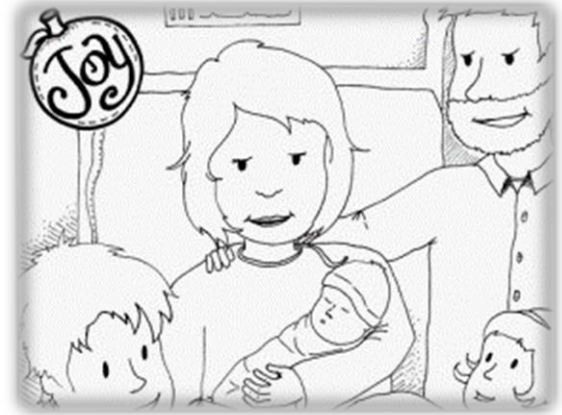


# Joy

## Fruit of the Spirit

### Lesson 2 of 9



Written by Kara Jenkins

This Bible lesson continues our series based on the Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5. Each installment will focus on a specific character quality that God creates in us through His Spirit.

**Target Age Group:** 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

**Scriptures Pertaining to Joy:** Galatians 5:22-26; Psalm 43:4, 21:6, 119:111; Proverbs 10:28; Isaiah 51:11, 55:12; Nehemiah 8:10; Habakkuk 3:18-19; John 15:11, 16:20; Hebrews 12:2; James 1:2

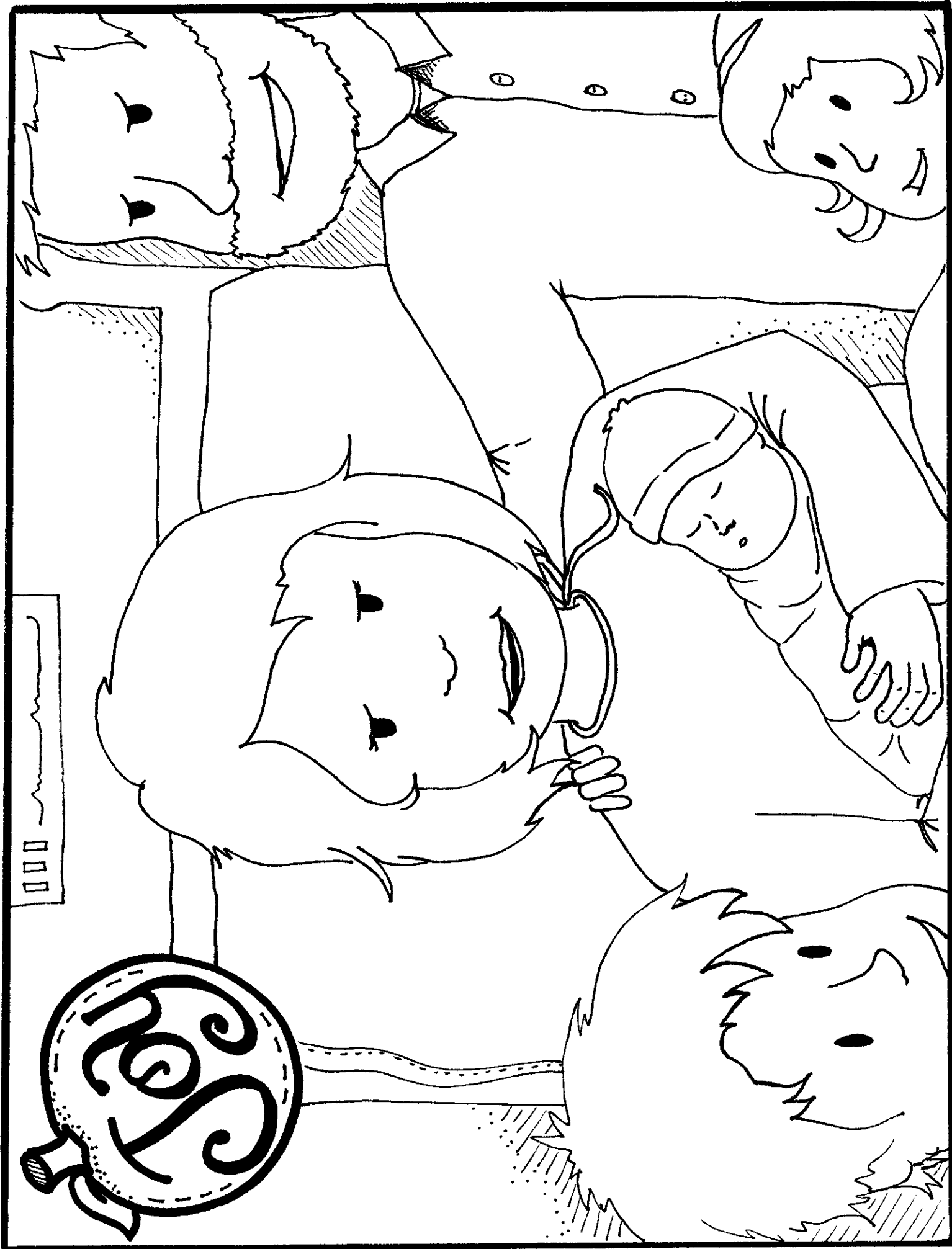
**Learning Objectives:** After this lesson, the children will demonstrate:

1. An understanding that joy is a fruit of the Spirit.
2. An understanding that God is our joy, from His Word comes joy, and our hope for eternity gives us joy.

