

LESSON SNAPSHOT

BOTTOM LINE:

Jesus' love gives us joy.

OBJECTIVE:

Kids will learn "Finding Jesus' love for me gives me Joy."

KEY PASSAGE:

Luke 1:39-45, Mary Visits Elizabeth

MEMORY VERSE:

"The Lord has done great things for us. And we are filled with joy." Psalm 126:3 (NirV)

SUMMARY:

Whether it's a cowboy, a doll, or a teddy bear, we each have a favorite toy that makes us happy. Mary went to visit her cousin Elizabeth. John was so happy to be in Jesus' presence, he leaped for joy inside his mommy's belly. We find joy when we accept Jesus into our life.

SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

Thank you for the love of Jesus.

In Jesus' name,

Amen

MEMORY VERSE

“The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.” Psalm 126:3 (NIV)

“The Lord has done great things for us. And we are filled with joy.” Psalm 126:3 (NirV)

LARGE GROUP:

Divide the room into girls and boys. Have the boys read the verse aloud, and then have the girls read it aloud. Who can read the loudest?

SMALL GROUP:

Have the kids read the verse in a cowboy voice.

SKIT

JOY STORY: COWBOY TO THE RESCUE

ITEMS NEEDED:

A cowboy costume for Buddy
A Han Solo costume for Ham
A toy stuffed dog

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN:

2M

CHARACTERS:

Buddy - A cowboy toy
Ham Salad - A non-Star Wars posable action figure collectible

A toy dog is on stage. Buddy enters and sees it. He runs and picks up the dog.

BUDDY: Shiloh? Shiloh Dog, what are you doing here in Mandy's Dad's office? Mandy's worried sick about you. She cried herself to sleep, she was so upset. You don't belong in office. This place is all of Mandy's Dad's important stuff, like computers and tax files and –

Ham enters.

HAM: Freeze, Imperial scum!

BUDDY: And forty year old space toys her Dad keeps on a shelf.

HAM: Is that you, Buckaroo Buddy?

BUDDY: Yes, it's me.

HAM: What are you doing with that four-legged creature?

BUDDY: This is Mandy's new favorite toy, Shiloh Dog.

HAM: Hello, Shiloh Dog. I'm ace space pilot Ham Salad.

SKIT

BUDDY: You are not Ham Salad. Your real name is –

HAM: Hey, some people prefer the original. Some people prefer the legally allowable parodies. Right, Woody?

BUDDY: My name is Buddy, Ham!

HAM: And my name is Ham Salad, friend to Fluke Skyrunner, boyfriend of Princess Lisa, sworn enemy of Dorf Raider, and best friend to the Cookie Monster Flubacca.

BUDDY: That never gets old.

HAM: So this is Mandy's new favorite toy? You better get him back where he belongs.

BUDDY: I was just about to do that. She's worried sick about him.

HAM: I'll give you save passage back to her bedroom.

BUDDY: That's not necessary, Ham.

HAM: Oh but it is. You're in the territory of the notorious space gangster Pizza the Hut.

BUDDY: Just help me get the dog home!

HAM: Right, sorry, cowboy. Let's get this doggy home. I know Mandy will flip with joy when she sees him, just like John the Baptist.

BUDDY: What did you say?

HAM: I said she'll flip like John the Baptist. It's a story from the Bible. When Mary was told she was pregnant with the baby Jesus, she went to tell her cousin Elizabeth who was pregnant with John the Baptist.

BUDDY: And the baby inside Elizabeth did a flip when Mary was near!

HAM: How did you know?

BUDDY: Mandy told us the bedtime story. It's how she comforted herself when she couldn't find Shiloh Dog. How do you know the story?

HAM: Are you kidding? Her Dad read it to her right here in this office before bed time.

SKIT

BUDDY: Well, no wonder Shiloh Dog was in here. And no wonder Mandy knows so many good Bible stories.

HAM: We do more than collect dust in this office.

BUDDY: I sure hope Shiloh can remind Mandy of that story. She needs to know that Jesus' love will bring her joy long after she stops finding joy with us.

HAM: You're a strange and philosophical little man. Let's go, cowboy.

OBJECT LESSON OR KIDS SERMON

ITEMS NEEDED:

An action figure with accessories

The cool thing about action figures like these is that we can play with the characters from our favorite TV shows and movies. They come with all kinds of cool accessories that let us reenact our favorite stories or create our own. Of course the biggest problem with these figures is that they're so small, they and their accessories can easily become lost. But any time we lose and then find our favorite toys, it gives us joy – almost as much as the first time we received them.

