



LESSON 2 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

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



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Activity: Find Baby Jesus

SUPPLIES: toy nativity set

Set out a toy nativity set and hide the baby Jesus somewhere in the room when the kids aren't looking. Let the kids play with the nativity set.

Ask kids questions or give prompts to help them find the baby Jesus. Let the kids go to each of the following locations to see if baby Jesus is there. Say things like ...

But baby Jesus is missing. Can you find baby Jesus ...

- **By the window?**
- **By the door?**
- **Behind the trash can?**
- **On the table?**
- **In the toys?**

When they find the baby, tell them to say, "Jesus is our joy!" **The shepherds came looking for Jesus after the angel told them the good news, kind of like we looked for Him. They were so excited and filled with joy. We can have joy because of Jesus too!**

Using the toy nativity set, go through the people and animals in the set and retell the story to kids. Let kids help set up the nativity scene as you share.



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Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **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.**

God's Big Story

Pull out the Bible

Ask: What is this called? ***The Bible***

Ask: Why is the Bible special? ***Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.***

Tell the Bible story

The Big Picture Bible, page 182

Jesus Was Born

Word of Wonder

WORD OF WONDER

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.

— Isaiah 9:6



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LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Craft: Baby Jesus Ornament

SUPPLIES: glue sticks, hole punch, string, scissors

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Baby Jesus Ornament Sheet (1 per kid)

Set out the Jesus Ornament Sheets (one for each kid), along with glue sticks, a hole punch, string, and a marker. First, the kids will glue the baby Jesus into the manger. Then they will glue the Jesus and manger onto the heart. Last, punch a hole in the top of the heart and tie a string to hang it.



Today, we've learned about how God showed His love by sending Jesus. To help us remember this truth, we're going to make an ornament.

Encourage the kids to take their ornaments home to remember that Jesus loves us.

Prayer and Blessing

Let's pray and talk to God. When I say, "joy" you can clap your hands. God, we thank You for the gift of joy (clap). When we are scared or worried, thank You for loving us and reminding us that You're with us, and we can always have joy (clap) because of Jesus! We love You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands 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!