

WEEK 2 ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE



THE BIG IDEA

Jesus came to bring joy to the world.

THE BIBLE

The Birth of Jesus Foretold: Luke 1:26-55;
Zephaniah 3:14-20

LARGE GROUP TIME

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *You can lead kids in worship with any songs you like best, but here are a few songs that go along with this month's theme. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to play or perform these songs. For more information, [read this!](#)*
 - "Good News" (Mandisa)
 - "Joy" (For King & Country)
 - "Joyful Joyful We Adore Thee" (Go Fish)
 - "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" (Paul Baloche)

ACTIVITY | Finding Joy

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Split kids up into two or three teams and have them think of as many songs as they can that contain the word "joy." At the end, have them sing one of the songs, or choruses of the song, together.*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Have preteens search on a device to see how many songs have the word "joy" in the song title.*
- There are many songs out there and even some we sing that mention joy. People are constantly searching for things that bring them joy, but are often disappointed because they never last.
- Having true and lasting joy means that we know that no matter what happens on the outside, we know on the inside that we are loved by and precious to God. Our joy doesn't depend on anything else but God!

ACTIVITY | Playful Puppets

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give kids a few pipe cleaners, googly eyes, and large pom poms. Set up a hot glue gun station for kids to glue on their eyes and pom poms. Direct kids to create finger puppets [like these](#).
- In last week's story, we met the angel, Gabriel, Elizabeth, and baby John. This week, we'll meet Elizabeth's cousin, Mary, who was also going to receive some good news from the angel Gabriel.
- Let's create a few of the characters then wrap them around our fingers to help us remember our Bible story!

QUESTION | Which foods burst with flavor?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** In addition to asking this question, you might want to bring in samples of some of these foods and have a few volunteers try them for fun!
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Give each preteen a [Gushers](#) (or [similar](#)) candy and eat it with their eyes closed. Can they tell what flavor the candy is bursting with? You could even use these really fun [popping boba](#) and put it in a beverage!
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Have kids try different fruits (e.g., apple slices, tangerines, grapes, cantaloupe etc.) and have them say which ones seemed to burst more with flavor.
- **What are some foods that burst with flavor as soon as you bite into them?** (Allow kids to give answers. Some examples might be lemons, garlic, grapes, olives, gushing candy, etc.)
- When these foods burst, it's like a yummy explosion of flavor!
- In today's story, we'll discover what happens when our hearts feel like they're bursting with joy!

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

BIBLE STORY | The Birth of Jesus Foretold

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Prompt the kids to use their finger puppets from the Playful Puppets activity to follow along as you tell the story from Luke 1:26–55.
- **Do you remember the name of the angel who appeared to Zechariah to tell him he was going to have a baby?** That's right, it was Gabriel.
 - **Everyone wiggle your Gabriel puppet.**
- Today's story continues with Gabriel suddenly appearing to a young woman named Mary.
 - **Show us how your Mary puppet might have reacted when she saw the angel.**
- She was scared, just like Zechariah was! But the angel said, "Don't be afraid, Mary. God is with you, and you'll have a son, Jesus! He'll rule over his kingdom forever!"
- Mary didn't understand. She wasn't married yet. How could she have a baby?
- Gabriel told her that the baby would be the Son of God. This sounded unreal, but Mary trusted God and believed the good news!
 - **Have your Gabriel puppet gently tap your Mary puppet to let her know everything will be okay.**
- Then, Mary went to visit Elizabeth while both of them were expecting babies. Guess what happened. Elizabeth's baby started jumping for joy inside her womb!

- Imagine that. A baby jumping up and down inside his mother’s tummy!
 - **Make your John puppet jump!**
- Mary was so filled with joy that she burst into a song about God, about how God has always done great things for people, about how God is full of love and mercy and will save them all!
 - **Have your Mary puppet perform a song!**
- This was a really big thing to happen to Mary, but she trusted God. So instead of being scared or worried, she became filled with joy instead!

BIG IDEA | Jesus came to bring joy to the world!

- This week, let’s say, “It’s time for the Big Idea,” in Swahili, a language widely spoken in parts of Africa.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Find a native speaker to record this on a simple video, or play [this sound clip on Google Translate](#) for kids to copy.) Afterward, pass out the Big Idea passport printable to each kid and have them write today’s Big Idea in box #2. Collect the passports at the end of large group time and save for next week.*
- Are you ready? “Ni wakati wa Wazo Kubwa!”
- That’s right, everyone! It’s time for the Big Idea! And today’s Big Idea is [Have kids shake their noisemakers from last week or have them stomp their feet to make a “drumroll.”] . . . **Jesus came to bring joy to the world!**

VIDEO | Teaching Video, Episode 2

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week’s episode of Grow TV.*

OBJECT LESSON | Fizzy Joy!

