

EXPERIENCE CHRISTMAS JOY

ABOUT THIS WEEK

Everyone seems to seek joy at Christmas but it seems very elusive do to the stress and distractions of the season. When we fully experience Christmas we truly experience joy!

ITEMS NEEDED

- Prayer Journal
- Bibles

CHECKLIST BEFORE YOUR GROUP ARRIVES

- Pray for the meeting
- Print & Read Discussion Guide
- Clean meeting room
- Clean bathroom
- Refreshments (Optional)
- Front door cracked open

OPENING (5-7 MIN)

Briefly welcome everyone and say: As the Christmas season begins to pick up speed we make preparations to experience the day. To get started today, let's go around and answer:

WHAT CHRISTMAS TRADITION GIVES YOU THE MOST JOY? WHY?

Say: Today we will be talking about how to truly experience Christmas is to experience joy!

OPENING PRAYER (1 MIN)

Say: But first, can someone start us off with a brief prayer for our time together?

BACKGROUND (10-15 MIN)

After the prayer say: Different things may bring happiness to people at this time of year, but the real joy of the season is sometimes difficult to find. In the Bible we see the joy that the baby that will be born in Bethlehem brings even before his birth.

Say: What is the difference between joy and happiness?

Allow time for discussion which may begin slowly.

Say: Joy and happiness are two different emotions that are somewhat similar but are actually very different. Joy is attributed to something very consistent and internal, while happiness tends to be triggered externally.

USING THIS DEFINITION, WHAT IS SOMETHING THAT MAKES YOU HAPPY? WHAT IS SOMETHING THAT GIVES YOU JOY?

LOOK INTO THE BIBLE (7-10 MIN)

Say: Let's take a look at a portion of the Bible that talks about joy.

WOULD SOMEONE READ LUKE 1:41-45 FOR US.

WHO EXPERIENCES JOY IN THESE VERSES?

We're looking for the response Elizabeth's baby, John the Baptist (v. 44)

WHAT CAUSES THE JOY?

CHRISTMAS JOY (15-20 MIN)

Say: Our worship theme this week was "Experience Christmas Joy."

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THAT MIGHT KEEP YOU FROM EXPERIENCING JOY AT CHRISTMAS?

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE: HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIENCED A CHRISTMAS WITHOUT JOY? NOTE: This is very personal and no one may respond. Allow some time for the group to think through this question.

WHAT WILL YOU DO TO EXPERIENCE CHRISTMAS JOY THIS YEAR?

**IS THERE SOMEONE WHOM YOU CAN HELP TO EXPERIENCE JOY THIS CHRISTMAS?
WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP THEM EXPERIENCE TRUE CHRISTMAS JOY?**

ANNOUNCEMENTS (2 MIN)

Say: There are a pair of announcements to share today:

DECEMBER PRAYER SERVICE WILL BE THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7. NOTE IT IS ON A THURSDAY AND NOT A WEDNESDAY.

DECEMBER 24 & 31 THERE WILL BE NO KIDS MINISTRY. KIDS MINISTRY WILL RESUME ON JANUARY 7.

CLOSING PRAYER (5-7 MIN)

Say: Are there any prayer requests today. [Please write them in your group prayer journal.]

If you would like to share anything in your life that may interfere with your experience of Christmas joy or someone that you would like to experience Christmas joy we will include those as we pray around our circle. I'll start the prayer and we will go to my left. I will also finish the prayer with the other specific prayer requests.