



WEEK THREE: To Practice JOY

SCRIPTURE

Read Luke 2:1-14

REFLECTION

There is a hymn that says, "Count your blessings, name them one-by-one. Count your blessings, see what God has done." These wise words remind the people of God to look for joy in their everyday lives.

In our story, the shepherds were doing their job in the fields by taking care of the sheep. It is what they did every day. Maybe their job had become a routine. Perhaps they were used to living in the fields, and they had forgotten to notice the green grass or look up at the glittering stars. Suddenly, the angels came to the shepherds to share, "the good news of great joy for all the people." They said, "Jesus has been born. It is a blessing for you. It is a blessing for everyone!"

The appearance of the angels woke the shepherds up. Suddenly, they were surrounded by the joy of the angels. Can you imagine the joy that filled that moment? Joy is always contagious. The angels' joy spread to the shepherds. After the angels left, they were bursting to talk with one another. They decided to journey to Bethlehem and search for baby Jesus.

Just like the shepherds, you probably experience amazing joy in special moments that you want to share with others, too. Even better, we don't have to wait for special days to experience joy. Joy is all around us in our ordinary days. Ordinary joy isn't announced by angels in the sky or by glittering candles on a birthday cake. Ordinary joy happens in the quieter moments of life.

How did you experience joy today? Maybe it was in a video call with a grandparent, a fist bump from your sibling, or knowing you did your very best on your schoolwork. Noticing our ordinary joy and sharing it with our friends and family is the way we practice joy. As we practice joy, it grows in our own hearts. As we share our joy with others, it grows in their hearts.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Can you imagine how the shepherds felt when the angels appeared with their message of joy? What do you think they looked like? How do you think they sounded? Take turns acting it out.
- Have you ever gotten so caught up in the routine of life that you have forgotten to look for joy? How do you feel on days when you do not notice the moments of joy around you? And on the days you do?
- Name a way you experienced ordinary joy today. Share with your family. Make a plan to practice joy this week by sharing one ordinary joy every day.

ACTIVITY

Materials:

- This week's Activity Page
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- Toothpicks, cotton swabs, short dowels, sticks, straws, etc.
- String or ornament hook
- Thin ribbon
- Art supplies (markers, crayons, colored pencils, etc.)

One way people practice joy is by telling stories of good times—times of laughter, triumph, and connection. Some families remember joyous times through scrapbooks or photographs. Some people use social media to record their joys. Some people keep journals of all the wonderful things that happen. Even when we are suffering or in pain, we may find ways to practice joy.

Spend some time recording your joys on the scrolls provided on the Activity Page. Write the year at the top, then color and write your joys from this week, this month, this season, and this year. Did some good things happen? What will you want to remember in the future? Practice joy by making a list of joyous experiences or events from the year.

Glue the top part of your paper to toothpicks, cotton swabs, short dowels, sticks, or straws, and roll up your scrolls. Tie a thin ribbon around your scroll. Using string or an ornament hook, hang your scroll on your tree or on your window so that you can recall the memories. Joy does not end. You can unroll your scroll and reread your lists of joy every year during the Advent season. Joy is a gift that keeps on giving!

PRAVER

God of great joy,
When fear becomes too loud inside our head,
help us to open our hearts
and feel your presence with us.
We feel great joy when we see you with us.
Amen.

REMEMBERING

my Joy SORT



REMEMBERING

my Joy SORT



REMEMBERING

my Joy SORT



