



# LESSON 22 | Joy

**Bible Basis:** Nehemiah 8:13–17; Luke 2:1–20

**Key Verse:** John 15:11: “I have told you this so that you will have the same joy that I have.”

**Key Question:** What gives us true happiness and contentment in life?

**Key Idea:** No matter what happens, I feel happy inside and understand God’s plan for my life.

**Resource:** *Believe Storybook Bible*, Chapter 22, “Joy” or story script (below)

## Master Supplies List

- Believe Storybook Bible* (optional)
- PowerPoint slides or printable posters of illustrations
- Empty box with lid, gift wrap
- Family Page (one per child)

## Optional Supplies

You will need the following supplies based on which option(s) you choose in **STEP 3 | Explore More:**

- OPTION 1:** White basket-style 8- to 12-cup coffee filters (one per child), markers, spray bottle with water, Joyful Hearts template, construction paper (two sheets per child), scissors, glue stick
- OPTION 2:** Laundry basket; beanbags or yarn balls; the letters *J*, *O*, and *Y*, each written on separate sticky notes (one set per child)
- OPTION 4:** Crayons or markers, Let’s Color! sheet (one per child)
- OPTION 6:** Three puppets

## STEP 1 | Come Together (5 min)

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**Supplies:** Empty box with lid, gift wrap

**Teacher Prep:** Wrap box and lid separately with gift wrap. Place wrapped lid on box.

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### GIFT

- GATHER the children.
- SHOW the children the gift-wrapped box, but do not open it.
- ASK, What would you like to find in this box that would make you very, very happy? (Take responses)
- SAY, Those ideas all sound great, but there's one problem with happiness: Sometimes it can leave us feeling empty. (Open the box to show that it is empty)

### HAPPINESS

- CONTINUE (using responses the children had suggested earlier), Candy might make us happy when we are eating it. But when it's gone, it's gone, and our happiness ends. It might even leave us with a tummy ache! A puppy would be a wonderful gift, but even that wouldn't make us happy all the time—like when it chews a favorite book or makes a mess in the house.
- SAY, Happiness is a good feeling we have for a while, when things are going our way or when we have the things we want. But it never lasts forever.

### JOY

- ASK, What are some things that make you sad? (Take responses)
- SAY (using responses the children suggested earlier), Sometimes hard things happen in life. People and pets we love die. People get sick. People hurt us. These things can make us feel sad, and it's okay and normal to feel sad. But the Bible says that God gives his children a gift that nothing and no one in this world can take away.
- ASK, Do you know what this gift is? (pause) It's a thing called joy!
- EXPLAIN, Joy is this great big happiness (stretch out your arms). It's better and bigger than feeling happy. Joy comes from knowing that God is good all the time, even when life is hard or sad. Our joy comes from knowing that we have a hope that God will one day wipe away every tear from our eyes and create a world with no sadness and no pain. This joy comes from knowing that God sent his Son, Jesus, to save us and to love us forever.

- INSTRUCT, On the count of three, I want us to all shout the word *joy!* Ready? One, two, three! (Shout “joy” a few times)

#### KEY VERSE

- REVIEW this week’s Key Verse. You may want to repeat the verse slowly a few times until the children are able to say it from memory.
- **NOTE:** You may also choose to review last week’s Key Verse together.

John 15:11

I have told you this *(Point outward with index finger)*  
so that you will have the same joy *(Point to corners of smile with*  
that I have. *two index fingers)*

## STEP 2 | Hear the Story (15 min)

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**Supplies:** *Believe Storybook Bible* (optional), PowerPoint slides or printable posters of illustrations

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#### INTRODUCTION

- TELL the children that they will be learning about how God brought joy to his people.
- SHOW the children how to make a heart shape with their hands by pressing their thumbs and their fingers together.
- SAY, As I read to you about the joy of the Lord, I want you to listen for the words *joy*, *joyful*, and *enjoy*.
- CONTINUE, When you hear me read a part about joy, make this heart with your hands.
- PRACTICE making a heart shape with hands.

#### READ CHAPTER 22

- READ aloud the story script below or chapter 22, “Joy,” from the *Believe Storybook Bible*.
- SHOW the illustrations included with this curriculum on PowerPoint slides or printable posters.
- WATCH for the children to make a heart shape with their hands whenever you read the word *joy*, *joyful*, or *enjoy*.

