

LESSON 3
JOY

LESSON AT A GLANCE

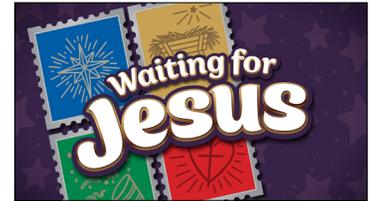
WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Is Our Joy**SCRIPTURE:** Isaiah 35; Luke 2**GOD'S BIG STORY:** After many years of waiting, the Savior is born. His name is Jesus, and He brings joy to the world!**WORD OF WONDER:** Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being sure of what we do not see.
—Hebrews 11:1

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Preservice Multisensory Activity: Emoji Face Swap
- Welcome Question: What makes you joyful?
- SMALL GROUP
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: Joy to the World (Glory to the King), Great Things (Do You Hear What I Hear)
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- In Awe of God's Wonder
- Responding in Worship: King of Kings
- Blessing Your Kids



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: 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.

Large Group

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Is Our Joy
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As kids arrive...

Around 20 minutes before service begins, display series theme loop. Play high-energy music in the background.

LG Leader walks around the room on mic and greets kids by name as they enter the room. Be extra intentional about introducing yourself to new parents and kids.

SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN (2min OR 30sec) Start a countdown to begin game 10 minutes prior to service start)

Multisensory Activity: Joy or No Joy?

SUPPLIES: masking or painter's tape

RESOURCES: Joy Signs (1 set/LG)

Ahead of time, print the Joy Signs and tape each to opposite ends of the room.

Display the first Joy or No Joy? Slide, and gather the kids. **Let's learn more about each other by seeing what brings us joy and what brings us no joy! I'm going to put a picture up on the screen. Pay attention to how the image makes you feel. If it brings you a lot of joy, you can stand next to the Joy Sign.** Point to the Joy Sign at one end of the room. **If the picture brings you no joy at all, you can stand next to the No Joy Sign.** Point to the No Joy Sign at the other

end of the room. **But if the picture makes you feel an emotion that falls somewhere between Joy and No Joy, you can stand anywhere in between the signs that represents how much or how little joy it brings.** For example, if a picture makes you feel slightly joyful but not full-on-

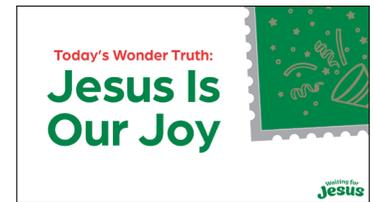
happy-happy-joyful, then you can stand about here. Go to a spot between the signs that is closer to the Joy Sign than to the No Joy Sign. **OK. Let's begin!**

Advance to the second Joy or No Joy? Slide, and invite kids to move to a spot that represents how they feel on a scale from Joy to No Joy. If time allows, call on one or two kids to explain how that image makes them feel and why. Continue through all 12 slides.



If some kids in your group are especially energetic, assign specific silly ways to move as they choose their spots on the Joy to No Joy spectrum. For example, they might move like robots, hop backward, or move in slow motion.

Gather the kids back together. **It was so fun to see which images brought you joy! Sometimes we use the words joyful and happy in the same way. As you were thinking about what images make you joyful, you may have been thinking about what makes you happy—and that's OK! Today we're going to learn that the joy we have because of Jesus is something deeper than how we feel when we are on a waterslide or eating ice cream. Display the Joy Wonder Truth Slide. Joy is deep gladness because of Jesus! It is something no one can take away because God loves us always. Joy comes from God and lasts forever! Our Wonder Truth today is JESUS IS OUR JOY.**



Welcome Question

SUPPLIES: paper, coloring utensils, poster board OR , whiteboard, dry-erase markers (if needed)

SLIDE: WELCOME QUESTION

At service start time, draw kids' attention to the Welcome Question.

Invite kids to write answers on the poster board or whiteboard.

It's so fun hearing all the wonderful things that bring you joy! Today we're going to hear about something God did that brought great joy to the whole world. But first, it's time for small group!



Small Group

Introduce small group time. While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is _____ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! We are going to pray as we prepare our hearts to worship God!"

