherd’s staff if we turn it around. It reminds us of the joy that Jesus brought to the world when He was born and when the shepherds were the first to hear and celebrate Jesus’ birth!**

**Our Word of Wonder tells us that we can be sure and certain of what we hope for—Jesus—even when we can’t see Him. We can trust God! Let’s play a game to see if we can find the candy cane even when we can’t see it.**

Place all three cups upside down next to each other on a flat surface. Place the candy cane under one of the cups. Mix the cups up and let the kids take turns guessing which cup has the candy cane under it. Whoever guesses correctly will say the verse. Play several rounds.

Gather the kids to discuss these questions:

- **Do you think the shepherds felt joy when they heard the news of Jesus? Why or why not?**
- **What is something about God that is hard to understand or believe?**

## God’s Big Story

**SUPPLIES:** Bible [Bible Story Picture](#) ( SG)

### Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they’re about to hear is part of God’s big story.

**I open my Bible, and what do I see?** *(Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.)*

**God’s big story, waiting for me!** *(Point to yourself.)*

**Let’s start by reading part of God’s big story from the books of Isaiah and Luke in the Bible. Isaiah is in the Old Testament, and Luke is in the New Testament.**

Read [Isaiah 35:3–6](#) and [Luke 2:6–18](#) from [our Bible](#).

## Discussion Questions

**SUPPLIES:** play dough, birthday candles

Gather the kids to sit in a circle.

**Today we learned about how Jesus was born and brought joy to the whole world! How do you celebrate birthdays?** Allow the kids to respond. Be sensitive to kids whose families don't do a lot for birthdays, and make sure they know that's OK. **Sometimes we eat birthday cake to celebrate birthdays. We're going to make a pretend birthday cake to help us celebrate Jesus' birth.**

Invite the kids to help you make a pretend birthday cake using the play dough. Then stick some birthday candles into it (like birthday candles on a cake!) and pass the pretend cake around the circle. Each kid will take one candle out when they get the cake and put the candle on the ground in the middle. The kid who pulls the last candle out will answer a question. Play several times with varying amounts of candles in the cake.

**Leader Tip:** If you don't have small birthday candles, use crayons instead. You could also take it up a notch and make a real birthday cake to serve the kids as a snack after the activity! If you do, be aware of food allergies.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **In what city was baby Jesus born?** *(Bethlehem)*
- **Who were Jesus' parents on earth?** *(Mary and Joseph)*
- **Who did the angel share the good news with about baby Jesus?** *(the shepherds)*
- **What did the shepherds do after they heard the good news about Jesus?** *(They hurried off to find the baby and see for themselves; told everyone the good news.)*
- **What makes you feel joyful and happy?**
- **What are you excited about for Christmas?**
- **How does Jesus bring you joy?**

**God sent Jesus to be the best present ever. We can celebrate Jesus and have joy because of Him. The joy that comes from Jesus lasts forever! Let's thank God for sending His Son Jesus to us and for giving us great joy!**

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That's OK! Encourage them to pray silently and to thank God for giving us joy because of Jesus.

## Head to Large Group

Return and finish the rest of this guide before parents arrive.

### Responding in Worship: Joy Parade

**SUPPLIES:** party hats (from Play Stations, 1 per kid), ribbon wands, toy instruments, party horns or blowers (1 per kid)

**RESOURCES:** upbeat music from the [Waiting for Jesus Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#)

**God sent His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior. Jesus came as a tiny baby to save the world from sin—the wrong things people say and do that separate them from God. We learned in today’s story that when God’s people were sad and scared, He promised that He was going to come and save them. And God sent the Savior as a baby and told a group of regular people first. The shepherds had so much joy.**

**And the joy didn’t stop with the shepherds! Jesus, the promised Savior, came to heal what was broken. Jesus came to help people. Jesus came to save us. We can have joy because of Jesus too.**

**Jesus came because He loves us more than anything! Because of God’s gift, we can love Jesus and have joy. We’re going to celebrate Jesus’ birth by having a joy parade! Let’s get ready to celebrate!**

Have the kids line up and give them party hats, ribbon wands, toy instruments, and party horns or blowers.

**Because of Jesus, we can have joy. Joy is deep gladness because of Jesus! Joy is something no one can take away because God loves us always. Joy comes from God and lasts forever! While we’re marching in the parade, remember to get loud and celebrate and praise God for sending Jesus!**

Play upbeat music from the [Waiting For Jesus Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#). Encourage kids to march around the room using their instruments, wands, or party horns as they sing and dance to the music.

You can also let the group march down the hallways of your church or do a parade for other groups.

**Make it Inclusive:** Some kids may struggle with this activity due to the chaos. They may enjoy doing their own mini parade in a small group.

At the end of the parade, bring kids back together. Collect the party horns and blowers, ribbon wands, and toy instruments. Show the kids how to fold their hands in prayer.

## Closing Game: Jump for Joy

**SUPPLIES:** ropes (2)

Today we learned from God's big story about when Jesus was born, and we learned that because of Jesus, we can have joy. Have you ever heard the phrase "jump for joy"? Allow the kids to respond. That just means celebrating with great joy. We're going to remember Jesus and jump for joy in a game. We'll see how big your joy jump is!

Lay two ropes on the floor on the floor about a foot apart.

Let the kids take turns getting a running start and then try to jump over the ropes without touching them with their feet. After all the kids have had a chance, move the ropes farther apart and play again. Every time kids jump, they can say the Wonder Truth, "Jesus is my joy!"

Play multiple rounds.

**Make It Inclusive:** For kids who are unable to jump, encourage them to step between the ropes or toss a ball as high or far as they can.