



Date: _____
Series: Advent
Winter Year 2, Lesson 30

Joy

Primary Scripture: Luke 2:10,11

Key Verses: Luke 2:10,11, “The angel said to them, ‘Don’t be afraid! I have good news for you, a message that will fill everyone with joy. Today your Savior, Christ the Lord, was born in David’s city.’”

How does this address a need in our kids' lives?

The theme of joy is easily attached to the Christmas message. We have joy because Jesus came into the world as God’s greatest gift. Kids have the need of finding their joy in the reality of Jesus as opposed to merely happiness derived from material gifts. Today’s Kids Church takes this joy one step further. We have joy as we anticipate seeing Jesus face to face on the last day (Jude 24). So, today we find the Christmas joy twofold: joy in Jesus’ coming as a babe in Bethlehem and joy in his final coming as the revealed King of the universe.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: Jesus is the Savior, Christ the Lord, who came as a real person born in Bethlehem. His primary mission was to give his life as payment for our sins so that we might have a relationship with him.

Jesus in us: Just as Jesus had joy in the task of being our Savior (Hebrews 12:2), through his presence in our lives, he gives us joy as we also serve God.

Jesus through us: The more we become aware of the final reality of Jesus’ return, the more urgent we are to open our lives to him so that he might use us to reach more people for his kingdom.

Stamp of Excellence:

Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the leader is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.



Worship

Invocation:

Let kids bring forward the worship symbols, such as the cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Attention Grabber:

Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.

Supplies needed: suitcase

Light the Advent candle (the first one this week), explaining each candle's special meaning:

1. Blue – the candle of hope.
2. Blue – the candle of faith.
3. Rose – the candle of joy.
4. Blue – the candle of love.
5. Center candle – white – the candle representing Christmas.

Have the child light only the first candle today. Explain that two candles will be lit next week, three the following, four the Sunday before Christmas, and the fifth after Christmas.

While lighting the candle, read the following responsively (put on PowerPoint or overhead) or have another child read the scripture responses.

Presenter: We worship in the name of the strong and living God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen. The living flame that burns on our Advent wreath gives us a picture of Jesus. He is the living light of the world. At one time Jesus said...

Reader: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have a life filled with light and will never live in the dark." (John 8:12b)

Presenter: The evergreen of the wreath represents the life that is found in Christ. At another time, Jesus said...

Reader: *"But I came so that my sheep will have life and so that they will have everything they need."* (John 10:10b)

Presenter: What is the meaning of lighting the first candle?

Reader: This candle calls us to hope. Since Jesus has come into the world, we have a sure and certain hope of our future.

Presenter: What is the meaning of lighting the second candle?

Reader: This candle calls us to faith. Through faith in Jesus, we have been made right with God.

Presenter: What is the meaning of the lighting of the third candle?

Reader: This candle calls us to joy. Jesus came into the world to give us joy. With joy we look forward to seeing him again on the last day.

Presenter: Dear Lord God, thank you for now helping us get ready for Christmas. We want to get ready to receive Jesus into the world and into our lives. We open our hearts to you as we worship you. By the power of your Holy Spirit, let Jesus come into our lives. When he does, fill us with hope, faith and joy. Amen.

Show kids the suitcase.

Boys and girls, have you ever been really excited to take a trip to see someone that you had not seen in a long time? Maybe it was your grandma or grandpa. Maybe it was a special friend that lived in another city. It might have seemed like a long time since you last saw that person. If you closed your eyes and tried to remember what that person looked like, it almost made you feel like you could not wait to see that person again. You might wonder if that person looked like the picture in your mind.

Close your eyes. I want you to picture what Jesus might look like. Can you see his hair? Maybe his beard? His warm and bright eyes? His smile? Do you look forward to seeing him face to face? What will it be like to reach out and touch him, put your arm around his shoulder, and talk to him? What will it be like to talk to him about anything?

Does that thought make you excited? Do you feel some joy in your heart when you think about seeing Jesus? Today we will talk about

joy in our worship. We have joy because Jesus came as a baby in Bethlehem to be our Savior. We also have joy because we know that we will see him again on the last day. We will be right next to him.

Let's keep picturing Jesus as we now give him our worship. He is the mighty God who deserves all of our praise.

Songs of Worship:

Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!

Your choice of music.

The Power of the Cross:

Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.

A prayer of confession.

Dear God,
Your Word says that we are to rejoice always. Lord, you want us to choose to think about you and choose to be joyful. Sometimes we choose to be grumpy instead. We choose to only think about things that go wrong. Sometimes we complain because we want something and do not get it. Then our joy goes away.

