

Explore It

FOR LEADERS

SESSION
04

HOPE IN JESUS BRINGS ME JOY

📖 Luke 24:36-53: Jesus appears to his disciples and the ascension of Jesus

Please refer to the Introduction document for more details

Start it

Explain to the group that you are going to play a game of sausages.

Choose one of the group to be 'on'. Whatever they are asked they can only answer by saying the word 'sausages'. Group members take it in turns to fire questions at the person until they laugh or smile and are out.

At the end of this game you can comment on the amount of laughter/smiles and when you saw people smile it made you smile too.

🗨 **Say:** Over the past few weeks, we have been thinking about different ways that we can find hope in Jesus. This week is our final one on about hope and we are thinking about how our hope in Jesus brings us joy.

Hold up a different pieces of paper with some words or pictures on and everyone has to decide whether that thing/activity would bring them joy, for example: swimming in the sea, eating chocolate, sleeping all day, going back to school, seeing everyone at Church, having an ice cream, reading a book, dancing in the rain. (You can add more of your own).

To make this interactive you could ask the children to stand up and wave their arms if it is something they enjoy; crouch if it's 'okay'; and lay down if it is definitely something that isn't joyful to them. (If the positioning of their camera wouldn't allow for this much movement, you could use thumbs up and thumbs down instead.)

Share your screen and watch this very short video - just for fun.

Inside Out - Meet Joy (24 seconds)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=96et9N2_NWE

Ask group members what they think joy is and allow for a short time of discussion.

🗨 **Say:** Joy is a real deep feeling of happiness, from the 'inside out'! We can find and experience joy even in difficult times, as joy is not dependent on what is going on around us, but on our faith in Jesus and his love for us. Joy is being happy inside even when things aren't going great. We can try to be joyful but only God can give us the kind of happiness that makes us joyful, we can't just be joyful on our own. When we hope in Jesus and the promises he has made, joy will fill us.

Sing It

Sing 'My Hope Is in The Lord' together. Remind the group that this song is about our hope in God who provides for what he knows we need. It has been used in the last few weeks so hopefully the children will be able to join in and sing it really well.

Lyrics version - <https://youtu.be/T0hxlgV2tgI>

Lyrics and actions - <https://youtu.be/tJePCzTaQo4>

Tell It

- **Say:** Today's story is about some of the things that happened after Jesus came back to life. Does anyone know what the word 'ascension' means? It means 'going up'.

Ascension - the most amazing lift off ever! No rocket, no engine, no explosion! Jesus was lifted off from earth to heaven. It was 40 days since Easter morning and Jesus had appeared to his friends at many different times and places: on a road, in a room, one to one, to a crowd of 500 and by a lake. He really was alive! But gradually they began to realise that it was time to say goodbye again. I wonder how they felt or what they might have said. Let's read the story together from the Bible.

Share screen: Display Luke 24:36-53 and, if the children are old enough, ask them to take it in turns to read a part of the passage aloud. Then summarise the main points of the story:

- ➔ When Jesus was ready to return to heaven, he appeared to his disciples in Jerusalem.
- ➔ At first they were frightened, they thought he was a ghost. But Jesus told them to look at his hands and feet to show he was real.
- ➔ Jesus ate a meal with them as he made sure they understood everything that had happened to him. He explained why it was important for him to be crucified and to be raised from the dead, to fulfil what the Scriptures had said about him.
- ➔ He also told them he was going to return to his Father in heaven, and that the Holy Spirit would come and be with them.
- ➔ Then Jesus led the disciples to Bethany where an amazing thing happened. The Bible tells us that Jesus lifted his hands and blessed his disciples. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.

- **Say:** I don't know how all of this looked, but in my imagination, I can see the disciples standing and watching as Jesus ascended higher and higher until he disappeared from view.

Were the disciples sad? No way! The Bible tells us that when Jesus had ascended into heaven, the disciples worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with GREAT JOY.

Ask the children to all pull a face that they think the disciples may have looked like in each of these scenarios.

Various moods or poses:

- ➔ Jesus back from the dead - Excited
- ➔ Jesus said he had to leave them soon - Sad
- ➔ Jesus said he would be back with power for them - Puzzled
- ➔ Jesus disappears from their sight - Shocked
- ➔ Jesus to return one day - Great Joy

Share screen: Share the whiteboard and ask each child to each draw a face to show the expression of joy that the disciples would have felt as they were full of the hope that Jesus would return one day.

Action It

- **Say:** Have you made a rainbow and placed it in your window? Across the country lots of people have done this as it was not only fun but helped people to spread joy at this difficult time, to bring a smile to people's faces, to bring encouragement and brighten up their little corner of the world. Some news headlines even said 'children put rainbows in window to spread joy'.

- **Ask:** What can you do this week that is safe, that will bring joy to you or others?

Ask each group member in turn to share an idea.