## THE STORY OF EZRA

- It can be fun to play with friends or open a birthday present. So many things can make us feel happy. But God gives us something even better than games and toys. He gives us his everlasting love! Even when we don't feel happy, we can have joy because we know God loves us. The Israelites learned to have joy that comes from the Lord, and you can, too.
- Long ago, the city of Jerusalem was destroyed by God's enemies. This made the Israelites sad so they worked hard to rebuild it. They were happy when God's temple was like new again. They celebrated by asking Ezra to read from the Bible. Ezra stood up where everyone could see him. He read for hours and hours.
- Soon, the people began to feel sad. As they heard God's Word, they learned that they had been breaking God's laws. Some began to cry. "Don't be sad," their leaders said. "You can have joy because you know that God is with us. The joy of the Lord is our strength."
- The Israelites celebrated more than ever. They remembered how God had freed them from slavery in Egypt. They shared food and built special huts out of branches. They lived in the huts for seven days so they could be outside and hear Ezra read the Bible. They were full of joy.

## THE STORY OF THE SHEPHERDS

- A new baby always brings joy to a family, but baby Jesus brought joy to the whole world!
- When it was almost time for Jesus to be born, Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem. But when they got there, they couldn't find a place to stay. An innkeeper told them, "I have no room for you, but you can stay in the stable."
- That night, Jesus was born. Mary wrapped him in cloth and placed him in a manger filled with soft hay.
- Nearby, shepherds were watching their sheep. Suddenly an angel appeared. "Don't be afraid," said the angel. "God has sent me to tell you good news that will bring joy to everyone! Today a Savior is born. You will find him sleeping in a manger."
- Then the sky filled with light. Angels sang, "Glory to God! Peace on earth! Good will to all people!" The shepherds hurried off and found Jesus asleep in the manger.

- What a joyful night it was! And we can still have this same joy today because of Jesus. Knowing God and his son, Jesus, is what makes us happy. It brings us joy no matter what happens in life. The joy that comes from knowing Jesus can never be taken away.

#### REVIEW EZRA

- ASK, What happened to make the Israelites sad? (Their enemies destroyed and burned the temple; they were taken away as slaves; they hadn't followed God's rules for life together)
- ASK, Why did the Israelites have joy? (They understood God's Word; God freed them from slavery and took care of them in the wilderness)
- ASK, How did the Israelites show their joy? (They ate and drank; they shared; they listened to God's Word; they built huts to sleep in)

#### REVIEW THE SHEPHERDS

- ASK, How did the shepherds know where to find Jesus? (An angel told them where to look)
- ASK, Why was the birth of Jesus such a joyful event? (Because he came into the world to save us from death and to bring us life and joy)
- PRAY, Thank you, good Father, for being a loving God who takes care of your children and gives us joy that lasts forever. Amen.

## STEP 3 | Explore More

Choose from these activity options, depending on your available time frame, to help the children explore the lesson further.

### Option 1: Joyful Hearts Memory Verse (20 min)

**Supplies:** White basket-style 8- to 12-cup coffee filters (one per child), markers, spray bottle with water, Joyful Hearts template, construction paper (two sheets per child), scissors, glue sticks

**Teacher Prep:** Print and photocopy the Joyful Hearts template onto construction paper (one per child), then cut out heart-shaped frames from the construction paper (one per child).

- GIVE each child one coffee filter, a sheet of construction paper to use as a place mat, and markers. Write each child's name on his or her place mat.

- **INSTRUCT** the children to open the coffee filter and color it with markers so it is covered with color. Encourage them to use lots of bright colors.
- **SPRAY** each coffee filter lightly with water and allow the children to watch the colors blend together.
- **SET** aside the filters to dry on the place mats (about ½ hour).
- **NOTE:** The wet marker will come off on your fingers. Use gloves if you need to touch the wet filters.
- **GLUE** the dried coffee filter to the back of the heart frame and trim any excess.
- **ALLOW** the children to take them home or hang them around the room.
- **SAY,** These are to remind us that we have the joy of Jesus in our hearts.

