2026-11-08 Jesus Brings Joy to Unhappy Sinners

Introduction

In this lesson, children will learn that Jesus has power over death and brings lasting joy to His people. Through the story of Jesus raising Lazarus (John 11:1-43), children will see that Jesus is both powerful and compassionate: He has authority over death, and He cares when people are sad. Through the story of Jesus entering Jerusalem (Luke 19:28-40), children will see people responding to Jesus' mighty works with joyful praise.

Lazarus was brought back to life, but he would die again. His resurrection was a sign pointing to something greater: Jesus came to defeat sin and death through His own death and resurrection, so that everyone who trusts in Him may have eternal life. Christian joy does not mean that we never feel sad. Jesus Himself wept. Our lasting joy rests in Jesus, our Savior, and the eternal life He gives.

> **Teachers:** Keep both Bible stories clear and brief. For younger children, explain that Lazarus had been dead and buried for four days, and that Jesus called him out of the tomb. Do not imply that Christians are always happy or that faith removes sadness. Emphasize that Jesus cares for people in sorrow and gives a hope stronger than death.

Before Class:

- Put the noisemakers inside the paper bag.
- Prepare the two illustrations and simple story props.
- Prepare one two-box drawing sheet for each child.
- Choose two or three familiar worship songs for the guessing game.

Main Ideas:

- **Jesus Displays God's Greatness:** Jesus' works show that He is the Son of God.
- **Jesus Has Power over Death:** Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb, showing His authority even over death.
- **Jesus Cares for the Sad:** Jesus wept with Lazarus' sisters and friends; He is compassionate.
- **Jesus Gives Lasting Joy:** Lazarus would die again, but Jesus came to give His people eternal life.
- **We Respond with Praise:** Because of who Jesus is and what He has done, we praise and worship Him.

Lesson Overview

Lesson Title	Jesus Brings Joy to Unhappy Sinners
Key Attribute of God	Powerful and compassionate
Main Idea	Jesus has power over death and gives His people everlasting joy; therefore, we respond to Him with praise and worship.
Memory Verse	Psalm 92:4 (ESV): "For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy."

Bible Passages	John 11:1-43; Luke 19:28-40; John 12:17-18
Age Group	Suggested for ages 4-6; adjust language and participation for your class.
Bible Story	10 minutes: Introduction (1), Storytelling (5), Wrap-up & Discussion (4)
Craft & Game	10 minutes: Craft (5), Game (5)

Teacher Introduction (Original Text)

> *The following is the original Teacher Introduction from Jesus, What a Savior!, Lesson 29, page 193. The wording is preserved.*
>
> Imagine the joy Lazarus' sisters and friends felt as they saw him brought back to life. Lazarus had been dead for days and was buried in the tomb—and then Jesus spoke His all-powerful words, "Lazarus, come out." The great enemy of all people—death—had a Master. But this life wouldn't last. Lazarus would die again. Something more had to be done to defeat death forever, and secure lasting joy. Although it was not fully understood at the time, Jesus had come to save His people from eternal death and condemnation in order that they might experience the greatest joy of all: eternal life with God.
>
> The promise of eternal life with God has an irrepressible response: praise and worship of Jesus! In his book Desiring God, John Piper summarizes worship in the following manner:
>
> *Worship is a way of gladly reflecting back to God the radiance of his worth. This cannot be done by mere acts of duty. It can be done only when spontaneous affections arise in the heart.*
>
> Pray that Jesus would speak life into the hearts of those who are in your classroom, bringing new life and happiness to many.
>
> *John Piper, Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist (Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah Books, 1996), 83.*

Praise and Worship (15 mins)

> **Parents:** The parent and child scheduled for this week will lead us in singing on Sunday. Please take time to practice the songs together at home, helping your child feel confident and joyful as they prepare to lead.

https://www.youtube.com/embed/klhTlssK27w

https://www.youtube.com/embed/rWYbv8hligs

Prayer and Offering (5 mins)

> **Parents:** Please encourage your children to bring an offering to church. You may help your child prepare by setting aside a coin for them to bring on Sunday. This is a great opportunity to teach them about giving to God with a thankful heart and trusting Him to provide.

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> ## What is Offering?
>
> Offering is when we **give something to God** to show our love and thankfulness. In church, we often give money as an offering, but we can also give our time, talents, and kindness to God and others.
>
> ## Why Do We Make an Offering?
>
> **To Thank God** – Everything we have comes from God! Giving back is a way to say, “Thank You, God!”
> **To Trust God** – When we give, we show that we trust God to take care of us.
> **To Help Others** – Offerings help the church teach about Jesus, help people in need, and share God’s love.
>
> The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 9:7,
> *"God loves a cheerful giver!" That means God is happy when we give with a joyful heart!*

Prayer for Offering

> “ Dear God, thank You for giving us everything we need. We want to give back to You with joyful hearts. Please use our offering to help others and share Your love. Help us to always trust You. In Jesus’ name, Amen!

