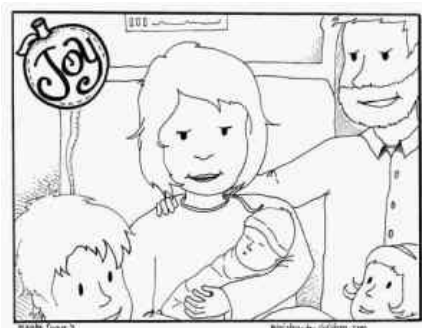


Joy Bible Lesson for Children (Fruit of the Spirit)

 ministry-to-children.com/joy-bible-lesson

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This Bible lesson continues our series based on the Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5. Each installment will focus on a specific character quality that God creates in us through his Spirit. Children will know joy is a fruit of the Spirit, God is our joy, from His Word comes joy, and our hope for eternity gives us joy.



Scripture: Galatians 5:22-26; Psalm 43:4, 21:6, 119:111; Proverbs 10:28; Isaiah 51:11, 55:12, Nehemiah 8:10, Habakkuk 3:18-19, John 15:11, 16:20, Hebrews 12:2, James 1:2

Exegetical Idea: Joy is a fruit of the Spirit, available to all believers as they abide in Christ.

Pedagogical Idea: If the Holy Spirit is within us, we can experience joy even in times of sorrow as we abide in Christ.

Cognitive Aim: Children will know joy is a fruit of the Spirit, God is our joy, from His Word comes joy, and our hope for eternity gives us joy.

Affective Aim: Children will feel joy as they praise God and discover joy together.

Behavioral Aim: Children will praise God through song, pray, and memorize Habakkuk 3:18.

Memory Verse: Habakkuk 3:18, “Yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.” (ESV)

Lesson Overview

1. **Kindle Curiosity** (5 minutes) Description: Learn and sing together *Blessed be the Name of the Lord* by Matt Redman. Supplies: Song *Blessed be the Name of the Lord* by Matt Redman (link to YouTube video below).
2. **God Revealed** (15 minutes) Description: Explore God’s Word, learn about the fruit of joy. Supplies: Bible
3. **Personal Pursuit** (10 minutes) Description: Have an expectant or new mother come and talk to the children (or feel free to have a missionary come in who has suffered for the Gospel or share your own personal story of when you experience joy in the midst of suffering). Compare times of happiness and times of sorrow through drawing. Praise God through song. Supplies: blank paper, crayons/markers, song *Blessed be the Name of the Lord*

4. **Daily Knowing** (7-10 minutes) Description: Pray together, memorize Habakkuk 3:18. Supplies: Notecards with Habakkuk 3:18 written on them for the parents. On the back, write down the Scripture references found at the beginning of the lesson pertaining to joy. Ask the parents to read and discuss these verses with their children during the week.

**For the fruit of the Spirit lessons, you could make a tree for the wall labeled “believer” or “Christian.” Each week you can add the particular attribute you are teaching about. This week, you would add “joy”, allowing a child to place it on the branch of the tree. I would encourage you to only use one type of fruit (if you are writing each virtue on a fruit), for though there are several virtues produced by the Spirit, they are all one type of fruit: the fruit of the Spirit. There are also several object lessons and activities on the website that would compliment this lesson if you have more time with your children. Many activities over the fruit of the Spirit would work well as the children are arriving.

1. **Kindle Curiosity (5 minutes)**

- After all of the children have arrived, sit together and ask: Can anyone tell me what joy is? (Allow time for discussion, but it is okay if they do not yet completely understand what joy is.)
- State: Today I want us to learn a song together that expresses joy. In our lives here on earth, we will always have sorrow and tears. Because of sin, we will never be able to experience a life without sadness. But when we repent from our sin and turn to Christ for our salvation, we receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit allows us to produce the fruit of joy. This song is called *Blessed be the Name of the Lord*. It is a song about praising God through the wonderful times and the sorrowful times of our lives. Even in our sadness, we can choose to have joy and praise God, saying “Blessed be Your name, O Lord”. Let’s learn this song together!
- Blessed be the Name of the Lord by Matt Redman: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NL3NFhmxQxs>

2. **God Revealed (15 minutes)**

- Bring the children back around you on the floor or at a table. State: So because we have the Holy Spirit, we can have joy. Let’s read together Galatians 5:22-23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” If joy is a fruit of the Spirit, what do we already know about joy? (If we have the Spirit, we can have joy, no matter what.) Remember that after we believe and trust in Jesus Christ, He gives us the Holy Spirit, who lives within us. It is the Spirit who produces this fruit in us as we abide in Him. (Choose a child to add *joy* to the *Fruit of the Spirit Tree* as described at the beginning of the lesson.)