- **What is something that gave you so much joy that you couldn’t hold it inside?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Invite the kids to smell different citrus fruits you’ve prepared. Then ask a kid volunteer to help you squeeze fruit juice onto the containers with baking soda. Only use one kind of fruit juice per container. Each citrus fruit will have a different fizzy reaction.*
- Sometimes when we are filled with joy, we can’t contain it – we have to let it show. But everyone does it differently.
- See how each fruit reacts differently with the baking soda? Joy can “bubble up” inside us and be expressed in many ways, too!
- When Mary was told the big news, she showed her joy by singing a song. We can also show our joy because that’s why **Jesus came . . . to bring joy to the world!**

VIDEO | Dance Around the World

- Dancing is a popular way of expressing joy, all over the world! And we have a reason to dance, since **Jesus came to bring joy to the world!**
- Let’s see what dancing looks like in different parts of the world!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play [this video](#) and encourage kids to join in the fun by either following the moves shown or expressing joy in their own way!*

BIBLE | Zephaniah 3:14–20

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Zephaniah 3:14–20 to the group or ask a volunteer to read it in a nice, clear voice.
- **What can we be joyful about, based on these verses?**
 - God has taken away our punishment.
 - God has taken away our fear.
 - God is with us.
 - God saves and rescues us.
- **What are ways we can express this joy, based on these verses?**
 - We can sing and shout aloud!
 - We can rejoice and be glad with all our hearts!
- The best part is it's not just us who have something to be joyful about. Zephaniah 3:17 tells us that God also rejoices over us! With singing!
- **Jesus came to bring joy to the world**, and that joy comes straight from God.

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

REFLECTION | Express Your Joy

- **What are some different ways people expressed joy in today's Bible story?**
 - Mary sang a song.
 - Elizabeth rejoiced in loud voice.
 - Elizabeth's baby boy, John, jumped for joy before he was even born!
- **What are some ways you express your joy?**
 - Maybe you sing in the shower, wear your favorite sweater, smile super widely, or skip when you walk.
 - Remember, there is no single way to express joy. We're all made differently, so we all feel joy differently!
- **Share with someone next to you how you show your joy!**

RESPONSE | Joie de Vivre

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Place a poster board and a set of markers in each of the four corners of the room. Label them "people," "places," "things," "ideas." Introduce the concept of *joie de vivre*, including its [pronunciation](#), to get kids thinking more concretely about joy. After a few moments to think on their own, have them travel to each corner of the room and jot down people, places, things, and ideas that bring them joy.
- *Joie de vivre* is an expression that comes from France that roughly translates to "the joy of living." It's a phrase people use to talk about the happiness or excitement about being alive and enjoying life.
- **Can you all say it with me?**
- We talked earlier about how joy doesn't depend on our circumstances. So really, no matter what is happening in our lives, we can all have *joie de vivre* simply because God loves us and sent Jesus to the world to show us how much.

- But sometimes it's hard to recognize joy, and it's very important for us to spot the different ways joy shows up in our lives!
- So think with me for a few minutes.
 - **Who are the people in your life that bring you joy?** These might be the people who you value spending time with and make you feel loved.
 - **Where are some places you go that bring you joy?** These are the places you look forward to going and maybe even never want to leave!
 - **What are some things you have that bring you joy?** Maybe it's a special gift, something you built yourself, or something you've had all your life.
 - **What are some ideas that bring you joy?** Sometimes joy comes from things we barely notice like smelling your favorite cookies, hearing your favorite song, or doing well on a test.

MEMORY VERSE | Make Your Own Melody

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Write out Luke 2:14 on the board or project the memory verse graphic.
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Print out copies of the memory verse for kids to hold for easier access. If anyone doesn't want to be around the loud and chaotic noise of everyone singing their own melody, move them to another area where they could color in the memory verse coloring page that's provided or cut out the words on one copy of the memory verse graphic and have them match it onto a second copy.
- Remember what Mary did after she was visited by the angel? She sang! Remember what Zephaniah said about how God rejoices over us? With singing! So it's our turn to sing!
- When I say go, everyone sing the memory verse out loud in whatever key and set to whatever tune you'd like. Let's make a loud, silly, and joyful sound together!

PRAYER

- God, thank you so much for sending Jesus to bring joy to the world! Because of Jesus, we know that no matter what happens in our lives, being loved by you is the greatest joy we could ever have. Help us remember that every day is a chance to express this joy and share it with others. Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- **How did Mary respond to what the angel told her?**
- **What did the angel say would be special about Mary's baby?**
- **What happened with Elizabeth's baby when Mary greeted her?**
- **Read Zephaniah 3:17. What does this verse say about how God sees us?**
- **How does Jesus bring joy to the world?**
- **What are some things that might threaten to take away your joy?**
- **How can we hold onto the joy God gives us? How can we share joy with others?**

ACTIVITY | Clothespin Angel

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have kids draw hair and a face on a wood bead with permanent or paint markers. Have them stick the bead on the clip end of the clothespin. Check out [these instructions](#) for how kids can further decorate their angel by wrapping yarn around for the robe, making heart-shaped wings out of felt, and even gluing on a pipe cleaner halo and feathers.
- ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Swap out this activity with a similar but simpler craft activity [like this one](#).
- The angel's news to Mary is a wonderful reminder to us that **Jesus came to bring joy to the world.**
- Let's make our own angel so that that we can be filled with joy each time we see it!

MEMORY VERSE | Luke 2:14 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Practice this month's memory verse with the signs (a combination of SEE and ASL) we've provided in your Programming folder or at growcurriculum.org/Luke2-14.
- Let's practice this month's memory verse together!
- **"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."**