Declaring God's Wonder

SLIDE: DECLARATION

Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

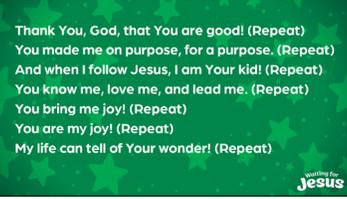
And when I follow Jesus, I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

You bring me joy! (Kids repeat.)

You are my joy! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)



Thank You, God, that You are good! (Repeat)
You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Repeat)
And when I follow Jesus, I am Your kid! (Repeat)
You know me, love me, and lead me. (Repeat)
You bring me joy! (Repeat)
You are my joy! (Repeat)
My life can tell of Your wonder! (Repeat)

Prayer of Invitation

Lead kids in a prayer of invitation before entering into worship and God's big story. Use your own words, here is an example: **God, thank You for being here with us! Please show us more about You and Your love for us as we explore Your big story today. Thank You for being our joy. Help us to live joyful lives that point others to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Today we'll hear that Jesus' birth is good news of great joy for all people! Jesus brought joy to His people long ago, and He brings us joy today. Let's worship Him!

WORSHIP VIDEOS: Joy to the World (Glory to the King), Great Things (Do You Hear What I Hear)

God's Big Story

SLIDE: TITLE

You are about to see how God kept a promise He made long before Jesus was born. Watch how the story moves from a busy town to a quiet field and finally to a manger. As you watch, think about why God might choose such an unexpected way to bring His Son into the world.

VIDEO: GODS BIG STORY



In God's Big Story:

Joy

Isaiah 35; Luke 2

LESSON 3 JOY

EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: paper bags such as gift bags or brown lunch sacks (1 per 3 kids), cardstock, scissors (prep only), story bag objects (see list below, optional)

RESOURCES: [Story Bag Cutouts Sheet \(1 per 3 kids\)](#)

Preparation: Ahead of time, prepare story bags for every 2–4 kids. (If you have enough supplies to create bags for every kid, go for it!) The story bags can be gift bags or brown paper lunch sacks with nine small paper cutouts and/or objects inside. You can print a copy of the Story Bag Cutouts Sheet on cardstock for each bag and cut out the images, you can gather the following objects (one of each per bag), or you can fill the bags with a mix of cardstock cutouts and objects. Here is a list of the nine objects and the Story Bag Cutouts Sheet image that corresponds:

- coin (coins)
- a swatch of white fabric (white cloth)
- hay or fake straw (pile of hay)
- small toy animal that is not sheep (goats)
- small toy shield (ancient shield)
- flower (flower)
- cotton ball (sheep)
- toy musical instrument (harp with music notes)
- small cross (cross)



Gather the kids, and help them form groups of 2–4. Give each group a story bag, and ask them to leave their bags untouched until you give them more instructions during the story. **In each of your story bags are objects that will help us understand and remember today’s part of God’s big story. I’ll pause at different times during the story, and your group will work together to find the object in your bags that connects with that part of the story. Let’s get started!**

It was nighttime when Joseph and his wife, Mary, arrived in Bethlehem—the town of David—after traveling there to pay taxes. Mary was expecting a baby, and the time had come for the child to be born. She gave birth to a boy and wrapped Him in large strips of cloth. Can you find an object in your bag that connects with this part of the story? If younger kids need more direction, invite them to find the white cloth. Invite kids to place the white cloth on the floor in front of them. **Mary placed the baby in an animal feeding trough called a manger because there was no guest room where they could stay. What do you think the manger may have been filled with?** Kids respond. **Yes, hay! Can you find something in your bag that looks like it could be in a manger?** Pause as kids find the hay or fake straw and set it in front of them.

To anyone watching, the birth would have appeared ordinary. No trumpets blared announcing the arrival of a king. Just a baby boy, lying in a smelly animal feeding trough filled with hay. Who (or what!) else do you think may have been there that night with Mary, Joseph, and the baby? Invite kids to look in their bags. If they aren’t sure what object to pull out, encourage them to find the image of goats or toy animal (not the sheep image). They can set the animal(s) in front of them.

However, this baby boy was far from ordinary. He was actually at the center of a promise God had made hundreds of years before.