Please forgive us when we complain or are grumpy. Forgive us when our joy is not based on you. Thank you for sending Jesus to take our sin away. Now, give us that joy that comes from being loved by you and having you in our lives. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want to help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.

Offering:

Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.

"God loves a cheerful giver." That means, as we give, we need to give with joy. We do this not because we have to, but because we want to. It is a way of showing our love to God.

Boys and girls, have you ever made a gift for someone (maybe your mom or dad) and it was so much fun to give it to them?

Let one or two kids describe a gift they made for someone they love.

There is joy in giving, isn't there? That is the way we want to give today!



The Word

Learning Game:

Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.

This learning game requires the use of parachutes that are often used in elementary physical education classes. A school or a recreational center might be willing to lend one to you.

Invite the children to form a large circle, with each child hanging onto the edge of the parachute. Start with the parachute lying on the ground. When the Presenter says, “Up!” all of the children lift the parachute in a quick, steady motion high above their head. The Presenter then says, “Down!” and they bring the parachute down.

In between the commands of “up” and “down,” shout the name of a month. All children whose birthdays are in that month must run underneath the parachute into an open spot before the parachute comes down. The months should not be called out in order, but they should be called out randomly. Make sure that every month is called.

What is the point of the game? Kids will experience some joyful anticipation knowing that their month will be called and that they will have to move quickly. So it is for Christians.

We know for sure that the last day will come and it will be a time of great joy as we will be called to meet Jesus face to face. It is a time of great joy if we already know him as our Savior now. If we do not know him as our Savior, we will meet him as our judge and it will be a terrible experience. We would be cast away from him forever.

Option: Place a variety of different types of balls or objects on top of the parachute. Have kids tightly pull on the parachute. They then make the objects become “joyful” by shaking the parachute. All of the objects dance with joy.

This might be used to give a visual picture of the anticipated excitement and joy we feel when we know that we will see Jesus on the last day.

A final Advent variation: Toss some balls onto the parachute, have the kids hold it steady until all the balls have rolled down to the center of the parachute. As they trickle and roll to the center, have them chant “Anticipate, anticipate!” When the balls get to the

center, shout out “Dance for Joy” and have the kids pull tight. After doing this two or three times, talk about how wonderful it is to wait for special events like birthdays. Explain that we’re *anticipating* (*eagerly waiting for*) Christmas to come in this season of Advent. Won’t it be a wonderful, joyous celebration when finally Jesus’ birthday is here?!

Bible Reading:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

Props needed: two rose-colored candles.

Invite a good reader to come forward and read the scripture while holding a lit rose-colored candle. Say:

The rose-colored candle reminds us of joy. The first reading reminds us of the first kind of joy we receive from Jesus.

The reading is Luke 2:8-14. Invite the children to listen for the word “joy.” When they first hear it, see which child can be the first to stand and sit down. This helps teach the children to listen carefully.

Have a second reader read Jude 24 and 25 while holding the other rose colored candle. This reading talks about how God wants us to be full of joy when we stand in the presence of Jesus on the last day. Again the children will be invited to stand and sit down quickly when they hear the word joy.

After both readings say:

There are two kinds of joy that we are talking about today. The first is the joy of knowing Jesus as our Savior who came into the world two thousand years ago to give his life for us. The second kind of joy is knowing that this same Jesus will come back on the last day. Whether we are alive or whether we have already died, we will be right there with him. We will have wonderful joy because we will get to see Jesus just as he is.

Which joy do you think is better? The first joy of coming to know him as Savior or the second joy of meeting him face to face on the last day?

Obviously, there is no right or wrong answer, but this forces the kids to think about seeing Jesus in two different ways.

Jesus came the first time as Savior and he will return a second time as revealed King and Judge. If someone does not know Jesus as

Savior, they miss that joy right now in their lives. When they see Jesus on the last day, they will certainly miss joy and be terrified because they had rejected Jesus as their Savior.

Application:

Option One:

Read the story, "Before It's Too Late" from *Tell Me the Story*, by Max Lucado—order from:

<http://www.maxlucado.com/shop/detail2.php?pid=B110H&ssid=61e83df6451fbfd21d2c81c3aeb70039&transtime=1128973596&endr=x>.

Option Two:

View "The Hill Difficulty," section 3 of the video *Dangerous Journey* based on John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, ©1985 by Yorkshire Television Enterprises Ltd. Each of the nine sections lasts about 15 minutes. This episode begins at about 28 minutes 40 seconds into the video.

