

Let every living thing praise the LORD! Praise the LORD! (Psalm 150:6)

Shout With Joy – Psalm 100

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: PRAISE

Sometimes we equate joy with happiness and it is true that the two emotions are similar. However, if God is deserving of our joyful praise, surely that is not true only when we are happy. Even in the midst of sadness or confusion, it is possible for joy to exist as the assurance that God is with us in the midst of whatever we are experiencing or feeling. God is our God and is faithful no matter what. Now there's a reason to be joyful.

Psalms is often referred to as the prayer book or the hymnbook of the Bible. The Psalms have played a significant part in the worship life of God's people for many years. Many of the psalms were written for use in corporate worship, while others are the prayers of individuals. Psalms continues to play a significant role in both Jewish and Christian worship as well as being used for individual prayer and devotion.

In Psalms we find a reflection of the entire range of human emotion. There are psalms expressing sadness, joy, anger, happiness, despair, hope, fear, and trust. This aspect of Psalms provides a couple of valuable reassurances. First of all, whatever you are feeling, you are not alone in that experience; one of the psalmists has felt your pain or experienced your doubt or celebrated your joy. Secondly, you may take any emotion or situation to God in prayer. It is a good and appropriate thing to offer our entire human experience to God. The structure of Psalm 100 is typical of a song of praise. It begins with an invitation to praise, followed by reasons for praise.

Most of Psalm 100 is dedicated to the invitation to praise (verses 1-4). The reason for praise is succinctly stated in verse 5; God is good and God's love lasts forever. Just five verses long, Psalm 100 contains an important reminder. God is our God and deserves our praise. What a great reason to be joyful!

Spiritual Practice for Adults

Find some time to praise God through singing! Put on your favorite song and belt it out.

Come Together

Come Together

Supplies: *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, green cloth, battery-operated candle, bird*

Prepare Ahead: *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a green cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 2 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 12 & 13) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4). Place the bird inside the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 2 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4), and invite the children to wonder about what the word *praise* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: This month we will hear stories about praising God. This week we will read a psalm (a special song) all about making joyful noise as a way to praise God.

WONDER: What do you think a joyful noise is?

- In this curriculum, we recommend reading stories from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary-age child to read the story, “Shout With Joy” (pp. 114–15) from the storybook.

PRAY: Dear God, we are so grateful for you and all of our blessings. Amen.

Shout With Joy – Preschool

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids’ Book, crayons*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy “Shout With Joy” (Reproducible 6A) for each child.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture.

SAY: We can praise God with shouts of joy.

ASK: How else can you praise God?

Coded Message – Younger Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids’ Book, crayons*

Prepare: *Photocopy “Coded Message” (Reproducible 6B) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of “Coded Message” to each child.

SAY: Praise is the many ways we say thank you to God.

ASK: What is one way you can praise God?

SAY: Solve the coded message to find out!

- Invite the kids to solve the coded message.

Joyful – Older Elementary

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, pens or pencils

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Joyful" (Reproducible 6C) for each child.

- Hand out a copy of "Joyful" to each child.

SAY: The Book of Psalms has lots of poems and songs in it that help us praise and worship God. One of the songs is Psalm 100. It encourages us to shout with joy.

ASK: What makes you joyful?

- Invite the kids to write one thing they are thankful for beside each letter on their worksheet.
- Encourage the kids to share their acrostic poems with the group.

Joyful Scavenger Hunt – All Ages

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons or markers

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Joyful Scavenger Hunt" (Reproducible 6D) for each child.

- Hand out copies of "Joyful Scavenger Hunt" (Reproducible 6D) to each child.

SAY: Find an item in the church that bring you joy that falls into each of the categories on your worksheet.

- Invite the kids to search for items in each category that brings them joy.

ASK: Why do these items bring you joy?

Wonder Time

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Shout With Joy" (Reproducible 6F) for each child.

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story one section at a time.

WONDER: Why do you think God wants us to shout with joy instead of whisper, or speak, or something else?

Share a Story

Supplies: Celebrate Wonder DVD, TV, DVD player

- Invite the children to join you and to sit in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 6 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

Wonder with Me

Supplies: Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors

Prepare Ahead: Lay out the Wonder Story Mat for Unit 2 (Class Pack—pp. 8 & 17).

Cut out the Bible story figures (Class Pack—p. 19).

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 2 Wonder Story Mat.
- Show the children the Unit 2 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4).

SAY: Today's faith word is *praise*. Praise is one of the many ways we thank God.

- Show the children this week's figure—a singer.

WONDER together:

- What makes you want to shout with joy?
 - What are you thankful for?
 - What is your favorite way to praise God?
- Place the figure on the Wonder Story Mat.
 - Open the Wonder Box to reveal the bird

WONDER: Why do you think a bird is in the Wonder Box this week?

Experience Wonder

Grateful, Thankful, Joyful Fun

Supplies: a die

SAY: There is so much to be grateful, thankful, and joyful about! We're going to play a game to help us share the things that bring us the feelings of being grateful, thankful, or joyful.

