

Week 3, December 13: Joy

Big idea: John wasn't the Light, but he pointed people to Jesus with joy. We can reflect Jesus' light and joy too.

Readings: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 · Psalm 126 or Luke 1:46-55 · 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 · John 1:6-8, 19-28

MEMORY VERSE

"Rejoice evermore." 1 Thessalonians 5:16 (KJV). Older children can add verses 17-18: "Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks."

Kids' lesson (30 minutes)

1. **Light the candles (3 min).** Light Hope, Peace and the third candle, Joy. In many churches this candle is pink or rose. Ask: "What makes you really happy?"
2. **Game: Who am I? (5 min).** One child secretly picks a Bible character. Others ask yes-or-no questions to guess. Say: "Today, important people asked John the same question."
3. **Story: A witness to the Light (8 min).** Read John 1:6-8 and 19-23. Leaders came from Jerusalem and asked John, "Who art thou?" He said he was not the Christ (John 1:20). He was a voice in the wilderness, sent to point to the Light, Jesus (John 1:8, 23).
4. **Talk about it (6 min).**
   - Why do you think John kept saying, "It's not me, it's Jesus"?
   - How can we point other people to Jesus?
   - Paul says to rejoice always. Is it possible to be joyful even on a hard day?
5. **Activity: Reflect the light (6 min).** Children cover a cardboard star with foil. Shine a flashlight on it and watch it glow. Say: "We aren't the Light, but we can reflect it, just like John."
6. **Prayer (2 min).** "Jesus, You are the Light of the world. Help us reflect Your joy to everyone we meet. Amen."

Supplies: cardboard star shapes, aluminum foil, glue, a flashlight.

Take-home note for families

Today we learned that John pointed people to Jesus, the true Light. Ask your child: *Was John the Light?* This week, turn off the lights one evening, shine a flashlight on your foil star and name three things you're thankful for.

Adult small group questions

1. John defined himself by who he was not: not the Christ, not Elijah, not the Prophet. What would it look like to find your identity in pointing to Jesus?
2. Isaiah 61 promises good news to the poor and healing for the brokenhearted. Where is joy hard for you or someone you love this Christmas?
3. Paul links joy, prayer and thanksgiving (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). Which of the three comes hardest to you right now?

Quiz

1. Was John the Baptist the Light (John 1:8)?
2. What question did the priests and Levites ask John (John 1:19)?
3. How did John describe himself in John 1:23?
4. Where was John baptizing, according to John 1:28?
5. Finish the verse: "Rejoice _____" (1 Thessalonians 5:16).

Story video

A 45-second narrated video for this week is at **biblelessonhelper.com/advent**. It works with the sound off too, thanks to captions.

Quiz answers

1. No, he was a witness to the Light (John 1:8)
2. "Who art thou?" (John 1:19)
3. The voice of one crying in the wilderness (John 1:23)
4. Bethabara, beyond the Jordan (John 1:28)
5. Evermore (1 Thessalonians 5:16)

Before you teach: look up each reference once in your church's Bible. Some newer translations word the verses differently, and a few name places differently, such as "Bethany beyond the Jordan" instead of Bethabara in John 1:28.

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