

Finding the Joy in the Curriculum - Resources

EXAMPLES

How to Sequence the Lessons

Example One: January - Agency and Activism (MLK observance)

February - Sexuality (Valentine's day)

March - Joy in Everyday Life (Lent starts during this month so maybe helping them turn to God daily during Lent as a practice)

April - Purpose (Easter month so relate to Jesus' sacrifice and full purpose in that salvation)

May - Anxiety (For those taking finals and those going off to college it's an anxious time)

June - Sabbath (Rest over the summer)

July - Beauty (Notice Beauty over the summer on trips)

August - Idolatry and Social Media (Students are often on social media a lot over the summer. It would be good to talk about it before school starts.)

September - Hospitality and Belonging (As school starts how to welcome and feel like they belong).

October - Kenosis and Confession (Relates to service in the world, could connect well with "Christmas in October," our service-related church wide project).

November - Gratitude (Thanksgiving month)

December - Friendship (Close to friends during Christmas season, and maybe emphasize being friends with your family too (instead of fighting lol!))

Example Two: We have a monthly mission focus planned for Sunday School wherein we bring in a speaker during the SS hour and couple it with mission activity in the youth group, so we chose the order of the material to connect with the mission themes we planned. Since we only have about 50 minutes of time during the Sunday School "hour" each week, we are spending 2 or 3 weeks on each topic for the spring. We will not keep to the curriculum during summer since we change our pattern of Sunday School, but we will continue to talk about these themes on our mission trips. We will return our attention to the Joy curriculum in our planning for fall.

20-Jan	Tuning-In to Joy: Discovering Joy in Real Life
27-Jan	Tuning-In to Joy: Discovering Joy in Real Life
03-Feb	<i>Annual Church Meeting – No Sunday School</i>
10-Feb	The Joy of Christian Friendship: Engaging Friends for Friends' Sake
17-Feb	<i>Mission Sunday – Food and Security</i>
24-Feb	The Joy of Christian Friendship: Engaging Friends for Friends' Sake
03-Mar	Reprogramming Our Use of Digital Platforms: Finding Rest Outside Ourselves
10-Mar	Reprogramming Our Use of Digital Platforms: Finding Rest Outside Ourselves

17-Mar	<i>Mission Sunday – Environmental and Social Justice</i>
24-Mar	My Own Two Hands: Joy, Faith & Action
31-Mar	My Own Two Hands: Joy, Faith & Action
07-Apr	My Own Two Hands: Joy, Faith & Action
14-Apr	Give Thanks: Building Space for Gratitude
21-Apr	<i>EASTER – No Sunday School</i>
28-Apr	<i>Mission Sunday – Refugee Center</i>
05-May	Give Thanks: Building Space for Gratitude
12-May	Give Thanks: Building Space for Gratitude
19-May	<i>Closing Sunday</i>

Introducing the Joy Project to the Congregation

Example One (written for the church newsletter by the youth minister):

"I want to take a minute to speak to you all about the topic of Joy. Beginning January 20, our Sr. High Youth will be embarking on a new Sunday School Curriculum, called The Joy Project. So, what is Joy? Is it a venti cup of happiness? I'd say joy is deeper than happiness. Joy has been described to me as a deep inner sense of well-being and delighting in God and the world around us and enjoying God's delight in us and all of creation.

In this culture that we live in, where we are marked by standards, goals, success, and expectations, and it's easy to get lost in all of that. But joy is an end, a goal, a success all in itself.

John Lennon once said, "When I was 5 years old, my mother told me that happiness was the key to life. When I went to school, they asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I wrote down 'happy'. They told me I didn't understand the assignment, and I told them they didn't understand life." What if we replaced "happy" with "joy," would this statement then give us a glimpse of God's desire for us?

The Joy Project is designed to find joy and bring the love of Christ to issues that we all experience at some point in our lives; anxiety, self-image, community, and many many more, through self-reflection, conversation, and activities. So, Sr High, please join us in our exploration of joy starting on the 20th, at 10AM in the Loft.

God finds joy in us all, just as we are! You're already who you need to be, God already loves you! Go out and spread a little joy in this world!"

Example Two (written for the church newsletter by the youth minister):

My grandmother's name was Joy Demarest... She taught me all about her namesake, Joy. She was always so filled with it. She had a deep relationship with God, a deep love of her family, cooking, and her community of friends around her. She would always tell me she wasn't about the pursuit of happiness, rather the pursuit of joyfulness, because it's deeper. As a kid... I didn't really get it... to me, Joy and Happy were the same word, just one was quicker to spell. It didn't click until recently when someone described to me a new definition of Joy, "to delight in God and enjoy God's delight in us" Joy comes

from communion with God, communion with nature, and communion with each other, our brothers and sisters. And having that thread of Joyful love from your community, and knowing of God's deep love for you, is healing. I believe it is so important for all of us to have a safe joyful space where we can go to break bread, to bring it all to the table without fear of judgement, to have a joyful ear to listen, and to walk away knowing, feeling, and thinking, "I am loved".