Seven hundred years earlier, things looked bad for God’s people in the land of Judah. The Assyrian army was advancing, and it seemed Judah would soon be conquered and taken captive! Is there anything in your story bags that makes you think of the Assyrian army? Pause as kids find the shield and set it in front of them.

But God chose that moment to remind His people that He would come to save them! “Be strong, do not fear,” God told the people through the prophet Isaiah. “One day I will heal all that is broken. Even the desert will be glad, and the wilderness will blossom and shout for joy. The eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of those who can’t hear will be unplugged. God will come, and He will come to save you!” Look in your bags for something that relates to this amazing promise from God to fix all of creation! Pause for kids to look in their bags for a flower. They can set it in front of them.

God’s people believed His promise and began to wait for this Savior, this Messiah and forever King. They waited. And waited. Surely the arrival of the Savior—God Himself—would be the grandest of all occasions.

The people may have thought God would come to the wealthiest and most powerful people first. But instead, God’s messengers announced the arrival of the promised Savior to an ordinary group of shepherds.

About 700 years after Isaiah and on the same night Mary gave birth to a baby boy in Bethlehem, a group of shepherds in the nearby hills were taking care of their sheep. Can you find something in your story bags that reminds you of shepherds caring for their sheep? Encourage kids to find the sheep image or the cotton ball and set it in front of them.

“An angel of the Lord appeared to them. And the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news. It will bring great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord. Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger’ ” (Luke 2:9–12).

Suddenly, a large group of angels filled the sky. They praised God, saying, “May glory be given to God in the highest heaven! And may peace be given to those He is pleased with on earth!” (Luke 2:14). Wow! The whole sky filled with angels praising God! What do you think they may have sounded like? Pause for kids to respond. Let’s look in our bags for something that reminds us of a sky full of worshipping angels. As needed, help kids find the image of the harp with music notes or the toy musical instrument.

These ordinary shepherds would have grown up hearing the words God had spoken through the prophet Isaiah. They knew that one day God Himself would come to save His people. But how could this be? The promised Savior and forever King had arrived, and God chose them to be the first to know! The joy they felt was too much to contain! They had to see this baby!

So, the shepherds hurried off and found Mary, Joseph, and the baby. They saw Jesus with their own eyes! Then they told everyone the good news. They had seen the Savior! Is there anything in your story bag that reminds you that this baby—Jesus—is our Savior? Pause for kids to pull the cross out of their bags. Encourage them to hold it up high! **Everyone who heard was amazed.**

When God’s people were at their lowest point, He promised that one day, He would come and save them. Yet when that day arrived, it wasn’t the grand event people had expected. God sent the Savior as a baby and announced His arrival to ordinary people. It’s no wonder the shepherds were filled with such joy!

But the joy doesn’t end with them. Jesus, the promised Messiah, who heals all that is broken and makes blind eyes see, brings lasting joy to all who know Him. **Jesus is our joy!**

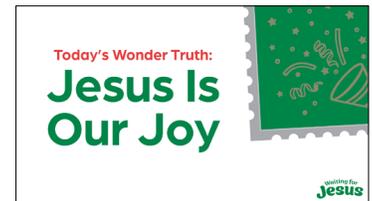
If time allows, invite small groups to retell the story together, using the objects from their story bags to help. If you provided a story bag for every kid, encourage them to take them home and use them to retell today’s story to their families.

Connecting the Wonder Truth

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Our Wonder Truth today is **JESUS IS OUR JOY**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in action in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

Sin is the wrong things we do that separate us from God. When the first people sinned, 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 His plan of salvation. In Jesus, we see the fulfillment of God’s plan!



In Awe of God’s Wonder

Spend a few moments allowing kids to think about the wonder of God’s story.

What brought you joy in God’s big story today? Invite the kids to talk about what made them feel joyful as they heard the story.

What do you think brings God joy? Allow kids to think quietly before sharing their ideas out loud.

Responding in Worship

SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson.

***Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. See the "Worship Posture Tutorial" on the RBKids Resource Page.



Responding
in Worship

WORSHIP VIDEO: KING OF KINGS

Blessing Your Kids

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them. Use your own words. Here is an example

Blessing: God kept His promises to His people and brought them joy through Jesus. God will keep His promises to you too because He knows you, loves you, and leads you. Rejoice this week because Jesus is our joy!