### Option 2: J-O-Y (15 min)

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**Supplies:** Laundry basket; beanbags or yarn balls; the letters *J*, *O*, and *Y* written on separate sticky notes (one set of letters per child)

**Teacher Prep:** Write the letters *J*, *O*, and *Y* on separate sticky notes, enough for each child to have one set of letters.

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- **GATHER** the children in a large circle with the laundry basket in the middle. Children should be about four to six steps away from the laundry basket.
- **TELL** the children that when they get a beanbag, they have one chance to toss it into the laundry basket. (Demonstrate an underhand toss.) Afterward, they should retrieve the beanbag they tossed and hand it to the person next to them.
- **GIVE** the children one of the three letters (*J*, *O*, *Y*) when their beanbag makes it into the laundry basket.
- **PLAY** with more than one beanbag going around the circle to keep the game moving.
- **INSTRUCT** the children to sit down once they have all three letters to spell “JOY.”
- **CONTINUE** play until every child has made three baskets.

### Option 3: If You’re Joyful and You Know It (10 min)

- **GATHER** the children in a circle.
- **LEAD** them in several rounds of “If You’re Happy and You Know It” with the following lyric changes:

If you’re joyful and you know it, clap your hands!    (*clap, clap*)

If you’re joyful and you know it, clap your hands!    (*clap, clap*)

God has saved us from our sin,  
So don't keep your joy locked in,  
If you're joyful and you know it, clap your hands! (clap, clap)

- CONTINUE with the words and motions for *stomp your feet, shake a hand*, and say, "amen."

### Option 4: Let's Color! (10 min)

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**Supplies:** Crayons or markers, Let's Color! sheet (one per child)

**Teacher Prep:** Print and photocopy the Let's Color! sheet (one per child).

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- GIVE each child a Let's Color! sheet.
- PROVIDE a selection of crayons and/or markers for the children to share.
- DISCUSS this week's Key Idea as the children color.

### Option 5: Praise and Worship (15 min)

"I've Got the Joy" by Carol Tornquist, George Willis Cooke  
© 2006, 2007 by Word Music, LLC (a div. of Word Music Group, Inc.)  
CCLI #4857031

"Joy to the World" by Carol Tornquist, George Frideric Handel, Isaac Watts  
© 2008 by Word Music, LLC (a div. of Word Music Group, Inc.)  
CCLI #3013443

### Option 6: Act It Out (10 min)

Joy Is ...

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Use two or three puppets to act out the following short skit. Make a copy of the script and request an adult helper to read the part of Dana, if you have trouble using three puppets at once.

**Characters**

Carol  
Dana  
Daniel

**Props:** Three puppets or helpers

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**Carol:** Hey, friend. Why do you look so sad?

**Dana:** It's raining and I was supposed to have a T-ball game today.

**Carol:** Oh, that's too bad.

**Dana:** I hate the rain! (*pouting*) Why can't it just go away?

**Carol:** I know how you feel! Stuck inside. No T-ball games.

**Daniel:** (*comes in dancing wildly and singing*) I've got this joy, joy, joy, joy  
down in my heart, down in my heart, where? Down in my heart!  
Where? Down in my heart! That's where!

DANIEL *high-fives* CAROL and DANA. DANA *reluctantly high-fives* DANIEL and then returns to crossing her arms and *pouting*.

**Carol:** (*to DANIEL*) Teach me that song!

CAROL and DANIEL *banter back and forth, singing off-key and dancing around* DANA, *who is still pouting*.

**Daniel:** (*referring to DANA*) What's *her* problem?

**Carol:** Oh, her T-ball game got canceled because of the rain.

**Daniel:** So her day is ruined? Your day is ruined, Dana?

DANA *nods her head*.

**Daniel:** Can I share something with you? You see (*starting to sing and dance goofily*), I got this joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart ... And you know what else? God's joy never ends—it lasts forever! It doesn't matter what's going on around you, good or bad. Even when you're sad about your game getting canceled, you can still have joy.

**Carol:** Joy is God's gift to us. Remember the story about when Jesus was born? The angel told the shepherds, "I bring you good news of great *joy*."