God sent His Son Jesus to save a people who were lost to sin. He sent a man named John, who was Jesus' cousin, to be his ambassador, and when Mary came near her pregnant cousin Elizabeth, the baby John flipped with joy. Even before birth John knew that Jesus had come to save him. He knew that nothing was more important than finding the love of Jesus.

New toys on Christmas can make us happy for a time, and lost toys found can also bring us joy. But nothing equals the joy of knowing Jesus. I hope all of you will receive the love of Jesus, because finding Jesus' love is the one thing that can bring you everlasting joy!

LARGE GROUP GAME

ROPE 'EM COWBOY

ITEMS NEEDED:

- A lasso
- An orange cone
- A stick horse

INSTRUCTIONS:

Choose one player for this game. Slip the stick of the stick horse through the hole on top of the orange cone. Have the player stand 10-15 feet away. The player has 60 seconds to toss the rope around the neck of the stick horse. If they can lasso the stick horse in 60 seconds or less, they win a prize.

VARIATION:

Let everyone have a turn but they only have 30 seconds to toss the rope around the neck of the stick horse

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Jesus came to lasso us and save us from sin. His love for us gives us joy!



LARGE GROUP LESSON

BOTTOM LINE:

Jesus' love gives us joy.

OBJECTIVE:

Kids will learn "Finding Jesus' love for me gives me Joy."

KEY PASSAGE:

Luke 1:39-45, Mary Visits Elizabeth

INTRO:

Once upon a time there was a boy named Andy. Andy had a favorite toy, a cowboy named Woody. I'm sure you all know what comes next.

Over the last 24 years, Toy Story has been a favorite of kids, which means many of you are the second generation of kids to enjoy these movies. Some of your moms and dads were the frustrated kids at Christmas in 1995 who couldn't get the popular Buzz and Woody toys because, as Barbie said in Toy Story 2, nearsighted toy vendors did not think to order enough of the popular characters. Those of you who are second generation fans probably aren't half as excited as your parents about the new movie.

Some of your parents will probably cry when they see the movie. In fact I'm pretty sure some of your parents cried when they saw the trailer. Am I right? Adults in the room be honest, who got a lump in your throat when you saw that second trailer and heard the Beach Boys' "God Only Knows" while you got your first glimpse of Sheriff Woody's reunion with Bo?

Cowboy toys may not be super popular today, but Woody is special. He was Andy's favorite toy before he was Bonnie's favorite toy. He's the toy that every kid cries when they lose, and the one that makes them flip for joy when he is found again. When you go to see the movie in the theater, look for the adults who are crying. Those aren't sad tears. There's real joy at being reunited with their favorite on screen cowboy.

(Note: Keep your eagle eyes open, Some of your adult leaders might get choked up as you read this aloud. Your curriculum writer certainly did as he wrote it!)

Toys and movies about certain toys can bring us real joy, but there's only one thing that can bring us truly lasting joy. That's the love of Jesus.

LARGE GROUP LESSON

Christmas is the time when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, who came to seek and save what he had lost – namely us. The Christmas story begins with an angel telling a woman named Mary that she will have a son whom she will name Jesus. As soon as Mary received this joyful news, she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who was also expecting a child. Here's what happened in that joy-filled moment.

READ LUKE 1:39-45

MAIN POINT:

There's a reason Elizabeth's baby did a flip when Jesus came near. Her son would be named John, and he is best remembered as John the Baptist. John was a prophet God sent to prepare the way for Jesus. Even as an infant, John knew that Jesus was special!

The toys we receive at Christmas can bring us joy for a time, but that joy will fade. There's only one thing that can give us truly lasting joy, and that's Jesus. When we find the love of Jesus, we will receive a joy that will stay with us forever!

DRIVE IT HOME:

As sentimental and sweet as this year's reunion with Sheriff Woody may be, the first generation fans will tell you that toys, even special ones, can't bring you a lasting joy. Almost all of the kids who had Sheriff Woody toys in 1995 have given them away or lost them, and while they may get choked up watching the new movie, none of them would say that Sheriff Woody still gives them joy every day. They enjoy these movies when they happen, but by spring or summer, that joy will have faded once more.

The same can be said for the toys you receive this Christmas. I'm sure all of you have at least once item on your wish list that is a "must have." It's the one toy that will make this a great Christmas. But think back to last Christmas. How many of you are still feeling joy daily from last year's Christmas gift? How about two Christmases ago? Three?

