

LESSON 3

JOY AND CONTENTMENT

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Gives Us Joy

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2–4

GOD'S BIG STORY: While he is in prison, Paul encourages the church in Philippi to rejoice. He teaches that when we are thankful, God's Spirit will give us joy and contentment no matter the circumstance.

WORD OF WONDER: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. —Galatians 5:22–23 (ISV)

Object Lesson: Party Time

Activity: Happy Face

Worship

God's Big Story

Word of Wonder

Prayer and Blessing

Game: Joy Jump

Object Lesson: Party Time

SUPPLIES: party supplies such as balloons, party hats, party horns or blowers, crepe paper streamers, or other party decorations

Greet the kids warmly and welcome them to church.

Allergy Caution: Be aware of any latex allergies or sensitivities among your kids and volunteers before doing this activity!

Welcome! Today we're talking about joy! Joy is the great happiness we feel deep in our hearts that comes from God! Let's play and get curious.

What kinds of things do you celebrate? What do you do to celebrate? Allow the kids to respond.

Sometimes we have parties to celebrate. Today we're learning and celebrating that God makes us joyful.

Set out party supplies, such as balloons, party hats, party horns or blowers, crepe paper streamers, or other party decorations. Let the kids play with the party supplies and use them to decorate the area or have a pretend party.

Activity: Happy Face

SUPPLIES: happy face stickers (at least 1 per kid), assorted colorful stickers, colored cardstock (1 sheet per kid)

In God's big story today, we'll learn that God gives us joy. Choose one sheet of paper that makes you smile and brings you joy. Put a happy face sticker and other stickers on your paper. Invite the kids to put stickers on their papers. Watch young toddlers closely to ensure they don't put the stickers in their mouths. You can also sing "If You're Happy and You Know It" with the kids and enjoy them to show their happy faces as they sing.

You chose paper and stickers that brought you joy! Joy is the deep happiness that comes from God. Our Wonder Truth today is: GOD GIVES US JOY.

Encourage the kids to do the following motions while you repeat the Wonder Truth. Older toddlers can say the words with you as they do the motions.

GOD—Point up.

GIVES US—Point to yourself.

JOY—Jump up and down and celebrate.

Worship

Today we'll learn that God makes us joyful through His Holy Spirit. Let's sing about joy together! Let's clap our hands, rock the pretend drums, whisper softly, and shout along with the song! Listen closely and follow me as we sing together!

Play songs from the Be Like Jesus Early Childhood Spotify playlist and encourage the kids to sing and dance while following your lead as they praise God.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible, paper (1 sheet), envelope

RESOURCES: Smiley Face Picture(1. SG), Bible Story Picture (optional)

Ahead of time, print one copy of the Smiley Face Picture. Put the paper inside the envelope like a letter.

God's big story today is a great story from the Bible about a person named Paul. Encourage the kids to say, "Paul." **Let's find out from the Bible what Paul wrote in a letter.**

Show the kids the God's Big Story video, read the story from the Bible, or use the Script provided. You can also print the Bible Story Picture to give kids a visual depiction as you tell the story.

Paul, a follower of Jesus, was in a smelly, dirty place. Pinch your nose and say, "Pee-ew!"

He was in jail, even though he didn't do anything wrong. Make a sad face. **He didn't have much food, and he didn't have visitors. Paul was probably hungry.** Rub stomach to indicate hunger.

He was lonely. Have you ever been lonely? Allow kids to respond. **But Paul knew God would help him have joy** (show kids the Smiley Face Picture) **even though he was hungry and lonely. Paul wrote letters** (show kids a letter) **to his friends. He did that often and told his friends that even in difficult time , they can have joy.** Show kids the Smiley Face Picture. **God gave Paul joy. God gives you joy too!**

God sees you and hears you when you're hungry and lonely! You can tell God, "Thank You" for being with you and giving you joy! Show the Smiley Face Picture.



Snack

Instruct kids to sit in the floor. Pass out snacks and say a prayer together.

Invite kids to repeat after you:

Thank you for the world so sweet. kids repeat

Thank you for the food we eat. kids repeat

Thank you for the birds that sing. kids repeat

Thank you God for everything. kids repeat

Amen

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bible

WORD OF WONDER

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

—Galatians 5:22–23a (ISV)

Our Word of Wonder for the Be Like Jesus series is Galatians 5:22–23a. Let’s practice saying the Word of Wonder together.

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

- **THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS**—Draw a large “S” into the air.
- **LOVE**,—Pat your hands on your heart.
- **JOY**,—Put your arms up as if celebrating.
- **PEACE**,—Place palms together by cheek and ear to indicate “sleep.”
- **PATIENCE**,—Point to a pretend watch on your wrist.
- **KINDNESS**,—Pretend to give someone a hug.
- **GOODNESS**,—Make a thumbs-up.
- **FAITHFULNESS**,—Make two fists and start with the right fist on top, hitting the left fist, then switch and pound the left fist on top of the right.
- **GENTLENESS**,—Pretend to gently rock a baby.
- **AND SELF-CONTROL**,—Point to yourself with your thumbs.
- **GALATIANS 5:22–23a**—Hold your hands together as if opening a book.

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them, thanking God for giving us joy.

Let’s pray and talk to God. When I say, “joyful” or “joy,” you can cheer or clap.

God, thank You for giving us the Holy Spirit. Thank You for making us joyful (cheer or clap) no matter what’s happening in our lives. Thank You for joy (cheer or clap)! We love You. 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: As Paul wrote to the Philippians, may you “always be joyful because you belong to the Lord. I will say it again. Be joyful!” (Philippians 4:4). **May God give you joy and contentment in every circumstance today and always!**

Game: Joy Jump

SUPPLIES: scissors (prep only)

RESOURCES: [Fruit Pictures\(1/SG\)](#), songs from the [Be Like Jesus Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, print the Fruit Pictures and cut the fruit pictures apart. Lay the Fruit Pictures out on the ground, spread apart close enough for kids to step on.

Joy is a fruit of the Spirit, which means it's something God gives us deep inside our hearts. We can have joy from God, no matter what happens. Let's show our joy with some joyful jumps and celebration as we jump from fruit to fruit while you listen to joyful worship songs.

You can jump from fruit to fruit until the music stops— then you'll freeze! When the music plays again, you can jump some more! Who's ready to jump for joy?

Play music from the [Be Like Jesus Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#) and encourage the kids to jump from one picture to another. If kids can't jump, encourage them to step (or even crawl) from picture to picture. Pause the music periodically and encourage the kids to freeze when the music stops.

Today you showed joy as you jumped to the music. We can remember that God gives us joy!

