



### **BIG TAKE AWAY:**

*Jesus is our joy*

### **REMEMBER VERSE**

#### **Hebrews 11:1**

*"Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being sure of what we do not see." (NIRV)*

### **CATECHISM QUESTION:**

*What sort of redeemer is needed to bring us back to God?  
One who is truly human and also truly God.*

### **TEACHING TIPS:**

**READ THE BLACK BOLDDED WORDS.**

### **HOST:**

Use the following intro, rules, and question to start today's conversation.

### **STORYTELLER:**

Use the given story to make the Bible story come alive for the kids. Aim is to engage kids through inflection, activity, drama, repetition...etc. We want the story to be memorable, portable, and repeatable.

***Biggest goal is to create a safe space and relationship where you can open up the Bible together.***

# **LARGE GROUP | Treehouse**

## **December 17, 2023**

## **Jesus is our Joy**

Isaiah 35 , Luke 2

### **EARLY ARRIVERS (8:00/9:30/11:15a)**

Start conversations with kids and get to know something that's new in their life. Play a game with kids while you wait for other kids to arrive.

### **AS KIDS ARRIVE (8:15/9:45/11:30a):**

As kids arrive help them find a seat near the stage. Help break up groups who may be fidgety. Small group leaders, host and storyteller who are not helping with drop-off can engage with kids and find out the best part of each child's week.

**"Hey friends! Happy Advent!! Today we celebrate Joy!**

**Welcome back to the Treehouse! My name is \_\_\_\_\_!**

**I am so excited to be with you all! Let's pray as we start our day together.**

**PRAYER** (Say a prayer inviting God's presence and thanking God for your time together with him)

(Sing Happy Birthday to any kids who have a birthday coming up or had one last week...they usually have a birthday tag on from check-in **Show Birthday slide.**)

**We have lots of fun things planned for today and I'm going to need your help to make it happen. Here's how you can be a part of the team!"** (Invite kids to chime in with UP rules.)

**UP RULES** (show UP Rules Slide)

1. Sit up
2. Zip up
3. Listen up
4. Hand up
5. Look Up
6. Clean Up
7. Kindness Up (kind hands, kind feet, kind words)



**WELCOME QUESTION:** (Show Welcome Question slide)

**"So, I have question for you! What makes you feel joyful?"**

(Take two or three responses, then tell about what makes you feel joyful.)

**Joy is such a good thing! Joy was God's idea! Do you know, when God made the world, he knew we would need joy. God was the first to give joy! Sometimes we might feel like it's hard to be joyful. Today's story reminds us about that...but even in the saddest moments God's joy finds a way to peak through. But before we dig into joy, let's play a game!**

## **OPENING ACTIVITY (8:20/9:50/11:35a):**

(show Game Time Slide)

**Happy and You Know It**

**Supplies:** slides, blue tape for floor

Create a line on the floor using a long rope or tape. It should be long enough for all the kids to line up on it. Invite the kids to come over to the line on the floor and have them stand with one foot on the right side of the line and one foot on the left side of the line.

**Let's learn more about each other by seeing what makes us happy and what doesn't! Let the kids know you're going to put a picture up on the screen.** If the image makes them feel happy, they should jump with both feet to happy face. If the image doesn't make them feel happy, they should jump with both feet toward the sad face.

**Sometimes places or people make you feel happy! However, the joy Jesus gives us does not depend on being in a certain place or situation. It's a cheerful feeling in the heart only Jesus can give. And it's a joy that God made for you and for me! Joy was God's idea! Our Truth today is "Jesus is our joy!"**

**NEW**

## **BIBLE STORY VIDEO**

**Let's take a look at our Bible Story today. It's from the books of Isaiah and Luke. So we have one book from the Old Testament and one book from the New Testament. Isaiah was a prophet who told people God's words. He had some really joyful news for the people...even though it looked like things were pretty sad and scary. Let's watch the story first and then you all will help us tell the story again later.**

\*Show Bible Story Video (on iPad)

## **MEMORY VERSE CHALLENGE** (show memory verse slide)

Go over Key Passage: Hebrews 11:1

Place a bookmark in the Bible at Hebrews 11:1

**Our memory verse is from the New Testament book of Hebrews. It's a very special verse that reminds us what faith is all about...we can believe in Jesus even though we can't see him.**

**Do we have one brave child who thinks they can read our remember verse?** (Invite a child up to read the verse.)

*"Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being sure of what we do not see."*

(Use the slide or have a child open up the Bible to the marked passage)

## **OFFERING** (show offering slide)

Invite **3 children** up to help with offering. Say a short prayer of thanks for the gifts God gives and ask him to use them to help the city see his love. You can also invite a child to pray.)

**SUPPLIES:** offering basket

**We are taking up an offering in here just like they do in the Sanctuary. This is a way we show our gratitude for what God has done for us. If you want to bring money to give, we will have a place for you to put it and then that money will go to help us share God's love and kindness with our city. You can't buy God's love or buy your forgiveness. This is just one way we share the good things God has given us. Let's pray.**

*(Invite **3 children** up to help with offering. Say a short prayer of thanks for the gifts God gives and ask him to use them to help the city see his love. You can also invite a child to pray.)*

## **APOSTLES' CREED** (Apostles' Creed slides)

Invite a child up to the front to lead by saying "Christians, what do you believe" and then leading the Apostles' Creed using the slides.