Don't feel bad about that, because even the fancy gifts parents give one another will lose their sparkle after a while. You know those commercials where people find a new car with a bow on the driveway? The commercials show you the joy of having a new car, but they don't show you the frustration of flat tires, squeaky brakes, coffee stains on the seats, and scratches in the door that turn to rust.

Toys get lost, given away, broken or thrown away, even our favorites. Kids grow up and move on to new things. And while we may get choked up with nostalgia every time we see Woody tip his hat, no adult will tell you that Sheriff Woody gives them an everlasting joy. When we find Jesus, we will find the joy that made John the Baptist flip. We will find the joy the blind man had when he received his sight.

LARGE GROUP LESSON

We will find the joy Mary Magdalene had when she saw Jesus had risen from the grave.

Finding the love of Jesus gives us true joy that never fades. Whatever you find under your tree this Christmas, I hope you find that joy as well.

CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

Thank you for the love of Jesus.

*In Jesus' name,
Amen*



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (K-2ND)

ICEBREAKER:

Who is your favorite Toy Story character?

MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:

Psalm 126:3

Have the kids read the verse in a cowboy voice.

SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY:

Do some jumping jacks or play some hopscotch, something to get the kids up and jumping like John the Baptist did in Elizabeth's womb.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read Luke 1:39-45

Whom did Mary go to visit?

What exciting news did Mary have to share?

What happened when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting?

Why did God send Jesus to be our Savior?

What will we find when we discover Jesus' love for us?

SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

Thank you for the joy Jesus brings.

In Jesus' name,

Amen



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (3-5TH)

ICEBREAKER:

Who is your favorite Toy Story character?

MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:

Psalm 126:3

Have the kids read the verse in a cowboy voice.

SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY:

Do some jumping jacks or play some hopscotch, something to get the kids up and jumping like John the Baptist did in Elizabeth's womb.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read Luke 1:39-45

What exciting news did Mary have to share?

Why did John leap in Elizabeth's belly?

Why did God send Jesus to be our Savior?

How does God's love give us joy?

What are some things we can do to share that joy with others this week?

SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

Thank you for the joy Jesus brings.

In Jesus' name,

Amen

POWERPOINT REVIEW GAME

TRUE OR FALSE

Elizabeth was told she would give birth to God's Son Jesus.

FALSE

Mary went to see her cousin Elizabeth.

TRUE

The baby Elizabeth was carrying leaped for joy when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting.

TRUE

Mary was less than joyful about becoming a mother.

FALSE

Finding Jesus' love can give us joy.

TRUE



MAKE IT STICK

5 Simple Ways You Can Make This Lesson Stick With your Kids

Joy Story Lesson 1

THIS WEEK'S LESSON: MY FAVORITE TOY



IN THE CAR:

Ask your child what they learned about this week on the drive home:

Whether it's a cowboy, a doll, or a teddy bear, we each have a favorite toy that makes us happy. Mary went to visit her cousin Elizabeth. John was so happy to be in Jesus' presence, he leaped for joy inside his mommy's belly. We find joy when we accept Jesus into our life. Luke 1:39-45, Mary Visits Elizabeth



HANGING OUT:

Make this week's lesson real:

Keep track of all the times you are reminded of the story of Jesus this week in the decorations you see and the Christmas songs you hear. Ask your kids how the story of Jesus can give them joy.



AT DINNER:

Here are some great discussion starters:

- What happened when Mary went to tell Elizabeth about the baby Jesus?
- Why did the baby in Elizabeth's belly leap?
- How can finding Jesus' love give us joy?



AT BEDTIME:

Quiz your child on this week's memory verse:

"The Lord has done great things for us. And we are filled with joy." Psalm 126:3 (NIRV)



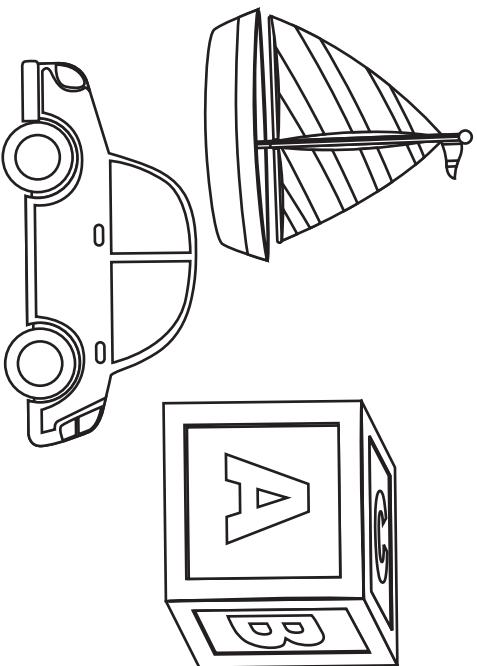
PARENT TIME:

