

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, a 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 sure of what we do not see.

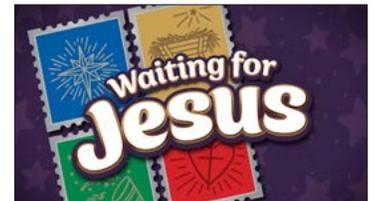
—from Hebrews 11:1

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Curiosity Activity: Joy Gift
- Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: **Go Tell It On The Mountain, Joy to the World**
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Prayer and Blessing



[Waiting for Jesus Preschool Spotify playlist](#)



LESSON 3 FOR LEADERS

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.

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

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Welcome

Slide: Series Welcome Loop

As kids arrive...

Walk around the room and welcome as many kids as possible by showing excitement that they have joined you. Give high-fives, fist bumps, encourage them to sit on the floor in their spots, and ask questions about their week.

Video: Countdown

Welcome kids to worship time. Introduce yourself by name.

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?

Allow the kids to respond. **Is it hard to wait for a wonderful gift? Was it hard to wait to open this one?** Allow the kids to respond. **God gave the greatest gift of all, and His people waited a long time. We don't have to wait anymore because the greatest gift of all is here! A baby was born and brought great joy! We can celebrate Jesus!** If you want, you can give all of the kids a small treat or prize as a gift.

Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions

RESOURCES: Tac the Cat puppet

Tac the Cat: (*singing*) Jingle Bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way. Oh! What fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh—hey!

Leader: Good morning, Tac! You seem excited for Christmas! Kids, you remember Tac the Cat. He's a curious cat, and I bet he'll ask a lot of questions today about Christmas.

Tac the Cat: You got that right! I've got lots of curious questions today. I've been listening to the amazing cat-er-iffic music station all week, and it's playing Christmas songs! I've been singing in my kennel, my litter box, and under the Christmas tree! But there are some songs that I just don't understand!

Leader: I think we can help you.

Tac the Cat: Let's sing the first song on my Christmas playlist!
(*Sing the song "Jingle Bells." Stop after the line "one-horse open sleigh."*)

Tac the Cat: Stop! A one-horse open sleigh? What's that?

Leader: It's a sleigh or carriage people ride in—it's pulled by horses.

Tac the Cat: Oh, cool! That sounds fun. I have a curious question about another song. It goes like this ...
(*Sing part of "Away in a Manger." Stop at the line "... no crib for a bed."*)

Tac the Cat: Wait! I know this is a song about baby Jesus, but I'm curious why he didn't have a crib to sleep in when he was born!

Leader: You're right, Tac. When baby Jesus was born, he wasn't born in a hospital. He was born in a barn—or stable. His bed was a manger, which is something animals eat out of.

Tac the Cat: Are you serious? That's kind of crazy! Baby Jesus, the Son of God, the King of everything sleeping in a smelly animal feeding bin!

Leader: Yes, we'll learn all about it today in our story and how this was all part of God's perfect plan. God sent Jesus to be the best Christmas present ever. We can celebrate Jesus and have joy because of Him.

Tac the Cat: Wow! I want to know more about this! What's joy?

Leader: 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!

Tac the Cat: Well, I'm ready for some joy! I want to celebrate Jesus too! I'm going to go sing more songs and tell everyone!

Have you ever been curious about something? Let's take a moment and think ... What about Christmas makes you happy? Allow the kids to respond. **What Christmas song do you like?** Allow the kids to respond. **Do you feel joyful today?** Allow the kids to respond. **It's OK if you don't really know what joy is or feel it right now. We'll learn in God's big story about joy and how Jesus came to the world to bring joy!**

Today's Wonder Truth is **JESUS IS OUR JOY.**

Declaring God's Wonder

SLIDE: DECLARATION

Thank You, God, that You made me! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Make prayer hands, then point up and then to yourself.

And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands on your hips.

Jesus loves me so much; (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

His love for me is big. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

The Holy Spirit leads me, (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Bring your arms down from above, making a path in front of you.

And I can follow You. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

March in place like you're following the leader.

My life can tell Your story. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

I'm a wonder; this is true. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shake your fingers, and celebrate ("praise hands").



Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use your own words. Here is your 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 was 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: Go Tell It On The Mountain, Joy to the World (Glory to the King).