**Daniel:** And when the Israelites had a big party after returning to Jerusalem and rebuilding the temple, what did they feel? *Joy!*

**Carol:** And remember Paul and Silas singing even when they were locked up in jail? Why'd they do that?

**Daniel:** Because they had that joy, joy, joy, joy down in their hearts!

**Carol:** Where?

**Daniel:** Down in their hearts!

**Carol and Dana:** Where?

**Carol, Dana, and Daniel:** Down in their hearts!

DANIEL, CAROL, and DANA *sing the song in unison and dance off stage*.



## STEP 4 | Going Home (5 min)

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**Supplies:** Family Page (one per child)

**Teacher Prep:** Print and photocopy the Family Page (one per child).

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- **GIVE** each child a copy of this week's Family Page.
- **SAY**, Give this page to your family when they pick you up. It will remind you to tell your family what you learned today about the joy we have when we believe in Jesus.
- **HAVE** the children practice telling you the story of Jesus' birth.
- **REVIEW** this week's Key Verse as well as today's story and Key Idea from the *Believe Storybook Bible* as you wait for the children to get picked up.
- **MAKE** sure each child remembers to take home any activity sheets or craft projects and the Family Page.















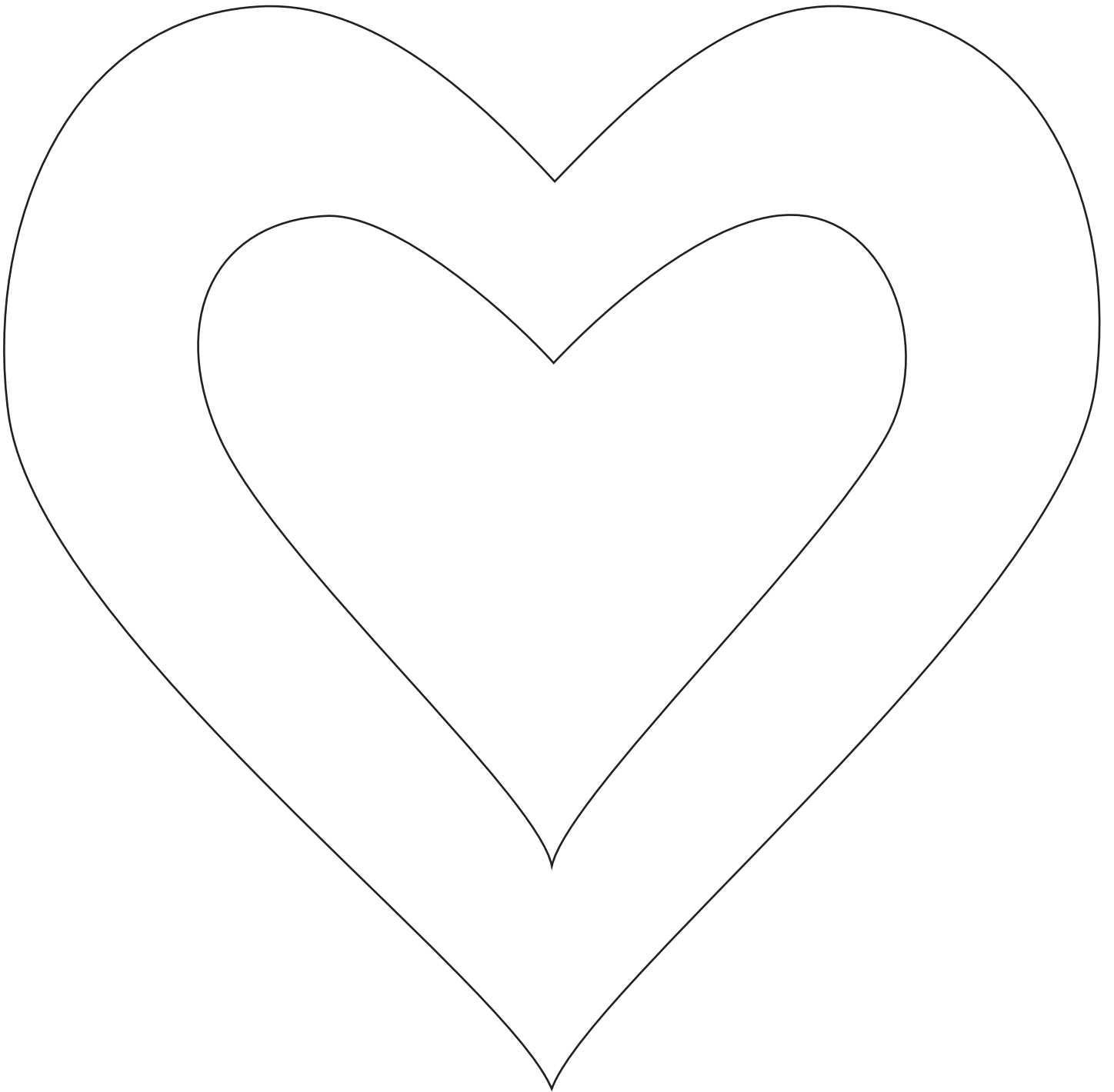












Let's Color! Name: \_\_\_\_\_



# FAMILY PAGE | Lesson 22: Joy

**Bible Basis:** Nehemiah 8:13–17; Luke 2:1–20

**Key Verse:** John 15:11: “I have told you this so that you will have the same joy that I have.”

**Key Question:** What gives us true happiness and contentment in life?

**Key Idea:** No matter what happens, I feel happy inside and understand God’s plan for my life.

**Resource:** *Believe Storybook Bible*, Chapter 22, “Joy”

## How to Use This Page

This week, your family can either read the story from the *Believe Storybook Bible* or read the Bible Basis passages from your Bible to help your child remember the lesson. Use the Table Talk questions below to start a discussion around the dinner table, while driving in the car, or just about anywhere. The Living Faith activity is designed to remind your child of the Bible lesson through a drama or other engaging activity. The Extra Mile idea provides interactive ways for your child to connect with the story.

## Table Talk

1. Tell me about a time when someone you know seemed really happy. How could you tell they were happy?
2. What is something that makes you sad? What do you look like when you are sad?
3. What has God done for you that gives you joy?
