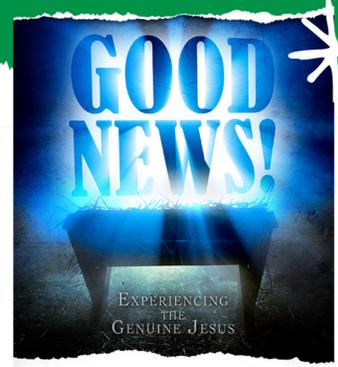




Experiencing the Genuine Jesus

ADVENT THEME:

JOY



Pre-Activity:

What you will need: 1 copy of the weekly puzzle for each student.

Provide each student with a copy of the puzzle to unravel what today's Advent theme is about. Each shape correlates with a letter in the diagram at the top of the page.

The answer to the puzzle is: Jesus is my Joy.

Music/Worship:

The music options below are ones that can be used for your worship time. Select whichever ones meet the needs of your particular group. We have provided several options, but the intent is for you to use whichever ones work for the time you have with your children.

Alive (Mannahouse Kids) – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e01-52V1c_s&list=PLQfg6PPLwrwlxMR3QKOFESbYThzYkMlfr

Joy, Joy, Joy (Kids Praise & Worship) – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imK7pAMf61E>

(Joy, Peace, Love – could use multiple weeks)

Joy to the World (Unspeakable Joy) (Chris Tomlin) – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqjzpWYFJfc>

Joy of the Lord is My Strength (Rend Collective) – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcG9HApTC_Q

Advent Candle:

Does anyone remember the first two Advent candles we've talked about this month? (Hope – Jesus is our Hope; Love-Jesus is our Love). Have a child help light each of the candles as you talk about them.

Today, we light the candle of Joy – Jesus is our JOY. The miracle of Christmas is that even though there is so much sadness in the world, the JOY of Christ deep within us can help us reach out to the sad, the suffering, and the lonely.

Advent Song: "A Candle is Burning" by Sandra Dean, Ottawa (words adapted by Rev. Cate Burton and Penny Merton, St Peter's Tauranga, PCANZ)

Tune: Away in a Manger

A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright;
A candle of **HOPE** in the darkest of night.
Though troubled and worried yet we will not fear.
Our hearts are now hopeful, for Jesus is near.

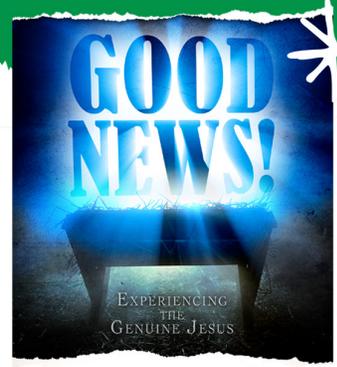
A candle now burning, a flame strong and sure
Reminds us that GOD's **LOVE** will always endure.
Deep love like the ocean, steady as the tide.
Great love which comes to use with arms open wide.

A candle is burning, a candle of **JOY**;
A warm glow to welcome brave Mary's new boy.
New life like a gift is now being unfurled.
God's promise of joy to an expectant world.





Experiencing the Genuine Jesus



Advent Prayer for Joy:

Dear God, thank you that through you we can always find joy! Help us to bring joy to our world by loving others the way you taught us. Amen.

Pre-Lesson Activity:

When all the children have arrived and after you have had a time of worship, this is a great introduction to the story lesson.

You will play this game, **“Joy, Joy, No Joy!”** like **“Red Light, Green Light!”** Have all the children on one side of the room. Make sure there is plenty of space for the kids to move forward when calling out the items. A teacher will call out items listed below or your own list of things. If the item called out makes them feel joyful then they move forward like **“Green Light.”** If the item called out *doesn't* make them feel joyful, they stay put and say **“No Joy!”**

Ideas: pizza, Saturday mornings, homework, piano lessons, detention, Christmas, birthday parties, video games, long car rides, book reports, presents, candy, going to the dentist, extra math tutoring, snow days, the beach, chores, vacation, going to a new restaurant, ice cream, school days, etc.

Lesson:

Props: magnifying glass

Hold up the binoculars or spyglass and ask... “How many of you know what this is?” (Give the children to think about their answers.)

“When you are doing detective work, or on a mission, looking for answers on a particular case, you use these devices to help you look for clues. Clues that will bring joy in solving the case. Sometimes when we are trying to find the joy we are looking for, we get distracted, thinking that this thing we are viewing will bring joy and happiness. Let's pretend we are looking through this spyglass together as a group.”

Look through the spyglass or binoculars and bring up some items that might represent people turning to find joy as you look through the lens. Examples: Food -chocolate candy bar; entertainment-movies, video games; money, material possessions.

“What makes you happy?”

“What is the difference between being happy and being joyful?”

“People often say they are “looking for happiness” or “searching for joy.”

“Where do most people look?”

“How would you feel if you were on your way to meet friends at a park or Disney World.”

“What would you say or do if your parents suggested that you spend the day with your friends at a museum instead?”