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible

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.

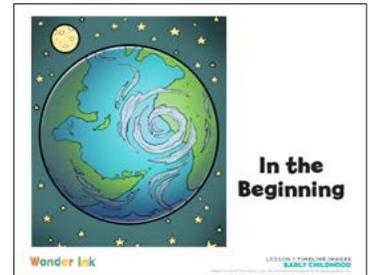
Read the God's Big Story Script provided or read Isaiah 35:3–6 and Luke 2:6–18 from the Bible. You can also print the Bible Story Picture to give the kids a visual depiction as you tell the story.

GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: paper, scissors (prep only), tape, paper (optional), roll of wrapping paper (optional)

RESOURCES: Timeline Images (1 set)

If you didn't already, print the Timeline Images and cut out the people pictures. These are the same images for the whole series. You can tape the papers together on a wall to make a long timeline. You can even add extra paper in between (where the "700 years" is on the timeline) to show time passing between Isaiah and Jesus. Another option is to use wrapping paper as the background to your timeline. Unroll the wrapping paper and tape it on a wall to make your long timeline. You will use this timeline for the first four lessons in this series and then add to it for the fifth lesson. Leave space at the end of the timeline to add on after the fourth lesson. In this lesson, you'll use images #3, 6, 7, 9, and 12 (in that order).



Long ago, things looked bad for God's people. They lived in the land of Judah. Point to the place on the timeline that shows God's people, the tribe of Judah. If it's not already there, invite a kid to tape it to the timeline.

Their enemy was getting closer. They were scared! But God reminded His people that He was going to come to save them! God sent the prophet Isaiah to talk to His people. A prophet is a person who speaks God's words to others. Isaiah said, "Be strong and do not fear. One day God will heal everything that is broken. God will come, and He will save you!" (from Isaiah 35:4.)

God's people believed His promise. They waited for this Savior who was going to be the forever King. They waited. And waited. And waited some more.

Then many years later, the leader of God's land told everyone to go back to where they came from to be counted. A man named Joseph was from Bethlehem. Point to or hold up the Joseph picture and choose a kid to tape it onto the timeline. **So Joseph and his wife Mary made a long trip to the town of Bethlehem to be counted.** Point to or choose a kid to tape the Mary picture to the timeline. **Mary was going to have a baby, and it was time for the baby to be born! Mary had the baby boy and wrapped Him up in large strips of cloth. There was no guest room where they could stay, so Mary laid Jesus in a feeding bin for animals called a manger.** Point to or choose a kid to tape the Baby Jesus picture to the timeline.

But this was not a regular baby boy! He was the child God promised many years before. God's people might have thought that the Savior would come in a really fancy way. They might have thought the Savior would come to the most rich and important people first. But that is not what God did!

The first people to hear that the promised Savior was born was a group of shepherds! Choose a kid to tape the shepherds picture to the timeline. **On the night Mary had her baby boy, a group of shepherds were taking care of their sheep. "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 lot of angels filled the sky. They praised God, saying, “May glory be given to God in the highest heaven!” (Luke 2:14a).

Who was the first to hear the good news about the Savior? It was a group of shepherds. Point to the shepherds on the timeline. These shepherds were so excited! 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 saw the Savior! Everyone was amazed.

When God’s people were sad and scared, He promised that He was going to come and save them. And when it was time for God to keep His promise, it was not the rich and fancy people who heard the news first. 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 is our joy!

Connecting the Wonder Truth

Ask the following question to help kids connect the Wonder Truth to God’s big story:

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

Sin is the wrong things we say and do that separate us from God. When the first people sinned, God started His plan to save people and fix what sin messed up. Before Jesus was born, people waited a long time for the Savior God promised. When Jesus was born, God’s promise was true! Jesus saves us from sin. We can have joy from God!

Prayer and Blessing

Pray with the kids and thank God for sending Jesus and giving us joy.

When I say, “joy,” you can lift your hands above your head like “praise hands” celebrating. God, thank You for sending Jesus to earth for us. Thank You for making a way for us to be saved and forgiven. Because of Jesus, we can celebrate and have joy (praise hands). We love You! We want to keep celebrating Jesus! In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

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!