

WEEK 3 LESSON GUIDE



BIG IDEA

Jesus brings joy to the world.

BIBLE

Mary Visits Elizabeth:
Luke 1:39–56

ABOUT THIS WEEK

Have you ever gotten a gift that was so perfect for you that it made you want to dance or jump with joy? This week, we'll take a look at the time when Mary visited Elizabeth to share joyful news with her. Once they saw each other, they both broke out in celebration because **Jesus brings joy to the world.**

WELCOME TIME

ACTIVITY | Send Joy To The World

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, spread out seven different hula hoops around your space and tape a different color of construction paper on the ground inside the circle (you may choose to label them with the continents, but as most preschoolers are not strong readers yet, colors would work just fine). Give each of the two kids a handful of seven items they can easily carry in their hand or in a basket (small plushies, small books, sealed envelopes, beaded bracelets). See how quickly they can get to each continent (color) and drop one of the items inside until all items are delivered. Repeat with a new pair of kids. For small spaces, use buckets placed closer together.
- Our world has seven continents: Africa, Antarctica, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America. I have marked them off with different colors today. Let's see how quickly we can deliver some Christmas joy to each continent. Once you are all finished, yell out, "Joy to the world!"

ACTIVITY | God Loves The World

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As one big team, have the kids work together to build a [giant floor puzzle of the world](#). You can also make your own by drawing a [simple drawing of Earth](#) on poster paper or foam board and cutting them up into as many pieces as you'd like. You can sing and play songs like "[He's Got The Whole World](#)" as you complete this activity.
 - ✳ **TODDLER HACK:** Toddlers are not developmentally at the puzzle-solving stage yet but they can start matching things that look the same. You can have two copies of the same world drawing and cut one of them into four simple pieces. Guide toddlers to place each piece in the correct spot on top of the other copy.
- Look at the world! Where we live is just a tiny dot! This world is so big and filled with so many people ... and God loves everybody in it.
- In today's Bible story, we're going to talk about how baby Jesus gives the whole world so much joy!

STORY TIME

SCRIPTURE | Luke 1:39–56 (Mary Visits Elizabeth)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Teach this Scripture passage by reading from a preschool-friendly Bible translation, Bible storybook, or using the talking points provided below! Use the props from previous weeks for Mary and Elizabeth and add a couple of baby figurines or dolls for John and Jesus. Show each figure when talking about them in the Bible story. Consider sitting on a rug with kids in a half circle to make this more cozy.
- Welcome back to the Joy Story corner! We'll learn all about why the birth of Jesus gives us so much joy.
- **Who are some people who bring you joy?**
- We learned from the Bible that the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her she would have a baby. His name would be Jesus and he was the savior God promised.
 - **What was the name of Mary's baby?** Jesus.
 - The angel Gabriel also appeared to Zechariah and told him he and his wife, Elizabeth would have a baby even though they were very old. His name would be John, and he would tell everybody about Jesus when he grew up.
 - **What was the name of Elizabeth's baby?** John.
- Mary and Elizabeth were related. So after the angel told her the news, she visited Elizabeth. Elizabeth already had baby John in her belly.
 - When Mary came over, baby John jumped for joy inside Elizabeth's belly!
 - **Can you all jump for joy with me?**
- Both Elizabeth and Mary were going to be moms of very special babies. Mary's baby was the savior of the world. Elizabeth's baby would help people get ready for the savior. God was doing something big.
 - Mary was thankful that God chose her for this important job—so she sang a song.
 - **What song would you sing if you were filled with joy like Mary was?**
- Mary knew her baby was God's own son. Jesus would help people learn and love God. He would save everyone from being separated from God. That's right—everyone! Jesus came to save the whole world! Isn't that joyful news?

BIG IDEA | Jesus brings joy to the world.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Prepare five wrapped boxes in advance, each containing a different toy with a Big Idea tag attached (use one of the Big Idea graphics provided or write your own). Label each box with a number corresponding to the week. This week, invite a couple of kids to unwrap box #3. If you have a [recordable plush](#) available, you could record yourself saying the Big Idea in advance, reset it each week, and gift wrap it in the box again. Once unwrapped, say the Big Idea aloud for the kids (or squeeze the tummy if using a recording) and have kids follow along with the motions below.
- What's the Big Idea of today's Joy Story?
 - **Jesus** ("[Jesus](#)" in ASL)
 - **brings joy** (Place index fingers on either side of cheeks and swivel your wrists.)
 - **to the world** (Sweep arms out from chest horizontally, palms face down.)

VIDEO | Joy Story, Episode 3

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's episode of [Cali's World](#).

