



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: Celebration

SUPPLIES: party supplies (such as party hats, party horns or blowers, balloons, ribbons or streamers, etc.)

In God's big story today, we'll learn about when God sent baby Jesus to the world. We'll learn that Jesus brings great joy! Joy means we can have so much happiness in our hearts and that we can cheer and celebrate! We'll have our own celebration to show joy.

Pass out the party supplies and let the kids use them to celebrate, cheer, and jump. Tell them the party supplies remind us we can have joy and celebrate Jesus. You can make it a game by saying "joy" and inviting them to celebrate, and then "Freeze" and tell them to be still.

We'll learn today that because of Jesus, we can have joy. Joy is deep gladness—or happiness—because of Jesus! Joy 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**.

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.

JESUS—*Pretend to rock a baby.*

IS OUR JOY—*Hands up above your head (party hands).*



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LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

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!