Review Verse from Last Week

John 3:17

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Bible Story (10 min)

Introduction (1 min)

Purpose: Help children discover that real joy often shows itself outwardly.

Props Needed:

- Small paper bag
- Two or three party noisemakers (inside the bag)

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> *(Hold up the paper bag.)*
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> **Teacher:** "Good morning, everyone! I have something special inside this bag. But first, I want you to make a promise. Can everyone try to keep a very serious, sad face? No smiling or laughing. Ready?"
>
> *(Invite two or three children to the front. Give each child a noisemaker and keep one for yourself.)*
>
> **Teacher:** "Now let's use these! Make some joyful noise!"
>
> *(Join in enthusiastically, then turn to the class.)*
>
> **Teacher:** "Oh! Some of you are smiling and laughing! What happened? Didn't you promise to look sad?"
>
> *(Take a few responses.)*
>
> **Teacher:** "When something makes us really happy, it is hard to hide our joy. We smile, laugh, clap, shout, or sing. Today we will hear about something amazing Jesus did, and how people responded to Him."

Story Telling (5 min)

Props / Visuals Suggested:

- Bible
- Lazarus illustration (29A)
- A piece of cloth to represent the tomb entrance; optional fabric for the sisters' clothing
- Jesus Enters Jerusalem illustration (29B), if available
- Pieces of fabric to represent cloaks, and palm branches (real or paper)

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> ### Part 1: Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead (John 11:1-43) (3 mins)
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> *(Show the Lazarus picture.)*
>
> **Teacher:** "This is Lazarus. He was a good friend of Jesus. He had two sisters, Mary and Martha. One day Lazarus became very sick, so his sisters sent a message to Jesus and asked Him to come."

Teacher: "But Jesus did not come right away. Lazarus died, and his sisters and friends were very sad. By the time Jesus arrived, Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days. Can you show me a sad face?"

Teacher: "When Jesus saw the people crying, He wept too. Jesus cared about their sadness. He had compassion for them. Then Jesus went to the tomb and told the people to take away the stone."

Teacher: "Jesus prayed to His Father and called out with a loud voice: 'Lazarus, come out!'" *(Read John 11:43.)* "And Lazarus came out of the tomb alive!"

(Invite children to show surprised faces.)

Teacher: "What an amazing miracle! Jesus has power even over death. He showed everyone how great and powerful God is."

Part 2: Jesus Enters Jerusalem (Luke 19:28-40; John 12:17-18) (2 mins)

(Show the Jerusalem picture.)

Teacher: "Later, Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a young donkey. Some people had seen Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead. Others had heard what He had done. They were excited to see Jesus."

(Invite children to lay fabric on the floor as cloaks and wave palm branches.)

Teacher: "The people praised Jesus and shouted, 'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!'" *(Luke 19:38.)*

Teacher: "The people could not keep their joy to themselves. They praised Jesus because of the wonderful things they had seen and heard. Jesus deserves our praise too!"

Review with Actions

- **Teacher:** "Jesus is powerful." *(Show strong muscles.)*
- **Teacher:** "Jesus cares for the sad." *(Put hands over your heart.)*
- **Teacher:** "Lazarus, come out!" *(Take two steps forward.)*
- **Teacher:** "Jesus has power over death." *(Raise both hands.)*
- **Teacher:** "The people praised Jesus." *(Wave imaginary palm branches.)*
- **Teacher:** "Jesus gives lasting joy." *(Smile and point upward.)*

Wrap-up & Discussion (4 min)

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(Gather the children close. Use the questions below selectively so there is time for the central teaching.)

Teacher: "Let's remember our two stories. Who was Lazarus? What happened to him? What did Jesus do?" *(Pause for answers.)* "Jesus brought Lazarus back to life. What does this show us about Jesus? He has power even over death."

Teacher: "When Jesus entered Jerusalem, how did the people respond?" *(Pause.)* "They praised Him. They had seen and heard about His wonderful works, and they were full of joy."

Teacher: "But Lazarus would eventually die again, just like everyone else. Jesus came to do something greater than bringing Lazarus back to life for a time. Jesus came to save His people from sin and death. He died on the cross and rose again, so that everyone who trusts in Him may have eternal life."

Teacher: "Does following Jesus mean we will never feel sad? No. Jesus Himself wept with people who were sad. But Jesus cares for us, and the eternal life He gives is the foundation of a joy that lasts."

Discussion Questions:

Question: "When Lazarus died, how did Mary, Martha, and their friends feel?"

Teacher Key: They were very sad. Jesus saw their sadness and wept too. He cares about people who are hurting.

Question: "What did Jesus do at the tomb?"

Teacher Key: He called, "Lazarus, come out," and Lazarus came out alive. Jesus has power over death.

Question: "Why did Jesus raise Lazarus?"

