



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

Play Stations

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Joy Coloring Sheet (1 per kid)

Greet the kids warmly and briefly explain the play stations to them. Invite them to play at any of the stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help you get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas about what we'll be learning today?

Play Station: Baby Jesus

Today we're going to talk about how a baby showed great love. What do you love? Allow the kids to respond. **God sent a very special baby long ago to show us how much He loves us. Let's hold the baby doll and show loving actions.** Let the kids take turns holding the baby. Call out various loving things for them to do with the baby doll such as: give the baby a hug, rock the baby, play with the baby, play "Peek-a-boo" with the baby, sing a song to the baby, comfort the baby, hold the baby's hand.

Who in your life loves you? How does that person show love to you? Allow the kids to respond. **How do you show love?** Allow the kids to respond. **We'll learn today from God's big story how God showed love for us by sending Jesus.**

Play Station: Joy Coloring Sheet

Set up: Print one copy per kid of the coloring sheet and set out the coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of a present they would want to receive or give.



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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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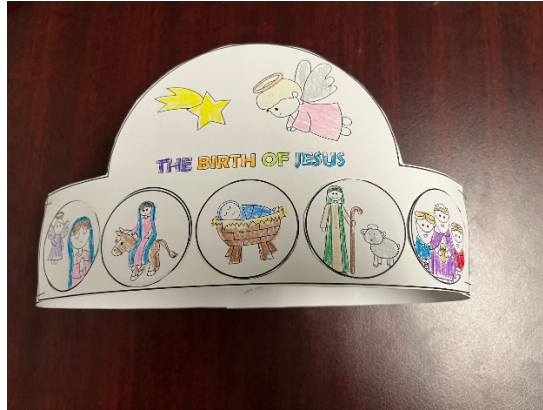
Faith

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LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Craft: Nativity Head Band

SUPPLIES: headband template, nativity scene circle pieces, coloring utensils



In our story today, we learned that God sent Jesus to be born. Let's make a headband to help us tell the story of Jesus.

Pass out the headband template and circle pieces and have kids decorate. They can glue the circles onto their headbands. Then help them staple it and allow them to wear it.



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Activity: Act Out the Story

In God's big story today, we learned God sent Jesus to be born and bring joy to the world! "The world" means you and me. You can help me tell the story. I'm going to call out a part of the story, and you'll act it out.

Call out various parts of the story at random (or in order, for younger kids) and let the kids act out the part of the story you say. You can choose certain kids for each scene or let the whole group act it out.

- Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem.
- Mary and Joseph in the stable with animals.
- Mary and Joseph holding baby Jesus.
- The shepherds in the fields taking care of their sheep.
- Angels telling the shepherds the good news and praising God.
- Shepherds rushing to visit baby Jesus.
- Shepherds running around telling everyone the good news that Jesus is born.
- People celebrating and jumping for joy because of Jesus!

Leader Tip: To make it harder, whisper it to half of the group and ask the others to guess what part of the story they're acting out.

We can share this story with others too, just like the shepherds did! We can celebrate and praise God because of Jesus! Jesus is our joy!

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!