



Joy to the World!

By Deborah Wassenberg

Introduction:

The hymn Joy to the World was written by Isaac Watts as a celebration of Jesus' second coming based on Psalm 98. But the line, 'let every heart prepare Him room' has been linked to Luke 2:7: 'And she brought forth her firstborn Son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.' So, it has become a favourite hymn at Christmas.

Jump for Joy! Songs to Sing:

Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him. Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre. Sing to him a new song; play skilfully, and shout for joy. (Psalm 33:1-3)

- Joy to the World
- Hymn of Joy
- I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy (traditional Sunday School song)
- Joy to the World (Unspeakable Joy)
- The Joy of the Lord Is My Strength (traditional Sunday School song)

Bible Lesson: The Birth of Jesus (Mary's Bundle of JOY!)

Bible Reference: Matthew 2:1-12; Luke 2:1-20

Visuals You Will Need:

1. The word 'JOY' on Christmas decorations or decor
2. Happy child because of something good happening to them
3. Joy: a fruit of the Spirit
4. Child with a joyful face
5. Isaac Watts/Music notes
6. Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus in the stable
7. Angel and the Shepherds
8. Shepherds worship Jesus
9. Wise Men and Herod
10. Wise Men worship Jesus

Words:

1. At Christmas, you see the word JOY more than at any other time.
It appears on Christmas Cards, decorations and even serviettes (napkins).
We sing about JOY, too.
But what is JOY?
2. You might say, 'JOY is feeling happy.'
But JOY is more than that.
Happiness is what you feel when something good happens to you.
School is finished, and the holidays are beginning – you feel happy.
Your parents decide on takeaway for dinner – you feel happy.
It's Christmas Eve – you feel very, very happy.
But JOY is more than a feeling of happiness because something good has happened to you.
Joy comes from God.
JOY doesn't depend on what is happening to you.
3. JOY is something you experience deeply inside your heart because that's where the Holy Spirit lives.
Joy is a Fruit of the Spirit.
Love, JOY, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (*Galatians 5:22-23*)
That's why JOY is always there no matter what is happening to you.
Whether it is something happy or something sad.
There are Christians around the world who face difficult times and persecution yet they can praise God and it's because they don't depend on happiness, they depend on His JOY. (*Romans 5:1-2*)
4. The Holy Spirit's JOY lasts forever. No one can take it away.
The Holy Spirit's JOY will satisfy you because it never runs out.
The Holy Spirit's JOY is always there.
The Holy Spirit's JOY gives you strength.
There's a famous Christmas Hymn called 'JOY to the World'.
I'm sure you've heard it and have probably sung it.
Let's find out about this JOY to the World.
5. Now in those days, a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. All went to register themselves, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to David's city, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David; to register himself with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him as wife, being pregnant.
6. While they were there, the day had come for her to give birth. She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger (feeding trough), because there was no room for them in the inn.

7. There were shepherds in the same country staying in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. Behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, for behold, **I bring you good news of great joy** which will be to all the people. For there is born to you today, in David's city, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. This is the sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill toward men.

8. When the angels went away from them into the sky, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem, now, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." They came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby was lying in the manger. When they saw it, they publicized widely the saying which was spoken to them about this child. All who heard it wondered at the things which were spoken to them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, just as it was told them.

9. Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him." When Herod the King heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet:
'AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH,
ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH;
FOR FROM YOU WILL COME FORTH A RULER
WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.'"
Then Herod secretly called for the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found *Him*, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him."

10. After hearing the king, they went on their way; and behold, the star, which they had seen in the east, went on ahead of them until it came to a stop over *the place* where the Child was *to be found*. **When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.** And after they came into the house, they saw the Child with His mother Mary; and they fell down and worshipped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And after being warned *by God* in a dream not to return to Herod, *the magi* left for their own country by another way.

Ministry to the Children:

Jesus is the source of JOY! Because of His great love for us, God brought Jesus to earth for a time, so He could show the world God's love. Then Jesus died on the Cross, paying for the sins of everyone. God raised Him from the dead, and now He is in Heaven. When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, and ask Him into your heart, He sends the Holy Spirit to live inside you so you are never alone. The Holy Spirit helps you live for Jesus all your life. Salvation brings you JOY! And your decision to receive Jesus into your heart brings God JOY!

Memory Verse: Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in faith so that you overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jump to It!

Hide words of the Memory Verse and the Bible reference around the room, under furniture or inside items. Make a note of where you hid them! Choose a child to jump to the furniture or item to find the word. Ask, 'Where do you think the Memory Verse is hidden? How many jumps do you think it will take you to get there?' Everyone can count along with the number of jumps. When all the words have been found, assemble them in the correct order and recite the verse out loud together jumping up and down at the same time. Phew!

Jump for Joy Jumping Games

Jump Like a Frog If...

Read out a list of questions to the children. If the answer to any question is 'yes' the child indicates it by standing up from their seat, jumping and squatting down like a frog on a lily pad in front of their seat. The winner of the game is the child who is still seated on their chair! Here are some examples to get you started:

- Jump if you have eaten chocolate today
- Jump if you are wearing green
- Jump if you were born in December
- Jump if you are the youngest child
- Jump if you have a trampoline

Jump Challenge

Indoors, use masking tape to make 5 – 10 lines about 60cm apart. Mark the first line as the 'start' line and then give the children the jumping challenge.

- Long jump: how many lines can you jump over?
- Run and jump: how many lines can you jump over with a running start?

- Long jump backwards: how many lines can you jump over backwards?
- Hop: how far can you jump on one leg?

Jump the Noodle Relay

Form two teams into lines. Lay a pool noodle across two low chairs, one per team for them to jump. On 'Go' the first team member in each line must run and jump the noodle without knocking it off, and then run back to their team, tagging the next in line. Continue until each team member has jumped. The team to finish first wins. If the noodle is knocked, the team member must return to the start line and try again!

Jump the Creek

Lay two long ropes on the ground to form banks of the creek. Divide the children into two teams. On 'Go' the two teams run and try to jump the ropes. Keep widening the ropes after each team jumps to show the creek is widening. If any child lands in the creek, they must 'dry their feet' by laying on their back and shaking their legs in the air. Then they can get up and continue the jumps!

Craft: Joy Bells!

Make musical instruments using bells so the children can make a joyful noise.

- Jingle bell streamers (thread bells onto a pipe cleaner then make it a circle by twisting the ends together and tie ribbon streamers to it like a miniature tambourine).
- Jingle bell bracelets (thread bells onto a pipe cleaner to form bracelets, twisting the ends together to secure).
- Jingle bell sticks (thread bells onto tinsel and wrap the tinsel around a stick or length of dowel and secure).
- Jingle bell shaker (decorate two paper cups, put a bell inside and glue the rim of one cup to the rim of the other)

Colouring Sheet: Jesus is Our Joy

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