

# JOY

## Psalm 100 (a paraphrase)

**Shout with joy to the Lord; everybody, everywhere!**

**Bring laughter as your worship to him,**

**Sing happy songs before him.**

**Get your head around that the Lord is God; he made us, we belong to him, he cares for us like farmers care for their flocks and herds.**

**Come before God with “Thank you!” on your lips; come close to him with celebration.**

**Yes! Sing thank-you songs and praise songs to God.**

**Because the Lord is all good, his love never fails, it goes on forever, he is faithful to you, and to your children, and to your children’s children as well. Forever.**

## Over to you!

Use a coloured pen to circle any words in this psalm that make you think of Joy.

Use a different coloured pen to underline all the *reasons* listed for being happy.

The writer of this psalm says to shout, laugh and sing to express Joy. How do you show that you’re happy?



## Over to you!

What does Joy usually feel like in your body?



I might make you feel all bubbly inside, give you a shot of energy and you might find that you can't help but smile.

I'm the feeling you get when you've reached a goal too, whether it's learning to write, cleaning the house or organising a meet-up with a friend - doesn't it feel good?

When I'm too small in your life, you end up feeling stressed and tense and it's harder to be a good friend.

I help you celebrate all the good things in life! My job is to help you relax and also bond with other people - I know you just love having a laugh with your friends, don't you?

### The Pursuit of Happiness

Everybody wants to be happy and many people state “happiness” as the goal of their lives. But we can't pursue happiness itself, we can only pursue what makes us happy. We all know people who pursue money or power, believing it will make them happy, only to end up with an empty life. There are some universal pursuits that are known to increase joy, like meaningful tasks, good relationships and creative expression. Ultimately, as Christians, we can see how these things fit in with following Jesus, and how pursuing God and his purposes for the world is the true source of joy (see Matt 6:28-34). How can you pursue God today?

**Grown-up tips**



# Jesus is Happy (retelling of Luke 10:1-24)

There were crowds of happy people around Jesus wherever he went. Just imagine the joy of all those people being healed! Imagine not being able to walk (in a time before wheelchairs or cars), and then suddenly your legs being made well again. How would you react?

Another clue to Jesus being a smiley, happy person is how many times we read about him hanging out with children (for example, Matt 18:2, Mark 10:13 and Luke 9:47): Have you ever met a small child who likes being with someone grumpy or angry?

For a while Jesus had been teaching and training his friends in how to share the happy news he had come to bring. One day he decided that they knew enough. He rounded up seventy-two of them and told them to spread out to different villages to tell everybody about him.

How did Jesus spend his time waiting for them to come back? We don't know - perhaps he had a nap, because he was buzzing with energy when they eventually returned!

We are told that the seventy-two friends came back elated and happy.

*"Lord," they exclaimed, "When we used your name, even the evil spirits obeyed us and stopped hurting people!" They were ecstatic, and Jesus looked at them proudly and lovingly.*

*"Evil doesn't stand a chance!" he replied, "I've given you power, stronger than the enemy's. But that's nothing; the real joy is that God has signed you up for an eternity with him."*

Then Jesus laughed, filled up to the brim with happiness in the Holy Spirit, and he prayed a celebration prayer:

*"I praise you, Father, ruler of heaven and earth, that you've hidden these things from those who think themselves so clever, but showed them to those who are childlike and innocent! Yes, that makes you happy, Father."*

Later, when Jesus was alone with his friends he told them: *"You are such a fortunate bunch to see what you've seen. Many rulers and holy people could only dream of experiencing what you've just been through."*



## Over to you!

Underline all the words in this story that make you think of Joy.

What were Jesus and his friends so happy about?

What do you think it felt like for the disciples to come back and see Jesus so happy? Do you think that you make Jesus happy?





# Simple Joy

Sometimes if we feel like we have too little Joy, we can help ourselves surprisingly easily. Our emotions don't just live in our minds - we feel our emotions with our whole bodies.

So sometimes we can help our emotions by caring for our bodies. Looking after yourself is not selfish, God made us to need these things.



What top 5 things make you feel happy?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## JOY & CURIOSITY



Joy and Curiosity are firm friends. Often, being curious about something will bring you Joy. For example, you might be curious about whether you could climb a big rock. If you manage to keep Fear at bay and have a go at the climb, the sense of achievement will make you feel Joy.

Jesus seemed to be one of the most curious people ever: he was constantly asking questions of the people around him! That might be one reason why he was so happy.

## God's best for you

The following are some ideas for God's best for you, things that are less about fun moments, and more about things that make us feel good every day. They're so simple that they are worth trying, don't you think?

Draw a smiley face by things you already do and praying hands by the things you want to ask for God's help with:



Get enough sleep and go to bed the same time every night.



Get some exercise every day, even if it's just a short walk.



Eat lots of fruit and vegetables that spread your energy out throughout the day.



Cut down on screen-time, especially if you spend a lot of time with social media or news; much of what people put online is designed to make you outraged or upset.



Human contact: ask someone for a hug or meet up with a friend. If you can't do that even a video chat will help!



Do something creative! Try singing, dancing, knitting, building, drawing or whatever creative activity you enjoy.



Read the book "*Jesus Asked*" by Conrad Gempf to discover more about Jesus' curiosity.



JOY

&

SHAME

Sometimes, if you are really happy and excited about something, someone might tell you to “take it down a notch”, or tell you to “stop being so self-centred”. Unfortunately, Shame may then swoop in and stop you from feeling Joy, because you think you did something wrong. This may feel like a sinking feeling in your stomach, or your face might feel warm.

If this is your experience, you may need to make friends again with Joy and Excitement. Like with all other emotions, this involves making time and space for them, and trying to sense in your body what they feel like.

When something happy happens, practise saying “I’m feeling Joy right now!” If someone in the family gets embarrassed by feeling happy or excited (perhaps they feel the urge to hide), help each other out by saying “You’re feeling excited, that’s great!” If the Excitement is hurting others by being very loud, perhaps suggest other ways of celebrating, like dancing, singing a song, developing your own goal-scoring celebration, or something else.



## Celebration prayer

A lot of songs in church have very joyful words – which is your favourite praise song? God wants to hear about our happiness, just like he wants to hear about our other emotions. In the outline of the word HAPPY below, draw or doodle things about God that make you feel happy, but also all the little things of the life he has given you that bring you Joy too.

HAPPY