**Bible Verse to Memorize:** Habakkuk 3:18: “Yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.” (ESV)

**Items Needed:**

- Bible (plus extras for children who forget to bring one)
- Song “Blessed Be the Name of the Lord” by Matt Redman found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NL3NFhmxQxs>
- Blank paper, crayons/markers



- Piece of paper for parents with Habakkuk 3:18 and a list of this week's relevant Scriptures written or printed on them, one for each family

**Optional Activity:** For the fruit of the Spirit lessons, make a tree for the wall labeled "Believer" or "Christian." (On a poster board or large piece of paper, draw or use construction paper.) Make paper "fruits," each labeled with an attribute of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Each week add the particular attribute you are teaching about. This week, you would add "joy," allowing a child to place it on the branch of the tree. Use only one type of fruit, for though there are several virtues produced by the Spirit, they are all one type of fruit: the fruit of the Spirit.

## **Bible Lesson**

### **Kindle Curiosity (5 minutes)**

After all of the children have arrived, sit together and ask, can anyone tell me what joy is? (Allow time for discussion, but it is okay if they do not yet completely understand what joy is.)

Today I want us to learn a song together that expresses joy. In our lives here on earth, we will always have sorrow and tears. Because of sin, we will never be able to experience a life without sadness. But when we repent from our sin and turn to Christ for our salvation, we receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit allows us to produce the fruit of joy. This song is called "Blessed Be the Name of the Lord." It is a song about praising God through the wonderful times and the sorrowful times of our lives. Even in our sadness, we can choose to have joy and praise God, saying "Blessed Be Your name, O Lord." Let's learn this song together!

### **God Revealed (15 minutes)**

- Bring the children back around you on the floor or at a table. Ask them the series of questions below (answers are in italics) and discuss.

Because we have the Holy Spirit, we can have joy. Let's read together Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." (ESV) What do we already know about joy? (*If we have the Spirit, we can have joy, no matter what.*) Remember that after we believe and trust in Jesus Christ, He gives us the Holy Spirit, who lives within us. It is the Spirit who produces this fruit in us as we abide in Him. (Optional: Choose a child to add joy to the Fruit of the Spirit Tree as described at the beginning of the lesson.)

Where can we look to discover what joy truly is? (*God's Word!*) There are many verses that talk about joy in the Bible. Since His Word is our truth, it is the first place we should turn to learn more about this fruit of the Spirit.

Let's turn together to Psalm 43:4. (Help the children find this verse.) Would someone like to read this for us? "Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy, and I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God." (ESV) What can we discover about joy from this verse? (*God is our joy!*) Not only did the psalmist say that God is his joy, but his exceeding joy, joy that goes above and beyond even regular joy!

Now let's turn to Psalm 119:111. Would someone like to read this verse for us? "Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart." (ESV) The psalmist is talking about God's Word. He is saying that God's Word is his forever, and it is the joy of his heart, or his deepest joy. Why do you think God's Word is the joy of his heart? (Discuss.)

As we read God's Word, we discover more and more of who He is. We learn about His promises to us and all that He has done. We can experience joy when we read and know God's Word, just like the writer of this psalm!

We know that we can have joy through the Holy Spirit producing His fruit within us. We also know that God is our joy and that we experience joy through His Word. James tells believers to consider it joy when they go through difficult times in their lives (James 1:2). How is it possible to have joy, to praise God, in difficult times? (Allow them time to

think and offer explanations.) Joy is very different from happiness. Happiness cannot be present when someone is sad. But joy can always be present, even at the same time as sadness.

Now let's look at another verse to find out how joy can be present at the same time as sadness! Turn to Proverbs chapter ten, verse 28 (help them find the passage). Would anyone like to read this verse for us? "The hope of the righteous brings joy, but the expectation of the wicked will perish." (ESV) If we are Christians, we have something the rest of the world does not: the hope of eternal life with God. After we die, we know we will live forever with God. He will wipe away every tear from our eyes and there will be no more sorrow. When we understand that we have this to look forward to, it gives us joy! We know that the hard times we experience on earth will not last forever because of Christ. Knowing this truth allows us to have joy even in the midst of sadness and sorrow.

