

Explore It

FOR LEADERS



HOW CAN I SHARE JOY WITH MY FAMILY THIS CHRISTMAS?

Matthew 1:18-25 Joseph accepts Jesus as his son

Each child will need:

- Colouring pens/pencils and paper
- The nativity scene they have been making, specifically the Joseph figure
- Percussion instruments (optional)
- You could also ask everyone to wear a Christmas hat

Start It

Play this action game. Tell the children you will call out someone's name and an action for him or her to do, such as, 'Sarah, clap your hands three times.' They need to listen carefully for their names and the actions they should do.

(Suggested actions: Bend and touch your toes two times; Stand up, turn around and sit down; Pat your head and rub your tummy; Blink your eyes; Pick your nose; Five star jumps; Give yourself a hug; Hop ten times.)

Call names quickly to keep the children moving and engaged. At the close of the game, thank the children for listening for their names and following instructions.

Or

Play a word memory game. Start by saying, 'Last night I had a dream about...' then add a subject - ideally just one word. The next person then says, 'Last night I had a dream about [what the first person said] and [their own thing].' This continues around the circle adding thing by thing to the dream. Continue for as long as possible then start again.

You could ask that all the items need to follow the alphabet, so the first thing begins with A, the next with B, the next with C and so on. Or that each new thing must start with the letter the last thing finished with. The group leader will need to call out the order of participants.

Share the Find Your Party Elf Name sheet <http://www.blessedbeyondadoubt.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Christmas-Party-Games-for-Teens1.pdf>. Ask each person to select their Christmas elf name. You could just use first names, or go crazy and add in middle and last names too!

If you have time, ask the children to draw a picture of themselves in an elf costume with their elf name as the title (or ask them to do this ready to share at your next session).

- **Say:** In the last session we talked about when Mary was visited by an angel. But Mary was not the only one visited by angels in advance of the birth of Jesus. In the story we will read today, God sends an angel to prepare Joseph for his very special role in the Christmas story. The angel told Joseph that Mary would have a baby and that they should name him Jesus.

Tell It

Read Matthew 1:18-25.

Watch the second half of the video clip from 2 mins 20. (Or you can watch it again from the beginning to remind the children of the last session.)

'Gospel Project: Angels Spoke to Mary and Joseph'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kcap1eWuatE>

Share a document with some empty speech bubbles. Ask the children what the angel said to Joseph and complete the speech bubbles as you do so.

For example:

- Don't be afraid!
- Take Mary as your wife.
- She will have a son.
- You will name him Jesus.

Ask: What three things do we learn about Jesus?

Add these answers to your document.

- Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus will be called Immanuel, which means 'God is with us'.
- Jesus will save his people from their sin.

● **Say:** Wow, what a special baby and what a special job Joseph had to do!

Sing It

● **Say:** Let's think about Joseph and Mary's amazing obedience and faith in God. They trusted him in every step of their remarkable journey and became central figures in the most amazing story in history – what an adventure!

There is a great rhythm in this song – perhaps ask the children to bring some percussion instruments (or saucepans!) to play along.

'Go Anywhere' Lyrics by Rend co Kids
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CC2FaToSyy>

Action It

Part One

As you discuss the following, the children could colour in their Joseph figure from the nativity scene.

Ask: What did Joseph do in response to the angel's message from God?

Allow time for response and discussion.

● **Say:** When the angel spoke and made God's plan clear, Joseph was obedient. He did not have to understand how everything was going to happen. He did not need to worry about what anyone else would think. Joseph trusted God and obeyed him. He chose to do things God's way, and in so doing he had the great joy and privilege of being the earthly father to God's own son, Jesus.

● **Say:** Sometimes you and I may find ourselves in a situation where we don't know what to do. Like Joseph, we might ask ourselves, 'What do I do now?' If we listen, God will tell us what to do. He probably won't speak to us through an angel, but he will speak to us through the Bible! It is up to us to listen and obey.

Ask: Can you think of a time when you had to obey and trust in God, even if you didn't know how it would turn out? What happened?

Allow time for response and discussion.

Ask the children to put their Joseph figure in the nativity scene.

Part Two

● **Say:** Joseph made a sacrifice to look after Mary. We talked in the last session about how Christmas will probably look a bit different this year. We can think about joy as a gift we can share with others. There's always a way for each one of us to make a special difference at Christmas, and this year it may be needed more than ever.

Ask: How can you help those in your family experience joy this Christmas?

Watch: 'The Greatest Gift' Sainsbury's OFFICIAL Ad Christmas 2016 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bq5SGSCZe4E>

In this advert the main character is searching for the greatest gift he can give to his family.

Split into two smaller groups using the breakout rooms function and chat about the message in this video.

Some questions you could ask:

- What message is this video trying to give us?
- When do the characters experience the most joy?
- What is the real 'greatest gift' of Christmas?
- What is the greatest gift you can give your family this year?

Ask everyone to think about one thing they can do to bring joy to their families this Christmas. Have one person in the group note down some ideas, and then when you bring the two groups back together you can share the ideas with each other. You could even create a poster on the whiteboard with everyone's ideas!

Pray It

Share a whiteboard and, using the annotate function, ask the children to add the names of their family members.

Play this song (which was originally sung by a very young Nick Jonas!) and ask the children to pray for all the names you have written on the screen. Pray that all our family members will experience joy this Christmas, whatever the circumstances, and ask God to help us all to share his joy with others. You can fade the music out after a short while.

'Joy to The World (A Christmas Prayer)' by Nick Jonas
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dt_JmXvjGhA

You could end by reading the words of the song together, or by asking one child to close in prayer for you all.

Lyrics can be found here:

http://www.streetdirectory.com.my/lyricadvisor/song/ecwwpo/joy_to_the_world_a_christmas_prayer

Explore It

Remember to send home the Explore It (For Me) and Explore It (Together) ideas for children and families.