- State: Where can we look to discover what joy truly is? (God's Word!). There are many verses that talk about joy in the Bible. Since His Word is our truth, it is the first place we should turn to learn more about this fruit of the Spirit.
- State: Let's turn together to Psalm 43:4. (Help the children find this verse.) Would someone like to read this for us? "Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy, and I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God." What can we discover about joy from this verse? (God is our joy!). Not only did the psalmist say that God is his joy, but his *exceeding* joy, joy that goes above and beyond even regular joy!
- State: Now let's turn to Psalm 119:111. Would someone like to read this verse for us? "Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart." The psalmist is talking about God's Word. He is saying that God's Word is his forever, and it is joy of his heart. Why do you think God's Word is the joy of his heart? (Discuss.) As we read God's Word, we discover more and more of who He is. We learn about His promises to us and all that He has done. We can experience joy when we read and know God's Word, just like the writer of this psalm!
- State: We know that we can have joy through the Holy Spirit producing His fruit within us. We also know that God is our joy and that we experience joy through His Word. James tells believers to consider it joy when they go through difficult times in their lives. How is it possible to have joy, to praise God, in difficult times? (Allow them time to think and offer explanations.) Joy is very different from happiness. Happiness cannot be present when someone is sad. But joy can always be present, even at the same time as sadness.
- State: Now let's look at another verse to find out how joy can be present at the same time as sadness! Turn to Proverbs chapter ten verse 28 (help them find the passage). Would anyone like to read this verse for us? "The hope of the righteous brings joy, but the expectation of the wicked brings will perish." If we are Christians, we have something the rest of the world does not: the hope of eternal life with God. After we die, we know we will live forever with God. He will wipe away every tear from our eyes and there will be no more sorrow. When we understand that we have this to look forward to, it gives us joy! We know that the hard times we experience on earth will not last forever because of Christ. Knowing this truth allows us to have joy even in the midst of sadness and sorrow.
- **Note-The parents will be given a notecard with all of the Scripture listed at the beginning of the lesson to go over with their children throughout the week in order for them to have a greater understanding of joy from God's Word. If you have more time with your children, I encourage you to go over more of the Scripture with them.

3. Personal Pursuit (10 minutes)

- State: Have an expectant or new mother come and talk to the class, describing the pain and difficulties experienced in pregnancy, but the joy she has at the same time, knowing that she is suffering for her baby and that it will not last forever. At the end of her short period of suffering, she will have a precious baby to hold in her arms and spend each day with.
- The mother herself can draw the connection or you can after she shares her story. In a similar way, we can have joy when we go through suffering in our lives because we know who we are suffering for, Christ, and He is worth it! We also know that one day we will be with Him for eternity and never experience suffering again.
- Pass out blank sheets of paper to each child. Explain that you would like them to listen to the song *Blessed be the Name of Lord* again. The song states, “Blessed be your name in the land that is plentiful...Blessed be your name when I’m found in the desert place...” Have them draw what they think this means. Discuss it as you go along, since this concept may be too abstract for the younger children. The “land that is plentiful” is a time of happiness, like making a new friend or going on a family vacation. The “desert place” is a time of sadness and/or suffering, like losing a pet or a family member, moving away from your home, divorce, etc. If you have time, you can go into a deeper discussion of why the song writer chose these descriptions. You could let them list the differences between each place. For example, a land that is plentiful has water, food, growth, and everything you would ever need.
- State: The Bible tells us that the joy of the Lord is our strength in sadness (Nehemiah 8:9). When we go through these desert places, the joy we have within us through the Holy Spirit is our strength. He holds our hands and walks with us every step of the way. Psalm 56:8 says that God holds our tears in His bottle. He is never far when we suffer, but right by our sides.
- Praise God together again with the song *Blessed be the Name of the Lord*. Allow them to move around freely, maybe making up motions to go with the song.

4. Daily Knowing (7-10 minutes)

- State: So we can experience joy when we know God. He is our joy, and the more we know Him, the greater our joy becomes. We can experience joy when we read God’s Word. In His Word we discover His truth, His promise, and who He is. We can experience joy when we remember how much Christ suffered for us and how He is worth suffering for now. And we can experience joy when we remember the hope we have of spending all of eternity with God without suffering or sadness. However, if we are not abiding in God (coming to know Him more each day and living for Him), we cannot expect to have the fruit of joy produced within us. It would be like taking away the water and sunlight from a fruit tree. The fruit will die and no more will be able to grow.

- State: If we are abiding in Christ, we will have the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and we can say, “I am going through suffering, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation” (Habakkuk 3:18, ESV). This is our memory verse for this week, “Yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.” Let’s work together to memorize this verse!
- Spend time in prayer together. Remember the specific situations your children are going through. Invite them to share if they haven’t already. Praise God for the fruit of the Holy Spirit, the joy we are able to have because He lives within us.
- Encourage the parents to work on this verse with their children. Send a notecard home with each parent with the verse written on it. On the back, list the Scriptures found at the beginning of the lesson for the teacher. Ask the parents to go through each of these verses in order for them to learn more about joy from God’s Word.