

# Explore It FOR LEADERS



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## JOY

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### Luke 2:15-20; Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11 Wise men come to visit Jesus

Today's session is all about the joy that Jesus brought into the world and is the final part of our Advent series. The Bible describes how the shepherds were just living their 'normal' lives when the angels appeared. The Magi, the wise men, were guided by a star but were unsure what they would they would find. God brings his joy, through Jesus, into the ordinary, everyday parts of our life.

Each child will need:

- An object that brings them joy
- Paper, pens/pencils

You will need:

- An object that brings you joy

## Start It

Last week the children were asked to find an item that brings them joy to share with the group. Give each child an opportunity to share their item, and then talk about your own.

## Sing It

- **Say:** Sing along with 'Joy to the World', and if it's a bit tricky then just have a dance and a smile.

(Sing-Along Video) 'Joy to the world' by Pentatonix (2 mins 32 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXAWzljwCow>

## Tell It

### Video

Watch the clip to recap the story of the shepherds.

*The story of Christmas (Jesus and the shepherds)* by Saddleback Kids (2 mins 25 sec)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJIC57EvYFo&t=19s>

**Screen share:** Luke 2:15-20 (ICB)

**'Then the angels left the shepherds and went back to Heaven. The shepherds said to each other, "Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened. We will see this thing the Lord told us about."**

So the shepherds went quickly and found Mary and Joseph. And the shepherds saw the baby lying in a feeding box. Then they told what the angels had said about this child. Everyone was amazed when they heard what the shepherds said to them. Mary hid these things in her heart; she continued to think about them. Then the shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking him for everything that they had seen and heard. It was just as the angel had told them.'

🗨️ **Say:** The shepherds were filled with joy when the angels told them about Jesus.

### Discuss:

- What did the shepherds do as soon as they had visited Jesus?
- How did the people react to the news?
- Are you like the shepherds when you tell people about the joy of Jesus, or do you find it tricky sometimes? If so, why?

🗨️ **Say:** There was another group that came to visit Jesus. Watch the clip to discover more about the wise men. Look out for King Herod. In our last session we discovered more about Caesar Augustus. Herod was one of his biggest supporters and the Jewish people never accepted him as king because of it. As you watch, have a think about why Herod might be so grumpy about the birth of Jesus.

### Video

*The story of Christmas (Jesus and the wise men)* by Saddleback Kids (3 mins 30 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zk1LhngROCM>

🗨️ **Say:** The wise men were excited about meeting Jesus, but Herod intended to spoil it for them. Herod was a joy-stealer.

### Discuss:

- Herod didn't feel joyful about the arrival of Jesus. Why do you think that was?
- In what ways can people be joy-stealers in our life?
- Jesus came to bring joy and wants us to spread that joy into the lives of others. How can we try to do that this Christmas time?

## Action It

### Ask:

- What is the difference between joy and happiness?
- How would you describe joy?

**Screen share:** Definition of joy, adapted from Kay Warren's definition of joy.

**'Joy is the feeling of peace I have when I know that God has everything under control. It's knowing that, because of him, everything is going to be OK and it's choosing to keep praising him when it isn't.'**

### Discuss:

- Does that definition of joy make sense to you? If so, how?
- What is the tricky part of that definition for you?
- Earlier we talked of ways that people and situations can steal our joy and, if we're honest, how we sometimes steal from other people. In this definition, who do we need to focus on as the source for our joy?

Ask the children to jot down the definition of joy (or give them a printed copy if required) for them to come back to over the Christmas period.

🗨️ **Say:** Rather than just being happy, let's focus on the birth of Jesus that brings joy into our everyday, ordinary lives.

## Pray It

As a final time of prayer together before Christmas, ask the children to share their favourite promise from their promise jar/envelope. They should, hopefully, have been keeping hold of them to help with this. (Remember, not all Bible verses will have been read yet.)

Bring this time of sharing to a close with prayer.

## Explore It

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