4. How can you show your joy and spread it to other people?

## Living Faith

### Option 1

The story of Jesus’ birth is a fun one to act out through role-play. Begin by creating three different settings: the stable (a couch fort with a baby cradle works well for this cozy setting), the hillside (try a pile of blankets with a few stuffed animals for sheep), and the city of Jerusalem (maybe a table and chairs). Then enlist a few actors to join you and your child. For the stable scene, you’ll

need Joseph, Mary, and a baby doll. The hillside scene will require angels and shepherds. Finally, the scene in Jerusalem will require Simeon and Anna. (Joseph, Mary, and baby Jesus make an appearance in the hillside and Jerusalem scenes as well.) Use bathrobes and costume pieces to dress the actors. Read aloud from Luke, chapter 2, as the children participate in acting out the joyful birth of Jesus!

### Option 2

Use dolls or action figures to act out the scene as you read Luke, chapter 2. If you have a child-friendly nativity set, pull that out and let your child use the figures.

### Extra Mile

- Practice this fun version of “If You’re Happy and You Know It” together, or ask your child to perform it for an audience.

If you’re joyful and you know it, clap your hands!    (*clap, clap*)  
If you’re joyful and you know it, clap your hands!    (*clap, clap*)  
God has saved us from our sin,  
So don’t keep your joy locked in,  
If you’re joyful and you know it, clap your hands!    (*clap, clap*)

- Continue with the words and motions for *stomp your feet, shake a hand,* and *say, “amen.”*
- Celebrate the joy of Jesus’ birth all year round! If you have a child-friendly nativity set, don’t pack it away with the Christmas decorations. Let it become part of your child’s regular playthings. An ornament with the word *Joy* can be a reminder for the whole family when it hangs from a cabinet knob or in a window. An angel proclaiming “The Savior Is Born” can be part of your regular decor.
- During prayer, remind your child that although we sometimes feel sadness and pain, the joy that God gives us lasts forever. Read some of the Bible’s descriptions of heaven with your children. See Revelation 21:1–5 and Isaiah 65:17–25.
- Help your child to make a picture collage to illustrate the things that bring them happiness and joy. Look through magazines or family photos for things that make your child happy (a favorite snack, a fun place, a game or activity). Glue these images to a large piece of paper cut into the shape of a cross. No matter how many pictures there are or what they show, the cross reminds us that our greatest source of joy is Jesus.