

**WEEK 2:** Waiting – the Joy of Mary**Date:** Dec. 20, 2020**Scripture:** Luke 1:39-56 – Mary’s song of joy declaring God’s faithfulness to her and God’s people.**Bottom Line:** Joy is not the same as happiness, which is fleeting and tied to our circumstances. Rather, joy is a deeply rooted contentment and pleasure in what is eternal and transcendent – the love of God and the identity that we receive because of his love.**Video:** <https://youtu.be/be22D97X6tg>

Preparation: Mom and/or dad, take time to prepare well for this spiritual experience with your son or daughter and perhaps their friends. Proper preparation includes reading through this guide, setting up a comfortable environment, preparing the videos, materials (*everyone will need a Bible, pen and notebook/journal*) and snacks, and prayer. It also includes giving your participants time to prepare as well. Let them know in advance what you want to do and then remind them a few minutes before your start time so that they are ready too.

Interactive game / activity

Christmas Movie Trivia: Using this [Google Slides show](#), see who can answer the most of these trivial questions from popular Christmas movies. Good luck!

Activity Debrief: (This would be a good time to pass out snacks)

- What is your favorite Christmas movie? Which Christmas movie do you wish was never made?

Video Teaching: Waiting with Joy – Mary

“Today we finish our Advent series with the virtue of Joy. We’re going to look at Mary, the mother of Jesus to learn today’s lesson. Before we do, let’s talk about Joy. What is joy and where do you find the most joy in life?”

Play the video [HERE](#)

Ice Breaker:

- When you were a kid (think like 5), what did you enjoy MOST about Christmas?
- What types of things do you imagine mom and dad enjoyed most about Christmas when they were your age?

Discussion Starters:

- What do you imagine it was like to be Mary? How do you think she felt about the angel's message to her and the great responsibility that God was placing upon her?
- There's a beautiful Christmas song that most of us know called, "[Mary did you Know?](#)" It invites us to imagine what it was like for Mary to raise Jesus, the Son of God. What do you imagine it was like to raise Jesus? *(If you want and have time, click the song to watch the music video.)*

Scripture: Read Psalm 95:1-7 together as a group and see what parallels you can make between Mary's song and this Psalm of praise from David, Jesus' great(x14) grandfather. As you listen to Psalm 95, think about the things in Mary's song that were highlighted in today's lesson.

Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

² Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.

³ For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods.

⁴ In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him.

⁵ The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.

⁶ Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;

⁷ for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

Digging Deeper:

- Where do you see "transcendence," "right relationship with God," and "transformation" in this Psalm?
- Mary and David's joy come from recognizing the great things that God has done in the past and the things he promises to do in the future. What great things has God done in your past that bring you great joy?
- When our joy is rooted in the transcendent character of our good and sovereign creator and his eternal promises, we can have joy even in trials. Where or when have you experienced joy even in the middle of a difficult or trying time?
- Joy comes from focusing on the good and eternal character of God. When you think about the character of God, what types of things come to mind? What are some of God's attributes or names that bring you joy?

Application:

- What can you do this Christmas season to better experience or express joy?
- How can share joy with others this Christmas? (Think about where joy comes from again.)
- If you struggle to experience joy, what changes could you make this week to experience it?

Closing activity & prayer: choose 1 of the following options to close your time together.

SINGING:

- Together sing “[Joy to the World](https://youtu.be/kzqsa6wTzLE)” by For King & Country (<https://youtu.be/kzqsa6wTzLE>)
- Or sing “[JOY](https://youtu.be/E-r7ogDaaEQ),” also by For King & Country (<https://youtu.be/E-r7ogDaaEQ>)

JOURNALING:

Take time to reflect on the ways that God has shown up in the past and thank him for his faithfulness and the miracle of his presence in your life. Use your journal to create a gratitude list and then pray to thank him for his goodness and faithfulness.

SCRIPTURE: Read, reflect on, and/or memorize Romans 15:4.

“For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.”

PRAYING: Close your group time in prayers for one another this Christmas.

- Pray for those in your small group. (take prayer requests)
- Pray for those in your families.
- Pray for the world around us this Christmas – especially in light of COVID and isolation.
- Pray for JOY!