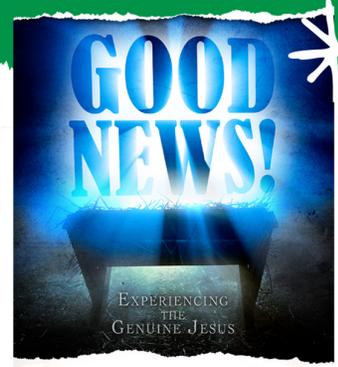
Looking through the binoculars again... “I see a larger area. Jesus as a baby in a manger scene.”
“What does this mean?” (Christmas)

“In Luke 2:10-12...But the angel said to the shepherds, ‘do not be afraid, I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you; you will find the baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”





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“When I think of JOY, I think of the shepherds. After the angel announced to the shepherds of the long-awaited news that their Savior had been born, they were excited. The angel told them exactly where they could find the baby. They didn’t have a spyglass or binoculars to look for this JOY they had been waiting for. The angel told the shepherds exactly where to look for the baby and where they would find the baby.

After seeing the Savior held in Mary’s arms, the shepherds told everyone what they’d seen and heard. Many people look for joy or happiness in the wrong places. They think that getting stuff or having lots of fun or friends will make them happy. These things may be enjoyable for a while, but happiness doesn’t always last. Happiness depends on circumstances.

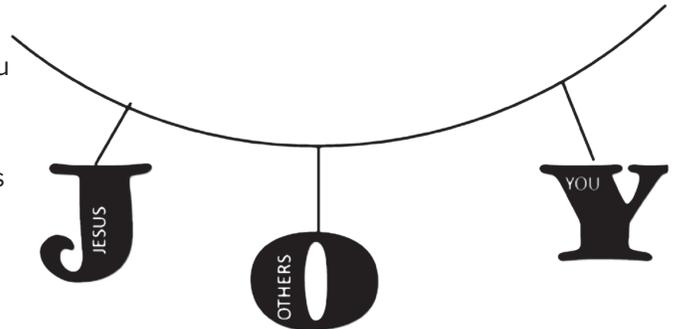
God does give us many good things to enjoy, but real joy comes when we have Jesus. The joy of Jesus brings us lasting joy.

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for the gift of Jesus. The JOY of Christmas. Help us not to look for joy in the wrong places. Through your lens or eyes, may we see you as we see others in the joy of serving.

Advent Calendar:

Supplies Needed: yarn or some sort of twine that you can tie letters to for a garland, foam letters or worksheet letters printed on cardstock that spell JOY for each child. Have children write Jesus on J, Others on O, and You on Y, then hang the letters from the twine/yarn for them to take home and hang somewhere.



Secret Agents:

What you will need: 1 booklet for each child “My Advent Promises”; Cryptogram page for students to work out the message they’re delivering this week (each sheet is for 2 kids); Secret agent cards (4 per child) copied front and back.

Throughout this month, we are taking the time to be secret agents for Jesus to our friends and families. This week you are going to be an “Agent of Joy.” Brainstorm some ways you can show joy to others during this week and write it down in your Advent Promises booklet. If there is time, allow them to make their own secret message of joy in the booklet.

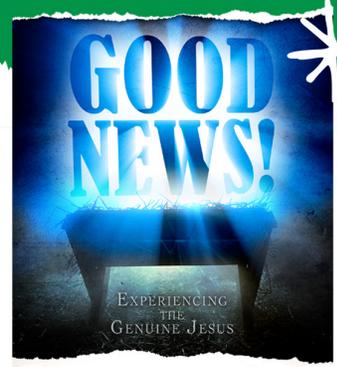
Pass out Secret Agent cards for them to leave behind secretly during the week when they complete an act of joy. Have each child complete the half sheet message so they know what message is on the back of their cards they’re leaving for someone else.

Cryptogram message on the Agent of Joy Card: “You have been visited by the Agent of Joy – The joy of the Lord is our strength”





Experiencing the Genuine Jesus



Small Group Prayer Time: Jigsaw Prayer

Give each child a piece of a jigsaw puzzle. Have the leader introduce each section and then leave space for response, either silent or out loud.

Hold the jigsaw piece in your hand and pray for yourself.

Ask God to help you. Thank Him for the good things in your life. Ask Him to help you see the big picture of the plan He has for your life.

Look at the parts of your piece that reach outwards.

Pray for people who reach out, help, and show love to others. Thank God for the people who help and show love to you.

Look at the parts of your piece that have spaces waiting to be filled.

Pray for people who have lost something or someone or who feel that they have something missing in their lives. Ask God to help them to know that they are loved by Him.

Try to fit your piece into the piece of the person next to you (it probably won't fit!)

Pray for people who find it hard to fit in, people who have moved to a new place, people who feel they have no friends, people who are being bullied. Pray that they will find peace, friends and happiness.

Hold your piece and think of someone from your community, your friends or family that you would like to pray for.

Thank God for that person and ask God to bless and help them.

