

A season of joy

**Bible verses:**

Luke 2:15–20; Matthew 2:1–2,9–11
Wise men come to visit Jesus

**Aim:**

To discover how the wise men experienced the joy of Jesus' birth

**Today's fruit:**

Joy



Today's session is all about the joy that the birth of Jesus brought into the world.

The Bible describes how the shepherds were just living their 'normal' lives when the angels appeared. The Magi, the wise men, were guided by a star but were unsure what they would find. God brings his joy, through Jesus, into the ordinary, everyday parts of our life.

The gift of Jesus brings joy into our lives not just at Christmas, but every day.

Each child will need:

- An item that brings them joy (brought from home)
- *Joy quote* handout
- Pens/pencils
- *Explore It ideas* handout

You will need:

- Today's fruit sign: *Joy*



Start it

Last week the children were asked to bring with them an item that brings them joy. Take time for each child to share their item and explain why it makes them feel joyful. Share your own example with the children.

Display the *Joy* sign and discuss how God grows joy in our hearts as we continue to follow him.

Sing it

Say:

Our song for today is full of joy. If you find it a bit tricky, dance along instead.

Song

'Joy to the world' sing-along video by Pentatonix (2:32)

Tell it

Say:

Last week we looked at the story of the shepherds. Let's watch the clip for a quick recap.

Video

The Story of Christmas (Jesus and the shepherds) by Saddleback Kids (2:25)

Read:

'Then the angels left the shepherds and went back to heaven. The shepherds said to each other, "Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened. We will see this thing the Lord told us about."

(Luke 2:15 ICB)

Ask:

How do you think the shepherds felt as they went to find Jesus?

Read:

'The shepherds went quickly and found Mary and Joseph. And the shepherds saw the baby lying in a feeding box. Then they told what the angels had said about this child. Everyone was amazed when they heard what the shepherds said to them. Mary hid these things in her heart; she continued to think about them. Then the shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking him for everything that they had seen and heard. It was just as the angel had told them.' [They were filled with joy.]

(Luke 2:16-20 ICB)

Ask:

- What did the shepherds do as soon as they had visited Jesus?
- How did the people react to the news?
- Are you like the shepherds, when you tell people about the joy of Jesus, or do you find it tricky to share your faith in him? If so, why?

Say:

There was another group that came to visit Jesus. Watch the clip to discover more about the wise men. Look out for King Herod. In our last session we discovered more about Caesar Augustus. Herod was one of his biggest supporters and the Jewish people never accepted him as king because of it. As you watch, have a think about why Herod might be so grumpy about the birth of Jesus.

Video

The Story of Christmas (Jesus and the Wise Men) by Saddleback Kids (3:30)

Say:

The wise men were excited about meeting Jesus, but Herod intended to spoil it for them. Herod was a joy-stealer.

Ask:

- Herod didn't feel joyful about the arrival of Jesus. Why do you think that was?
- In what ways can people be joy-stealers in our life?
- Jesus came to bring joy and wants us to spread joy into the lives of others. How can we spread joy this Christmas time?



Action it

Ask:

- What is the difference between joy and happiness?
- How would you describe joy?

Give each child a *Joy quote* handout, adapted from a quote by Kay Warren. Read the quote together.

'Joy is the feeling of peace I have when I know that God has everything under control.

It's knowing that, because of him, everything is going to be OK and it's choosing to keep praising him when it isn't.'

Discuss

- Does this definition of joy make sense to you? If so, how?
- What is the tricky part of the definition for you?
- Earlier we talked about ways that people and situations can steal our joy and, if we're honest, how we sometimes steal joy from other people. In this definition, who do we need to focus on as our place to find joy?

Give the children time to colour and decorate their handout. Encourage them to stick up the quote at home as a reminder of what joy looks like when we follow Jesus.

Say:

Rather than just focusing on being happy, let's focus on the joy that Jesus brings into our lives – not just at Christmas, but every day.

Pray it

Say:

Our memory verse for this month reminds us of the promise God made to his people. Isaiah shared the news that the Son of God would come to earth to be with us. Let's share it together.

Read:

'A child will be born to us.

God will give a son to us.

He will be responsible for leading the people.

His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God,

Father Who Lives For Ever, Prince of Peace.'

(Isaiah 9:6 ICB)

Say:

Jesus brought joy into the world when he was born. We can experience his joy every day of our lives.

To bring the session to a close, watch the clip that shares the message of the joy of Christmas.

Video

'Sounding Joy' official lyric video by Ellie Holcomb (3:50)

Explore it

Remember to send home the *Explore It ideas* for children and families.



Explore It is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview)

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Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:

Luke 2:15-20:

Matthew 2:1-2,9-11



Aim:

To discover how the wise men experienced the joy of Jesus' birth



Today's fruit:

Joy



Explore

Have another look at this definition of joy.

'Joy is the feeling of peace I have when I know that God has everything under control.

It's knowing that, because of him, everything is going to be OK and it's choosing to keep praising him when it isn't.'

How does it change how you feel about what it means to be full of joy for Jesus?



Cook

This is definitely an activity to try with an adult, so please don't do it on your own. Why not make some Christmas jam to spread the joy of Jesus with others. You could put a label on the jar and decorate it with a joyful verse from the Christmas story.

How to make strawberry jam Mary Berry cooks by BBC



Song for the week

'Joy to the world' sing-along video by Pentatonix



Memory verse

'A child will be born to us.
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Memory verse

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(Isaiah 9:6 ICB)



Start it

Today we are going to hear about the wise men who travelled a long way to discover the joy found in Jesus. God brings his joy, through Jesus, into the ordinary, everyday parts of our lives.



Tell it

Share a child-friendly version of Matthew 2:1-2,9-11 or watch the following clip.

'The Story of Christmas (Jesus and the Wise Men)' by Saddleback Kids

Watch 0.00-2:35 'But God told them to go home a different way.'

Sit in a circle and ask the group to share together:

- Who did the wise men visit first when they arrived in Jerusalem?

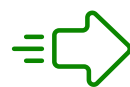
- How did Herod feel about there being another king in Judea?
- How did King Herod try to trick the wise men?
- How did the wise men know how to find Jesus?
- What did the wise men give to Jesus?
- What did God warn the wise men about in a dream?



Sing It

'Joy to the world' Christmas carol for kids by Allstars Kids Club (2:08)

'Shine! (from the inside out)' by Nick Jackson uploaded by Tangy Crayfish (2:20)



Action it

Games and activities to reinforce the Bible passage:

- Make a crown to remind you of the story of the wise men.
- Draw one of the gifts the wise men gave to Jesus.
- What gift would you give to Jesus? Act it out and see if your friends can guess what it is.
- Pretend to be King Herod when he found out about Jesus and show us your best angry face.