Here are some ideas that you could add to those of your group:

- Go outside - ride your bike, have a walk. Say hello, smile and / or wave at people you meet (from a safe distance!)
 - Play! Choose a game that one of your sibling's enjoys and play it with them.
 - Take time to contact your friends.
 - Leave a note each day somewhere in your house that will make someone else smile.
 - Read a book that is about joy, like Mr Happy or Pollyanna. (See the Explore It sheet to find out where you can get these for free.)
 - Write a happy message on a balloon and bat it around with a member of your family.
 - Tell a joke and make someone smile.
 - Paint some colourful stones with happy messages and leave them outside when you go for a walk to brighten up someone else's walk too!
- 💡 **Say:** Joy positively affects our mood as well as our health. And did you know, scientists have proven that people who know how to experience joy and are doing it live longer and happier lives. One way of experiencing joy is by being thankful. Another word for being thankful is gratitude. Being joyful and thankful are characteristics of the life of Christians, this is how God wants us to live.

Ask each person to write down or draw on a piece of paper as many things as they can think of that they are thankful/grateful for. For example, a cosy warm bed, a loving mum and dad, a hot meal every day, some great toys to play with, that the sun is shining, their pet dog, being able to chat with their friends. Ask the children to share their lists with the group. Maybe you could collate one huge list and see how many things you can come up with together! (Or you could do this activity on the whiteboard.)

Pray It

- 💡 **Say:** In the last few weeks the whole county has been clapping at the same time, giving thanks to our key workers who are keeping the nation running, especially those carers working in the NHS and in social care settings. Together, let's give God a rousing round of applause and a gift of laughter as we thank him for his love and care, and ask him to fill us, key workers, our family and friends with joy even in this difficult season.

Encourage your group to clap, or bang things together, to make a joyful noise in praise and thanks to God! Keep it going for at least one minute!

Encourage the group to write down three things that they are grateful for every night before they go to bed this week and to pray a prayer of thanks to God for those things. This is guaranteed to make you feel more joyful!

Explore It

Remember to share the Explore It (For Me) and Explore It (Together) ideas for children and families.

Explore It FOR ME

SESSION
04

HOPE IN JESUS BRINGS ME JOY

 **Luke 24:36-53: Jesus appears to his disciples**

Here are some ideas and activities you could do on your own



Write

Spread the joy tags - Cut the shape of a door tag out of paper or card. Decorate the tag e.g. write the words 'May your day be filled with sunshine' or 'Hope in Jesus brings joy' and then go hang it on a neighbour's door for them to see when they next go out.



Sense

Bubbles in the garden - Make some bubble liquid: To do this mix very gently one cup of washing-up liquid with nine cups of water. (A tip: if you happen to have glycerin in the house, add one tablespoon to the mixture and it will stop the bubbles popping so fast.) Now to make the gadget: Take some string or wool, and a drinking straw. Cut the straw in half and thread the wool or string through both halves, one after the other, until you make a kind of square/circle thing. Tie the ends of the wool together and pick it up by one of the straws. The bottom straw should hang down, pulling the wool into a square/circle shape. Dip all of this in the bowl of bubble mix. Enjoy watching the bubbles of joy float up into the sky. Can you shout out some of the things you are grateful for as the bubbles disappear!?



Read

Read a book that brings you joy, or you can read one of these
Mr Happy - Books Read Aloud for kids (by Roger Hargreaves) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RTqZ9OCR0Ok>
Pollyanna - a story about an orphan who spreads joy wherever she goes. <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/search/?query=pollyanna>



Create

Joy Jar - Write something down on a piece of paper every day that has made you feel joyful. Place it in the jar. At the end of having to stay at home, you can open the jar and read all the positive things that made you happy.



Draw

Like Jesus going up to heaven, so do balloons go up. With permission - why not go outside and with some chalk draw a large balloon. Write some words from today's lesson inside e.g. Jesus, Heaven, Ascension, Holy Spirit, Power. Or write words to show joy to people and make them smile.



Share

Random act of kindness - Why not do something special this week for someone in your house.

KIDS ALIVE ONLINE

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive>

Kids Alive! The UK's only weekly Christian comic - is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!



Explore It TOGETHER

SESSION
04

HOPE IN JESUS BRINGS ME JOY

 **Luke 24:36-53: Jesus appears to his disciples**

Here are some ideas and activities you could do as a family



Create

Make an Ascension Day rocket out of rubbish or things you have around your house and garden.

Make a parachute with a handkerchief or plastic bag and string with a weight on. As you throw it up, think of Jesus' ascension to heaven. As it comes back down - and as you smile that it works - think of the joy of Jesus returning one day.



Share

Make up a small bag for a neighbour or friend, full of little things that will make them smile and feel joyful.

Create some rainbows to fill your windows, spreading joy to all those who walk past your house. If you are colouring in, each member of your family could be responsible for a different colour. Or chalk a big rainbow on the pavement outside of your house.



Hear

Find a piece of music your family enjoy listening to and listen to together. Talk about why you like it.



Play

Create a grid of the days of the month on, then as a family choose a game you will play together on each of the days. Make sure everyone gets a choice so everyone can enjoy at least one of their games that brings them joy.



Pray

Go on an early morning walk together and see what joy God's creation brings you. Thank God for the beautiful flowers you may see, the green grass, the waking sky, the animals you hear, the sun as it starts to shine. Thank God for each of his amazing creations that bring so many people joy.



Bake

Make some cookies and decorate with a balloon design on top (signifying balloons go up).