ACTIVITY | Pass The Globe

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, form a circle with kids. Have kids toss or roll an [inflatable globe](#) to the person next to them or across the circle. Sing and play your favorite preschool version of "Joy to the World"

(like [this one](#)) while the globe is tossed. When the music stops, the person holding the globe has to yell out the Big Idea (invite leaders and other kids to help). Keep going until everyone has had a chance to say the Big Idea.

✂ **TODDLER HACK:** Have kids play with the inflatable globe (provide more than one to make sharing easier) and sing these words to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb”: “Mary had a baby boy, baby boy, baby boy. Mary had a baby boy. Jesus is his name.” You can add a second verse: “Jesus brings joy to the world, to the world, to the world, Jesus brings joy to the world, to the whole wide world!”

- Great job passing the “world” around and remembering the Big Idea. When Elizabeth and Mary heard they would become mothers, I wonder how they felt at first.
- **How do you think they felt?**
 - Elizabeth might have felt like she was too old to have a baby.
 - Mary might have felt like she was too young to have a baby.
 - They both might have been scared or confused.
- But Mary and Elizabeth knew their baby boys—John and Jesus—were from God. That gave them joy. After all, Jesus was none other than God’s son. When they grew up, John would let everyone know that **Jesus brings joy to the world.**

PRAYER

- Dear God, you give us joy when we are scared, confused, or sad. Thank you for giving us Jesus and bringing joy to the whole world. Amen.

SHARING TIME

SNACK | Earth Yogurt Cup

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Gather two containers of vanilla yogurt (non-dairy if needed), adding a drop of green food coloring to one and blue to another. Scoop a dollop of each color into clear cups for kids. Provide [bamboo skewers](#) or toothpicks and have kids swirl the yogurt around to make their “earth” design (it does not have to be geographically correct, of course!). You can add nut-free granola to finish off their [earth cups!](#)
- **TODDLER HACK:** What toddlers need to recall at the end of the day is that they had fun spending time with you at church ... more than the details of the Bible story or Big Idea. Focus on getting to know them, playing with them, and meeting their needs over teaching the material!
- **Where in the world have you visited?**
- **Where do you want to go or learn more about?**

ACTIVITY | Circle Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Pass around a customizable snow globe (choose from [classic globes](#), [mason jar kits](#), and [plastic kits](#)). Each week, you can insert a picture of anything you’d like—a small toy, a laminated photo of one of the kids in your ministry, a photo of you or one of your volunteers as a preschooler, or even hand-drawn pictures of your kids made! Invite kids to shake the globe each time it’s passed to them. After it’s passed around the circle once, ask one of the questions and invite the kids to call out their responses.
- **Who was the family member Mary went to visit?** Elizabeth.
- **What did the baby in Elizabeth’s belly do when Mary came over?** He jumped for joy!
- **How did Mary show her joy about her special baby from God?** She sang a song.
- **When you feel joy, what do you do to show it?**
- **Who does Jesus bring joy to?** The whole world!
- Let’s say our Big Idea together: **Jesus brings joy to the world.**

ACTIVITY | Joy Tree Ornament

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Each week, invite the kids to create a paper ornament to represent what they learned. The kids will create their joy tree ornament using the provided [ornament template](#), a hole puncher, and ribbon or twine. You may choose to have leaders write the Big Idea on the ornament for them. This week, provide smiley face stickers or have kids draw happy faces all over their ornament in various colors. Have kids write their names on the back and hang it up on a tree in your space (it can be a tree outline with green tape on a wall), or take it home. Consider printing on cardstock or laminating their finished work to make them last longer.
- This ornament can hang on a tree—or anywhere we want—to help us remember our Big Idea: **Jesus brings joy to the world.**

MEMORY VERSE | Luke 1:46–47 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Help kids learn this month's memory verse by setting the words (and the Scripture reference) to the tune of "We Wish You A Merry Christmas." You can also have kids repeat the verse after you in small chunks, say them using silly voices, or create simple hand motions for keywords.
- **"My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior."**

PLAY TIME**ACTIVITY | Coloring Page**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Print and distribute [the coloring page](#) along with crayons or markers. You can review today's Bible story, Big Idea, and memory verse as the kids color.

ACTIVITY | Joy Delivery

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Provide [postal service](#) dress-up items and props, such as small cardboard boxes and sealed envelopes. Have kids pretend to "deliver" packages to different parts of the room.

ACTIVITY | From The Joy Box

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Each week, provide a box of different toys kids can play with. You can guide them to use the toys to build something they remember or reenact parts of the Bible story. This week, provide baby dolls and baby toys kids can play with to connect with baby John and baby Jesus.