



24-7 SPACES

THE VISION IS JESUS

WEEK THREE:

THE JOY OF JESUS

USE THIS DEEPER GUIDE ALONE,
WITH FAMILY OR FRIENDS OR YOUR CHURCH
SMALL GROUP



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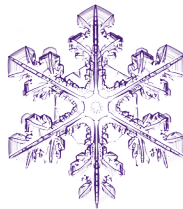


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MATERIALS NEEDED

- A Bible





REFLECT:

The following Bible verses, quote and song are related to this week's theme: The Joy of Jesus. As you read them consider what they say about to us about joy.



Read: Isaiah 9:3, Luke 2:28-32, Luke 1:46-56, Zephaniah 3:17, John 15:10-11, Luke 10:21



Read: The following extracts from C.S Lewis' book 'Surprised by Joy', the story of his conversion. He recounts the accidental discovery of and his subsequent search for 'joy', recalling 'stabs of joy' throughout his life.

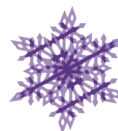
"A young man who wishes to remain a sound Atheist cannot be too careful of his reading. There are traps everywhere -- 'Bibles laid open, millions of surprises,' as Herbert says, 'fine nets and stratagems.' God is, if I may say it, very unscrupulous."



"You must picture me alone in that room in Magdalen, night after night, feeling, whenever my mind lifted even for a second from my work, the steady, unrelenting approach of Him whom I so earnestly desired not to meet. That which I greatly feared had at last come upon me. In the Trinity Term of 1929 I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed: perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England."



Read: "Joy is prayer - Joy is strength - Joy is love - Joy is a net of love by which you can catch souls. God loves a cheerful giver. She gives most who gives with joy. The best way to show our gratitude to God and the people is to accept everything with joy. A joyful heart is the inevitable result of a heart burning with love. Never let anything so fill you with sorrow as to make you forget the joy of the Christ risen" (**Mother Teresa**)



REACT:

(1) The Christmas story is full of music and song, for example Mary's song (Luke 1:46-56). The power of music evokes strong emotions. Think of a piece of music that evokes 'joy' in you?

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(2) Read the extracts from C.S Lewis' 'Surprised by joy'. Recount where you have felt 'stabs of joy' in your life? Where have you experienced the 'unrelenting approach' of God? Where is Christ surprising you with joy today?.....

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(3) Read Mary's song (Luke 1:46-56) 'The Magnificat' - reflect on how the world is tilted toward the rich and powerful; whereas God is tilted towards the underdog. His bias is towards the poor. How can we live with a bias towards the poor? Think of those in your neighbourhood who are excluded or on the margins, what does God's mercy look like for them today?.....

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(4) Consider Simeon's song and his Joy when encountering Christ - what does it mean for you to encounter Christ today? Christmas is a manifestation of Christ to the world. Reflect on what it means for the world to encounter Christ that Christ be born to the world?

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RESPOND:

Personal

This week, choose to live in the Joy of Christ. When circumstance or people make you unhappy, remember the joy Christ brought when he came to earth. Reflect on Mary's song, the joy 'that the mighty one has done great things' for her. Reflect over the last year, where has God been at work? Take some time to thank God for the way He has been at work in your life. Write a song or liturgy reflecting joy; use it throughout this Christmas season.

Practical

Spread a little joy this Christmas, try a random act of kindness to bring someone joy! You could buy a hot chocolate for someone who looks cold or buy a Christmas present for a stranger. Share some Christmas food with a homeless person and give them a Christmas gift. On a frosty morning scrape the frost off of someone else's windscreen or clear their pathway. Leave some food on the doorstep of someone in need or next to a sleeping homeless person.

Prayerful

Take a walk around your neighbourhood. Pray for those you can see, pray that they would encounter Christ's joy this Christmas. Ask God how he wants you to be the prayer and respond. Use the following liturgy based on Mary's Magnificat from 'The Liturgy of the Hours'.



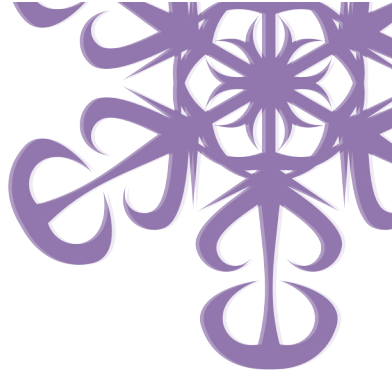
*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.*

*He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.*

*He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.*

*He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children for ever.*





NEXT WEEK...

“THE LOVE OF JESUS”



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