What you need to know:

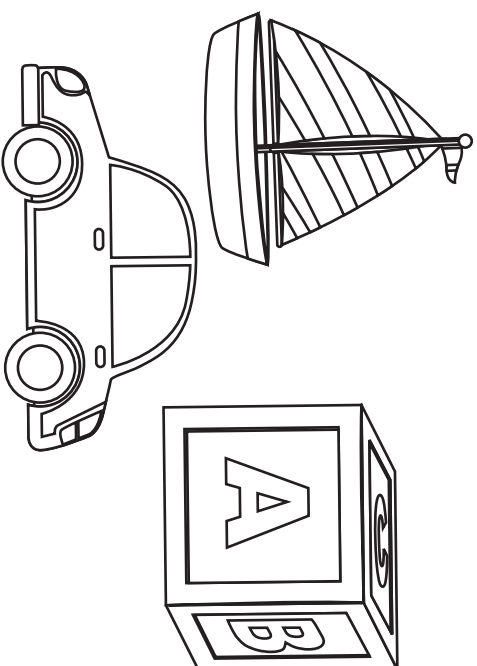
Knowing that Jesus loves us should give us joy. At Christmas time, as we remember how God showed His love for us, we need to take time to celebrate and thank God for the joy He has given us through Jesus. Let's leap for joy like the baby John the Baptist when we remember that a Savior has been born!

CRAFT ACTIVITY

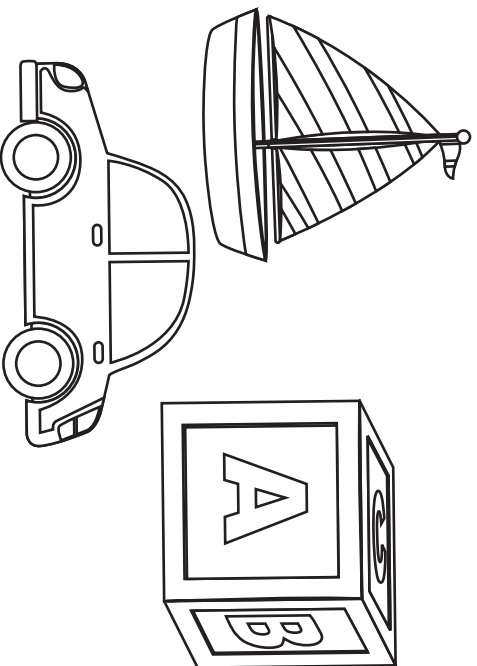
Have the kids make finger puppets of Mary and Elizabeth so they can re-tell the story from today's scripture when they get home.



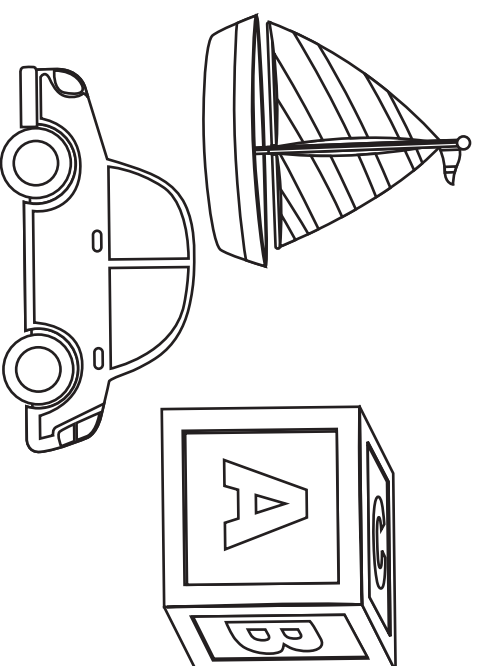
"The Lord has done great things for us.
And we are filled with joy!"
- Psalm 126:3 (NIRV)



"The Lord has done great things for us.
And we are filled with joy!"
- Psalm 126:3 (NIRV)



"The Lord has done great things for us.
And we are filled with joy!"
- Psalm 126:3 (NIRV)



"The Lord has done great things for us.
And we are filled with joy!"
- Psalm 126:3 (NIRV)