### **Personal Pursuit (10 minutes)**

- Have an expectant or new mother come and talk to the class, describing the pain and difficulties experienced in pregnancy, but the joy she has at the same time, knowing that she is suffering for her baby and that it will not last forever. At the end of her short period of suffering, she will have a precious baby to hold in her arms and spend each day with.
- The mother herself can draw the connection or you can after she shares her story. In a similar way, we can have joy when we go through suffering in our lives because we know who we are suffering for – Christ – and He is worth it! We also know that one day we will be with Him for eternity and never experience suffering again.
- Pass out blank sheets of paper to each child. Explain that you would like them to listen to the song "Blessed Be the Name of Lord" again. The song states, "Blessed be your name in the land that is plentiful...Blessed be your name when I'm found in the desert place..." Have them draw what they think this means. Discuss it as you go along, since this concept may be too abstract for the younger children. The "land that is plentiful" is a time of happiness, like making a new friend or going on a family vacation. The "desert place" is a time of sadness and/or suffering, like

losing a pet or a family member, moving away from your home, divorce, etc. If you have time, you can go into a deeper discussion of why the song writer chose these descriptions. Let the children list the differences between each place. For example, a land that is plentiful has water, food, growth, and everything you would ever need.

Tell the children, the Bible tells us that the joy of the Lord is our strength in sadness (Nehemiah 8:9). When we go through these desert places, the joy we have within us through the Holy Spirit is our strength. He holds our hands and walks with us every step of the way. Psalm 56:8 says that God holds our tears in His bottle. He is never far when we suffer, but right by our sides.

- Praise God together again with the song “Blessed Be the Name of the Lord.” Allow them to move around freely, maybe making up motions to go with the song.

### **Daily Knowing (7-10 minutes)**

We can experience joy when we know God. He is our joy, and the more we know Him, the greater our joy becomes. We can experience joy when we read God’s Word. In His Word we discover His truth, His promise, and who He is. We can experience joy when we remember how much Christ suffered for us and how He is worth suffering for now. And we can experience joy when we remember the hope we have of spending all of eternity with God without suffering or sadness. However, if we are not abiding in God (coming to know Him more each day and living for Him), we cannot expect to have the fruit of joy produced within us. It would be like taking away the water and sunlight from a fruit tree. The fruit will die and no more will be able to grow.

If we are abiding in Christ, we will have the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and we can say, although I am suffering, “...yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.” (Habakkuk 3:18, ESV) This is our memory verse for this week, “Yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.” Let’s work together to memorize this verse!

## **Closing Activities (5-10 minutes)**

- Spend time in prayer together. Remember the specific situations your children are going through. Invite them to share if they haven't already. Praise God for the fruit of the Holy Spirit, the joy we are able to have because He lives within us.
- Encourage parents to work on this week's verse with their children. Send home the papers with the verse and Scriptures. Ask the parents to go through each of these verses in order for them to learn more about joy from God's Word.

## **Joy**

Galatians 5:22-23 (NASB)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, \_\_\_\_\_, peace, \_\_\_\_\_, kindness, \_\_\_\_\_, faithfulness, \_\_\_\_\_, and self-control; against such things there is no law."

Psalms 43:4 (NASB)

"Then I will go to the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, to God my exceeding \_\_\_\_\_; And upon the lyre I shall \_\_\_\_\_ You, O God, my God."

Psalms 21:6 (NASB)

"For You make him most \_\_\_\_\_ forever; You make him \_\_\_\_\_ with gladness in Your presence."

Nehemiah 8:10b (NASB)

"Do not be \_\_\_\_\_, for the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ is your strength."

John 15:11 (NASB)

"These things I have spoken to you so that My \_\_\_\_\_ may be in you, and that your \_\_\_\_\_ may be made full."

John 16:20 (NASB)

"Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will \_\_\_\_\_ and lament, but the world will \_\_\_\_\_; you will \_\_\_\_\_, but your grief will be turned into \_\_\_\_\_."

Hebrews 12:2 (NASB)

"...fixing our eyes on \_\_\_\_\_, the author and perfecter of \_\_\_\_\_, who for the \_\_\_\_\_ set before Him endured the \_\_\_\_\_, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of \_\_\_\_\_."

James 1:2-3 (NASB)

"Consider it all \_\_\_\_\_, my brethren, when you encounter various \_\_\_\_\_, knowing that the testing of your \_\_\_\_\_ produces endurance."



\*\*\*\*Homework\*\*\*\*

- Talk to someone about the difference between being happy and being blessed (joyful). Write down their name on a piece of paper and bring it to class next week.
- Write down, on a piece of paper, 3 reasons you are blessed and this is why you have joy. Bring this list into class next week.

## **Joy** (Teacher's Guide)

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"Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy."

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"...fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

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