**The Apostles' Creed is a way we remind each other about what we believe. Let's say it together not trying to be silly, faster, or louder than anyone else.**

*I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.  
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit;  
Born of the Virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate; Was crucified, dead and buried;  
He descended into Hell; The third day He rose again from the dead;  
He ascended into heaven; And is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;  
From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit; The holy catholic Church, the Communion of Saints;  
The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body; And the life everlasting. Amen.*

## **BIBLE STORY (8:30/10:00/11:45a):**

### **Jesus is our Joy | Isaiah 35; Luke 2**

**Supplies:** Bible, rap artist or poet, narrator,

**STORY TIP:** This story has a lot of rhyme. To make it fun, incorporate two leaders to tell the story. Have one act as a rap artist or a sophisticated poet. Narrator will cue kids to act out certain parts of the story,

RAP ARTIST/POET:

**A man named Joseph and a girl named Mary  
began an adventure that was a little bit scary.**

Narrator- Encourage kids to show a scared expression.

**They traveled to Bethlehem—David’s hometown.**

**When they arrived—no room was around.**

Narrator - Encourage kids to put their hand up to their forehead as if looking around.

**So, they went to a stable to rest and sleep.**

**It was filled with lambs, donkeys, and sheep.**

Narrator - Encourage the kids to make animal sounds..then ask them to stop.

**Baby Jesus was born on that night.**

**The birth filled His parents with happy delight!**

Narrator - Encourage kids to show a happy expression.

**No fancy parades, no trumpets blared.**

**It might have seemed—as if nobody cared.**

**People couldn’t know—that this sweet, baby boy**

**Was the promise from God and a gift of great joy!**

Narrator - Encourage kids to shout “hooray!”

**NARRATOR: But seven hundred years earlier, things looked bad for God’s people  
in the land of Judah. The Assyrian army was advancing as Judah had become  
weaker and more discouraged. It seemed they would soon be conquered and  
taken captive!**

**But God chose that moment to remind His people that He would indeed come through for them. God Himself would come to save them!**

**“Be strong, do not fear,” God told the people through the prophet Isaiah. “One day, I will heal all that is broken. Even the desert will be glad, and the wilderness will blossom and shout for joy. The lame will leap like a deer and the tongue of the mute will sing for joy. God will come, and He will come to save you!”**

**God’s people believed His promise and began to wait for this Savior, this Messiah, this forever King. They waited. And waited. And waited some more. Surely the arrival of the Savior—God Himself—would be the grandest of all occasions.**

**The people may have assumed God would come to the most important people first—the wealthy, the powerful, the respected.**

**But instead, God’s messengers announced the arrival of the promised Savior to an ordinary group of shepherds.**

RAP ARTIST/POET:

**On that night Mary gave birth  
God sent an angel to visit the earth.  
In a field, shepherds watched sheep.  
A light so bright—woke them from sleep.**

Narrator - Encourage the kids to act as if they’ve been woken from sleep.

**The shepherds were scared by this light in the sky.  
“Do not be afraid,” came the angel’s reply.  
“I bring you good news for everyone!  
God sent His love through the birth of His Son.”**

Narrator - Encourage kids to do a “rock the baby” motion.

**“The Savior’s been born; born in David’s own town.  
Asleep in a manger is where He’ll be found.**

Narrator - Encourage kids to pretend to be sleeping.

**The Lord and Messiah, yes, He is the one.  
God’s great joy for all people, His only Son!**

**NARRATOR: Suddenly, a large group of angels filled the sky. They praised God, saying, “May glory be given to God in the highest heaven!  
And may peace be given to those He is pleased with on earth!”**

**These ordinary shepherds would have grown up hearing the words God had spoken through the prophet Isaiah. They knew God had promised to send a Savior who would heal all that was broken. They knew one day God Himself would come to save His people. But how could this be? The Promised Savior had arrived, and God chose them to be the first to know?! God sent His angels to announce the birth of the Messiah to them?! The joy they felt was too much to contain! They had to see this baby!**

RAP ARTIST/POET:

**"Let's go," said the shepherds, "Right away!"  
So, they headed for Bethlehem without delay.**

Narrator - Encourage kids to run in place. Then ask them to stop and sit down.

**There in a stable, asleep on the hay.**

**God's gift to the world, Baby Jesus did lay.**

Narrator - Encourage the kids to do a "rock the baby" motion.

**The good news of Jesus was too good not to share.**

**So, they told everyone, and they went everywhere!**

**"We've seen Him," they shouted! "The Savior! It's true!"**

**"God's gift of love come for me and for you!"**

**NARRATOR: When His people were at their lowest point, God promised He would come and save them. One day He would send a Savior, a forever King. Yet when "one day" arrived, it all felt so ordinary, so different from what the people had expected. God sent the Savior as a baby and announced His arrival to ordinary people. It's no wonder the shepherds were filled with such joy!**

**But the joy doesn't end with them. Jesus, the Promised Messiah, who heals all that is broken and makes blind eyes see, brings lasting joy to all who know Him.**

**This story points us to Jesus: The prince of peace and the baby Isaiah prophesied about a long, long time ago was and is...Jesus. Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies and came to bring joy to the world. Jesus brought joy to the world by living a perfect life, showing compassion to the hurting and outcasts and rescuing the world from sin when he died on the cross and rose from the dead. Jesus is our joy!**

**PRAYER:** (When you finish, close your time together by blessing the kids as a group.)

***"Joy comes from Jesus. May Jesus be your joy. May you always remember that joy was God's idea. He created joy and made joy for your heart to know and***

**share. May you know the joy that comes from Jesus and may you share God's joy with everyone around you!"**

*(STORYTELLER EXITS AND KIDS BREAK UP INTO SMALL GROUPS ON FLOOR)*

*Call out one group at a time, such as Kindergarten. Then call out 1st Graders...etc. Try to keep them from running all at once to their small groups in chaos like fashion.*