

3

Share Others' Joy

LUKE 15:4-10



GOAL

Children hear two of Jesus' parables about the joy in finding that which was lost and practice celebrating with others.

- A** Art
- AM** Active/Movement
- C** Conversation
- D** Drama
- F** Food
- G** Game
- M** Music
- NS** Nature/Science
- QC** Quiet/Contemplative
- S** Service
- T** Technology
- X** Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

Dear Lord, make me aware of the joy of the children I lead and help me to celebrate that joy with them. Amen.

THIS SESSION

This session is about celebrating and rejoicing together, sharing one another's happiness. Sometimes it is difficult to celebrate another person's happiness when one's own feeling or life circumstance is not the same. This celebration of joy moves beyond one's self to recognize and share the joy of another.

THE BIBLE STORY

In the two parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin, the shepherd and the woman call the community together to celebrate in their joy of finding that which was lost to them. The third parable in this series in Luke 15 is about a child and sibling, the prodigal, for whom the parents rejoice upon their child's return. While the stories hold together in theme and are told in sequence in Luke, the story of the prodigal is a broader story with layers and dynamics a bit complex for a young child.

CONNECTIONS WITH CHILDREN

Many young children eagerly join in to any celebration because they respond naturally to the joyful emotions, especially if there is a party. Because young children aren't always able to articulate and control their emotions or emotional responses, they may not always be able to engage in or sustain others' joyful celebration.

SESSION PREPARATION

- "People Celebrate" (p. 32): Gather pictures of celebrations from photos or magazine clippings and books about celebrations. See suggestions for books about celebrations around the world. There are also countless books on specific holidays or parties in general you could gather.
- "Lost and Found" (p. 33): Cut out sheep from copies of Resource Page 4 and hide one sheep for each child in your space. Hide a coin in the room as well. Obtain *Who Counts? 100 Sheep, 10 Coins, and 2 Sons*, by Amy-Jill Levine and Sandy Eisenberg Sasso (Flyaway Books, 2017) or use the YouTube video "Fish Stories: 'Who Counts? 100 Sheep, 10 Coins, and 2 Sons'" (bit.ly/FMWhoCounts, 9:35, stopping at 4:22).

Depending on the options you choose:

- "Collage of Celebration" (p. 34): Gather magazines for the children to cut out pictures of celebrations. Cut out pictures for children who have difficulty using scissors.



GETTING STARTED

- Pictures of celebrations (photos or magazine clippings)
- Books about celebrations around the world

PEOPLE CELEBRATE



Welcome the children as they enter and invite them to look at the books and pictures you have gathered about celebrations. When everyone has arrived, gather the children into a conversation group and engage them in conversation using the following questions:

- ➔ What celebrations did you see in the pictures or books?
- ➔ What celebrations does your family have?
- ➔ What do people do when they celebrate? (*some answers may be: visit family, decorate, eat, dance, sing*)
- ➔ Why do people celebrate?



Books about celebrations around the world:

- *Celebrations Around the World: The Fabulous Celebrations You Won't Want to Miss* by Katy Halford (DK Children, 2019)
- *Children Just Like Me: Celebrations!* By Anabel Kindersley and Barnabas Kindersley (DK Children, 1997)
- *Festivals and Celebrations (DK Readers Level 2)* by Caryn Jenner (DK Children, 2017)
- *Let's Celebrate!: Festival Poems from Around the World* by Debjani Chatterjee and Brian D'Arcy (Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2014)
- *Let's Celebrate!: Special Days Around the World* by Kate Depalma (Barefoot Books, 2019)
- *What Do You Celebrate?: Holidays and Festivals Around the World* by Whitney Stewart (Sterling Children's Books, 2019)
- *A Year Full of Celebrations and Festivals: Over 90 fun and fabulous festivals from around the world* by Claire Grace (Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2021)

- Internet-connected device (optional)

REJOICING IN THE LORD



Sing together "Rejoice in the Lord Always."

Rejoice in the Lord always! Again, I say, "Rejoice!" (*repeat*)

Rejoice! Rejoice! Again, I say, "Rejoice!" (*repeat*)

Ask each child, "Why do you feel like rejoicing today?" Accept any response. Invite the group to sing the adapted words to the song (noted in bold) with the child's name after each response.

Rejoice with (*Name*) always! Again, **we will** "Rejoice!" (*repeat*)

Rejoice! Rejoice! Again, **we will** "Rejoice!" (*repeat*)



To learn the song, invite the children to sing along with the YouTube video "Rejoice in The Lord Always—Bible Songs For Children with Lyrics" (bit.ly/FMRejoiceSong, :38).



INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

CELEBRATE WITH ONE ANOTHER



Recall the different types of celebrations mentioned in “People Celebrate” (p. 32). Comment that some celebrations are about events, such as a holiday or a birthday, and some celebrations are about special times in a person or community’s life, such as a graduation, wedding, or “strawberry festival” in an area that grows strawberries. Wonder together what other kinds of events happen that have celebrations or times to rejoice. Some ideas might be a new pet, a good grade in school, learning a new skill, a sports game, or a musical recital.

Have the children form pairs and invite each child to share something they would like to celebrate in their life with their partner. Be a partner with a child if you have an odd number of children. After the children have talked together, provide paper and crayons and copies of Resource Page 1. Invite the children to draw a picture of themselves at their partner’s celebration, writing the name of their partner and their reason for celebrating at the bottom of their paper.

Invite the children to share their pictures with the group, explaining how they would rejoice with their partner.

- Copies of Resource Page 1
- Paper, crayons



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

LOST AND FOUND



In parables from Luke, Jesus teaches his disciples to be joyful with others. These stories have deep meanings about God’s relationship with us, but the children will hear the story for what it is and hear the joy that is expressed when the lost is found.

Tell the children that Jesus often told stories to his followers, and today they are going to hear two stories about things that were lost. Invite them to listen to what happened when those things were found. Read Resource Page 2 based on Luke 15:4–10. Then read the first two stories in *Who Counts? 100 Sheep, 10 Coins, and 2 Sons* by Amy-Jill Levine and Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, or show the YouTube video “Fish Stories: ‘Who Counts? 100 Sheep, 10 Coins, and 2 Sons’” (bit.ly/FMWhoCounts, 9:35), stopping at 4:22.

Engage the children in conversation using the following questions:

- What was lost in each story?
- How did the shepherd and the woman feel when they lost something important to them?
- What did each of them do?
- When they found what was lost, what was the first thing they each did?
- If you were one of the neighbors invited to the party, how could you rejoice with the shepherd and the woman?

Show the children the nine coins you have and tell them that you have lost your tenth coin. Invite them to search the room to help you find it.

- Resource Pages 2 and 3
- Who Counts? 100 Sheep, 10 Coins, and 2 Sons* by Amy-Jill Levine and Sandy Eisenberg Sasso (Flyaway Books, 2017), or internet-connected device
- Nine coins and a hidden coin
- Hidden sheep cut from Resource Page 4
- Copies of Resource Page 5
- Glue sticks

When the coin has been found, invite the children to share your joy with clapping and a cheer.

Show the children the picture of ninety-nine sheep on Resource Page 3 and wonder how a shepherd would even know one is missing! Tell the children that they are each shepherds of ten sheep. Hand out copies of Resource Page 5 and count the sheep together. Wonder where their tenth sheep might be. Invite the children to search for their lost sheep. When each child finds a sheep, have all the others rejoice with them, clapping and cheering. Have the children glue their found sheep to their papers.



FINDING THE PRACTICE ALL AROUND US

Choose one or both options.

- Building blocks
- Toy people and animals



You may want to have the children focus on worship with a special celebration, such as Christmas, Easter, World Communion Sunday, Pentecost, and so forth, particularly if you have recently celebrated one. A typical Sunday worship service will work also.

- Magazines and/or pre-cut pictures of celebrations
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

CONGREGATIONS CELEBRATE EVERY SUNDAY



Tell the children that Easter Sunday is an important time in the church because it celebrates Jesus' resurrection. Ask the children to describe all the celebratory things that happen on Easter Sunday. Some ideas might be fancy music with trumpets, joyful singing, lots of flowers, a flowered cross, party clothes, special foods, and so forth. Tell the children that every Sunday is like a little Easter, a celebration of worshiping God, giving thanks for Jesus, and rejoicing in the new life we have as followers of Jesus.

Invite the children to use building blocks to make a church worship space. Encourage the children to work together as a group. If you have a large number of children, you may want to form two or more groups. Have them put toy people and animals in the space to worship God. Ask the children to recall and have their toy congregants act out joyful activities that happen in worship. Some ideas might be songs, children's message, passing the peace, a baptism or communion (called "celebrations"), prayers sharing joys and thanksgiving, and so forth.

COLLAGE OF CELEBRATION



Invite the children to look through the magazines to find and cut out pictures of people celebrating together. Offer pre-cut pictures for children who have difficulty using scissors. Provide construction paper and glue sticks to make collages. Have the children share their collages with the group, pointing out the celebrations. Wonder what it may be like to be at the different celebrations and how the children might celebrate with the people.



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

In the everyday little things, we can share joy with others by celebrating their joys. Even the youngest in the church can help with church celebrations. They can help prepare communion elements, make centerpieces for pot-luck dinners, help set tables, and more. It is important

that they are engaged in this part of the life of the church as they are being shown and learning to *Practice Joy*.

Choose one or both options.