Say: **Over 300 years ago, a man named John Bunyan preached the message of the Bible in England. But that was against the law if you weren't given permission to do so by the government. So he was thrown in prison and stayed there for many years. In 1676, he wrote a story called "*The Pilgrim's Progress*." It is history's all-time best selling book next to the Bible.**

This is what happens in the story. There is a man named Christian who is on a sacred journey. That is why he is called a pilgrim. A pilgrim is someone who is taking a journey for an important religious purpose. He leaves his hometown, called City of Destruction, and travels to a place called The Celestial City. The Celestial City reminds us of heaven. His journey is like our lives as Christians, as we, too, have a final destination of heaven. Along his way, he faces many dangers and obstacles, just like we face challenges in our Christian life.

Today, we will watch a 15 minute section from the movie "Dangerous Journey" which is based on the book "*The Pilgrim's Progress*." We will see how Christian travels the straight and narrow road – not the easiest road, but the one God will bless – the road that leads to the Celestial City.

When you listen to this chapter of his story, I want to see who can remember the answers to these questions. I will ask them after the story, and if I call on you and you have the right answer, you will receive a prize!

- When they get to the crossroads, which way does Christian go? What is the name of the hill he climbs? What happens to his companions?
- What does Christian do when he stops to rest at an arbor part way up the hill?
- What are the words that encourage Christian to go back up? “Desire now the _____.”
- What does the porter say about the lions that helps Christian know he will be safe?
- What is the name of the room in the palace where Christian sleeps overnight?

Show Part 3 of “Dangerous Journey,” titled “The Hill Difficulty.” After viewing the video, ask the Discussion Questions below.

- **When they got to the crossroads, which way did Christian go?** *(Straight ahead, up the hill.)* **What is the name of the hill he climbed?** *(“Difficulty.”)* **What happened to his companions?** *(They went on broader roads to the left and right. One lost his way forever, the other fell and never got up again.)* **Why did they not reach the Celestial City?** *(Because they took the wrong roads. There’s only one right road to heaven, and it’s Jesus.)*
- **What did Christian do when he stopped to rest at an arbor part way up the hill?** *(He read from a parchment an angel had given him, then took a nap.)* **What do you think that parchment represents?** *(The Bible.)* **Christian had to go back to get the parchment. What does that teach us?** *(That the Bible is our “passport” to heaven. The Bible has the words of eternal life.)*
- **What were the words that encouraged Christian to go back up?** *(“Desire now the heavenly country.”)*

- **What did the porter say about the lions that helped Christian know he would be safe?** *(They were on long chains and couldn't reach Christian if he just stayed in the light right in the center of the path.)* **What does that represent?** *(The dangers and temptations in life that can't get to us if we stay on the right path – if we live and believe what the Bible teaches.)*
- **What was the name of the room in the palace where Christian slept overnight?** *(“Peace.”)*



Witness and Tell:

Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.

Let some kids tell about a joyful event they are looking forward to this Christmas season.

Ask: **How is this like looking forward to Jesus' first (or second) coming?**

Prayer:

Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.

Options: (select one from the options below)

_____ **Prayer Line Option:** Kids line up and take turns stepping in front of the microphone to speak their prayers briefly.

_____ **Prayer Chair:** Adults or children with special prayer needs are invited to sit in the chairs. Kids gather around them, lay hands on their shoulders or knees and take turns praying.

_____ **Popcorn Prayer:** The leader moves through the crowd with a microphone and turns it toward kids who are raising their hands to pray. The kids speak their prayers into the microphone.

Lord's Prayer: Lead the children through the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, or let them pray the entire prayer along with you.

Blessing:

Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use a special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.

Song of Sending:

Choose one song. Briefly introduce song so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.

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Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- suitcase
- Advent Wreath

Learning Game:

- parachute that is often used in elementary physical education classes. (A school or a recreational center might be willing to lend one to you.)
- balls or various objects that can be bounced on the parachute

Bible Event:

- two rose-colored candles that will be lit
- *Option One* - the story, "Before It's Too Late" from *Tell Me The Story*, by Max Lucado—order from:
<http://www.maxlucado.com/shop/detail2.php?pid=B110H&ssid=61e83df6451fbfd21d2c81c3aeb70039&transtime=1128973596&endr=x>
- *Option Two* – "The Hill Difficulty," section three of the video "Dangerous Journey" based on John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, ©1985 by Yorkshire Television Enterprises Ltd.—order from: http://www.visionvideo.com/111-1111111-1111111_389.vhtml or from:
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