- Invite the kids to take turns rolling the die.
- If the kid rolls a one, they will share the name of someone in their lives that brings them joy.
- If the kid rolls a two, they will share about a place they are thankful for.

- If the kid rolls a three, they will share the name of a friend they are grateful for.
- If the kid rolls a four, they will share the name of activity in their lives that brings them joy.
- If the kid rolls a five, they will share about a book they are thankful for.
- If the kid rolls a six, they will share about a time they felt grateful for church.
- Give every child a chance to roll the die.
- Continue playing until the group is ready to move on.

SAY: There is so much in our lives that we can shout with joy about!

Examine the Bible Verse

SAY: Our Unit 2 Bible verse is Psalm 150:6. Find it in your Bibles.

ASK: Is Psalms in the Old or New Testament? (*Old*) Where is the Book of Psalms located in the Old Testament? (*nineteenth book, almost exactly in the center of the Bible*) In what chapter of Psalms is our verse located? (*150*) What is the verse number? (*6*)

SAY: Our Bible verse is all about praising God!

ASK: What's your favorite way to praise God?

- Gather the kids around the Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 12 & 13). Read it together.

Peaceful Place

Supplies: *Leader Guide—p. 114, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, book: The Thank You Book, by Mo Willems; music; paper; crayons or markers*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy the Unit 2 Faith Word coloring sheet (Leader Guide—p. 114) for each child.*

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Invite the children to explore music and singing.
- Have each child color the Faith Word coloring sheet.

Tip: *All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.*

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice – Exploring Praise Through Worship

SAY: A spiritual practice is something we do to help us be present with God. A spiritual practice can be anything because you can be with God any time, anywhere, and any way! This month we are going to praise God through gratitude.

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice:
 - **SAY:** We're going to think about five things we're grateful for. You'll close your eyes and I will say a place. You will think of something you are thankful for at that place.
 - **SAY:** Get comfortable and close your eyes.
 - **SAY:** At home, I am grateful for...
 - **SAY:** At school, I am grateful for...
 - **SAY:** In nature, I am grateful for...
 - **SAY:** At church, I am grateful for...
 - **SAY:** At the park, I am grateful for....

SAY: We can praise God for all of the things we are grateful for.

ASK: Would any of you like to share what you are grateful for?

PRAY: Repeat after me: "God, thank you for our many blessings. Help us always be ready to praise you. Amen."

- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child on the hand as you say this blessing: "May you feel God's love all around you every day."

Family Spiritual Practice

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book; Leader Guide—pp. 111, 112*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Celebration Chart" (p. 111) and "Family Letter" (p. 112) for each child.*

SAY: Let's take a look at your Take-Home Pages (*Reproducibles 6F–6G*). Ask your family to read the Bible story and participate in this week's spiritual devotion with you. There's an extra activity for you to do sometime this week.

- Send home a copy of the Take-Home Pages, a copy of the Family Letter, and a copy of the Celebration Chart with each child.

Supplemental Activities

Preschoolers and Early Elementary– Joyful Noises

Supplies: none

SAY: Let's use our voices to make joyful sounds to God. I will name a way to make a joyful noise and you'll say, "Praise God!" in the way I name. Ready?

SAY: Shout to the Lord!

- Invite the kids to shout, "Praise God!"

SAY: Whisper to the Lord!

- Invite the kids to whisper, "Praise God!"

SAY: Laugh to the Lord!

- Invite the kids to laugh the words, "Praise God!"

SAY: Sing to the Lord!

- Invite the kids to sing, "Praise God!"

SAY: Talk to the Lord!

- Invite the kids to say, "Praise God!"

SAY: Shout to the Lord!

- Invite the kids to shout, "Praise God!"

- Continue playing until the group is ready to move on.

Older Elementary – Thankful Jars

Supplies: 16-ounce mason jars, lots of paint pens, slips of paper, pens

SAY: Sometimes life gets hard, but there are always things we can be thankful for. We're going to decorate a mason jar using paint pens. Make a design that brings you joy! Then you will take the jar home and fill it with small slips of paper you've written your joys on.

- Give each child a mason jar.
- Invite the kids to decorate their jars with a design that brings them joy using paint pens.
- Give each child a slip of paper and a pen.
- Encourage them to write down something they are thankful for onto a slip of paper.
- Invite the kids to put their slips of paper into their jars.

Intergenerational Activity – Sing Together

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Shout to the Lord" (Reproducible 5E) for each participant.

SAY: There is a song that was written based on Psalm 100 called "Shout to the Lord." Let's sing it together.

- Give each participant a copy of the words to the song "Shout to the Lord."
- Practice the chorus together a few times so your nonreaders and early readers can participate.
- Sing the song together.

ASK: What is your favorite song to sing to God?

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for our blessings. Hear our shouts of joy, our giggles of joy, and our silent joy. Amen.