JOY TELEPHONE

G

Invite the children to sit in a circle. Talk together about things that bring you joy: a sunny day, a birthday present, seeing a dog wag its tail, swinging at the park, and so forth. Ask one child to think about what brings them joy and whisper it to the next person in the circle using the format “(____) brings me joy.” They pass the message along to each next child. Have the last person share with the group, “(____) brings joy to (*first child’s name*).” Take turns, making sure all who want get the chance to share someone else’s joy.

JOY TAG

A AM G

Distribute paper and drawing supplies. Have each person draw one thing that brings them joy, then fold the paper in half. Collect the papers. Gather the children in a circle. Give one child a drawing to open. Let them guess the joy and the person who drew it. If they guess correctly, everyone cheers, and the turn is over. If they didn’t guess correctly, the person who drew it says “No” and the guesser chases the drawer around the circle until the guesser catches the drawer or the drawer has returned to their spot. The drawer then whispers what the joy is to the guesser and the guesser announces, “____ brings (*Name of drawer*) joy!” Continue until all drawings have been shared.

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- Paper
 - Crayons



FOLLOWING JESUS

JOYFUL RESPONSE PRAYER AND MARCH

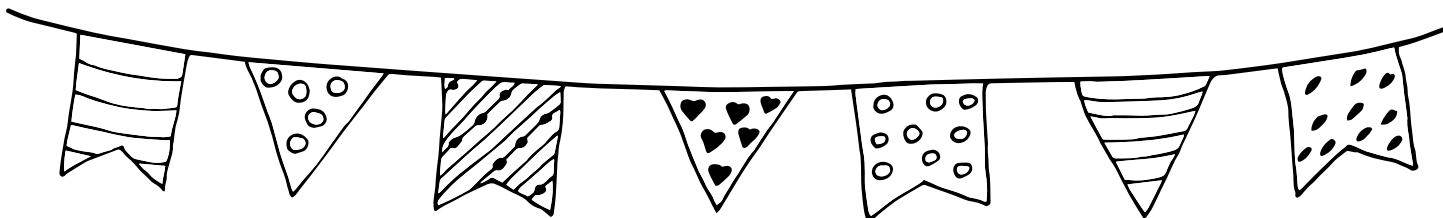
M AM T

As the group readies to leave and follow Jesus daily, offer a prayer and time of joyful response. Invite the children to name people who have had something to celebrate. Write their responses on newsprint. Practice the response with the children: “I rejoice with others.” Pray the following prayer, prompting the children to respond after each item from the list you mention.

Dear God, thank you for (*people from list*).
I rejoice with others.
Amen.

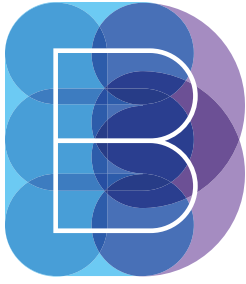
Provide children with scarves or ribbons. Invite them to march, waving the scarves or ribbons as they listen to “You Shall Go Out with Joy” (or “Joy to the World” during the Advent/Christmas season). Play music or show the YouTube videos “VU 884 You Shall Go Out with Joy” (bit.ly/FMGoOutWithJoy, 1:40) or “Joy to the World with Lyrics—Christmas Carol & Song” (bit.ly/FMJoyWorld, 2:09).

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- Newsprint and marker
 - Scarves or ribbons
 - Music for “You Shall Go Out with Joy” (or “Joy to the World” during the Advent/Christmas season) and music player or internet-connected device



I am celebrating with _____

because _____.



BIBLE STORY

BASED ON LUKE 15:4–10

Jesus told this story. Once, a shepherd had a flock of 100 sheep. This shepherd loved the sheep and looked after them carefully. Every night, they would count their sheep to make sure that all 100 were there.

One night, as the shepherd was counting the sheep, they counted only 99 sheep.

“Oh no!” cried the shepherd. “One of my sheep is missing! Where can it be?”

The shepherd left their flock and went out to look for that lost sheep. They searched the hills and the slopes. Finally, the shepherd heard a little “baa.” The shepherd was so happy to find this lost sheep.

“Come!” the shepherd called to their friends and neighbors. “Come and celebrate with me! I have found the sheep that was lost!”

What can we do to rejoice with the shepherd?

Jesus told another story. It was about a woman who had ten coins. She didn’t have a big house or much money, but she was very happy and had lots of friends.

One day, she lost one of her coins. What could have happened to it? She searched her house high and low.

“Oh, it’s so dark in here,” she said. “No wonder I can’t find what I’m looking for.”

She turned on all the lamps in the house. Again, she searched high and low. She looked under the table. She looked under the chairs. She looked under the bed and behind the pots and pans.

But no luck—she still couldn’t find the coin.

She picked up her broom and started sweeping. Finally, there in the corner of the room, under some dust and dirt, she found her lost coin.

She called all her friends and invited them to come and celebrate with her.

What can we do to rejoice with the woman?