Teacher Key: Jesus displayed the greatness of God and showed His authority. Keep the answer connected to John 11 and the lesson's main idea.

Question: "How did the people respond when Jesus entered Jerusalem?"

Teacher Key: They praised and welcomed Him as King because of the mighty works they had seen and heard.

Question: "Would Lazarus live forever because Jesus raised him that day?"

Teacher Key: No. Lazarus would die again. Jesus came to defeat sin and death through His own death and resurrection and to give eternal life to His people.

Question: "How can we show our joy in Jesus?"

> **Teacher Key:** We can sing, pray, thank Him, tell others what He has done, and worship Him with thankful hearts.

Closing Thought & Prayer

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> **Teacher:** "Jesus is powerful and compassionate. He cares when we are sad, and He has power even over death. Lazarus came back to life, but Jesus came to do something greater: through His death and resurrection, He gives eternal life to everyone who trusts in Him. That is why our joy in Jesus can last forever. Let us praise Him with thankful hearts!"
>
> *(Fold hands and bow heads.)*
>
> **Prayer:** "Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for being powerful and wonderful. Thank You for raising Lazarus from the dead and showing us that You have power over death. Thank You for caring for people who are sad. Thank You for dying and rising again to save Your people and give eternal life. Help us to trust You, find our joy in You, and praise You with thankful hearts. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Memorizing Verse: Psalm 92:4

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>
> **Psalm 92:4**
>
> For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy.
>
> **Hand Gestures:**
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> - **"For you, O LORD,"**: Point both hands upward.
> - **"have made me glad"**: Place hands over your heart, then smile.
> - **"by your work;"**: Extend both hands as if showing something wonderful.
> - **"at the works of your hands"**: Hold up both hands and look at them.
> - **"I sing for joy."**: Pretend to sing, then raise hands in praise.
>
> **Teacher:** "Let's say the verse together, phrase by phrase, and do the actions. Now let's say the whole verse together. I will do the actions while you say the words."
>
> **Teacher Tip:** Explain briefly: "Glad" means happy. "Your work" and "the works of your hands" remind us of the wonderful things God has done. We respond by singing for joy. For younger children, teach the verse in two parts: "For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work" and "at the works of your hands I sing for joy." Repeat each part several times before joining them.

Craft & Game (10 mins)

Craft: My Joy in Jesus

Adapted from the original curriculum's Lesson 29 workbook coloring activity and Psalm 92:4 drawing activity. Children remember one wonderful work of Jesus and identify a way to respond with praise.

? **Time:** 5 minutes

? **Age Group:** 4-6 years

? **Lesson Connection:** We respond to Jesus' wonderful works with thankful praise.

? Setup & Materials Needed:

- One sheet of paper per child, divided into two boxes
- Crayons or markers

? How to Do It:

Step 1: Teacher: "We are going to make a picture called 'My Joy in Jesus.' Look at your paper. It has two boxes. In the first box, draw one wonderful thing Jesus has done. You could draw Jesus calling Lazarus out of the tomb. In the second box, draw yourself praising Jesus. You might be singing, praying, or thanking Him."

Step 2: Walk around and talk with children: "What wonderful thing did Jesus do? What does this show us about Him? How could you praise Jesus?"

Step 3: Teacher: "As you finish, remember our Bible verse: 'At the works of your hands I sing for joy.' We respond to Jesus' wonderful works with thankful praise."

If time is short, children may draw one picture and explain the other orally.

Game: Name That Worship Tune

Helps children connect joyful singing with praise to Jesus.

? **Time:** 5 minutes

? **Age Group:** 4-6 years

? **Lesson Connection:** Our singing is one way we praise Jesus for His wonderful works.

? Setup & Materials Needed:

- Two or three familiar worship-song melodies
- Optional: small musical instruments, streamers, or palm branches

? How to Play:

Step 1: Teacher: "Now let's play 'Name That Worship Tune!' I will hum a familiar worship song. Listen carefully and try to guess its name."

Step 2: Teacher: "We will take turns. If your team guesses correctly, everyone on that team may stand up, sing the song, and play an instrument or wave a streamer."

Step 3: Hum or play a short melody. Let children guess. Give each team a turn and keep the pace lively.

Step 4: Teacher: "Great job! Why do we sing songs to Jesus?" *(Pause.)* "We sing because Jesus is wonderful. He is our Savior. He has power over death and gives eternal life to His people. Our singing is one way we praise Him."

Response Song

https://www.youtube.com/embed/qALasgTBRsE

Closing Prayer & Snack Time (10 mins)

> "Dear Jesus, thank You that You have power over death and that You care when we are sad. Thank You for the joy You give to everyone who trusts in You. Help us to sing for joy at the works of Your hands. In Jesus' name, Amen."
>
> Now, let us thank You for the snack we're about to enjoy.
> We fold our hands.
> We bow our heads.
> We thank You, God,
> for this daily bread.
> Amen.

Free Time & Children Pickup (15 mins)

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