

The Joy of Christmas

Theme

Joy is found in sharing

Object

A wrapped Christmas gift

Scripture

Luke 3:7-18

Look at this beautiful Christmas gift. (Pass the gift around.) Are there gifts under the tree at your house? Have you looked to see how many of the gifts have your name on them? (Pause for responses.)

There's a story about a young boy who checked the presents under the tree every day. He loved looking through them, arranging them, and counting them. One day, he discovered that his sister had more gifts than he did. He ran to his mother very upset.

"Katie has more presents under the Christmas tree than I do!" he cried.

His mom explained that getting gifts under the tree isn't what Christmas is really all about because Jesus is our greatest gift.

- Have you ever felt the way this boy did? Explain.
- How did that experience affect your joy in that moment?

Christmas should be a time of joy. Today, we'll learn our true joy is in Jesus' birth, not the presents we get. In fact, God tells us that giving is even better than receiving.

In the Bible, John the Baptist was sent to prepare people for the coming of Jesus. He told them to repent of their sins and prepare their hearts for the coming of our Savior.

"What should we do?" they asked.

John replied, "If you have two coats, give one of them to the one who has none. If you have food, share it with those who have none."

This message is for us, too. If we want to experience the real joy that Jesus wants for us, then we must learn to share. By sharing what God has so generously given to us, we will receive an even greater gift -- the gift of joy.

- What is one way you can give others joy during Christmas?

Dear God, help us to learn that it is through remembering Jesus' birth and giving to others that we receive true joy at Christmas. In Jesus' name, amen.

Interactive Group Activities
by Carol Williams & Charles Kirkpatrick

Sermon Title: "The Joy of Christmas"

Scripture Reading: Luke 3:7-18

CHRISTMAS MUSIC FREEZE: To prepare the children for class, the teacher can play some Christmas music while children hop, run, or skip, etc, in a designated place. When the music stops and the teacher shouts... FREEZE, the children will stop immediately and FREEZE in whatever motion they were doing. Then the music can begin to play again and play as time allows to FREEZE!

PIN THE MANGER ON THE STABLE: This is played like PIN THE TAIL ON THE DONKEY, except that the teacher will draw a stable on a piece of poster board and will glue some straw to the bottom will include other characters from our Christmas story except for the baby Jesus and the manger. The children will put on a blindfold and try to pin a picture of the manger inside the stable.

THINKING OF SOMETHING: The children will sit in a circle and take turns saying, "I'm thinking of _____" and mention clues about a character or a part of our Christmas story, that the other children can try to guess. For example: "I'm thinking of who the angels told that Jesus was going to be born." Or they might say, "I'm thinking of what baby Jesus was wrapped in when he was born."

CHRISTMAS MEMORY GAME: The teacher will place items on a tray that will remind the children of parts of the Christmas story. (angel, star, sheep, star, donkey, shepherd, etc. The children can have 2 minutes to memorize all of the items on the tray and then the tray will be removed. The children can write the items or draw pictures of the items that they REMEMBER where on the tray. The teacher might want to let the children tell what each item reminds them of for the Christmas story, as well, if time allows.

CHRISTMAS WORD GAME: The teacher can give older children a word from our Christmas story and see how many words the children can make out of that one word, in a certain time limit. Words such as Christmas, or Manger, or Savior, etc.

CHRISTMAS SCRAMBLE: Divide the children into teams, the teacher will give each child card with a letter on it and the children on each team and will try to arrange the letters to make a word. Suggested words might be Jesus, share, shirt, baptize, water, food, or other words from our Scripture reading. For older children, each team can be given a paper bag with the letters in the bag for the teams to put the letters together and figure out the word that the teacher had wanted to spell.

BLIND MANGER GAME: Provide each child a piece of construction paper and a pencil. The teacher will give one simple direction at a time that the child will complete, in order to draw a picture without knowing what the picture will be until the teacher has completely given all the directions. The teacher could choose to give simple directions to draw a manger. (Directions could be: Draw one line down the left side of your paper, draw a line down the right side of your paper, draw two lines in the shape of a roof to connect the two lines, etc). Ask what God shared with us that was in the manger.

CHRISTMAS WRAPPINGS: Provide a shoebox for each team. The teacher can have small items that each team could pack into the shoebox to be given to a needy child. The children could also work together as a team to wrap the gift for a child. (This is part of sharing).

JOY BELLS: The children can be given some construction paper and a pattern of a bell. JOY IS FOUND IN SHARING can be written on their bells and add glitter and decorations to the bells, to be hung around the classroom.

HEART ORNAMENTS: Each child could be given a red heart to decorate and trim the edges of a heart ornament to hang on the classroom Christmas tree or to take home for the child's tree. The hearts should have words from today's lesson, such as REPENT AND PREPARE OUR HEARTS FOR JESUS' COMING, etc.

SING A SONG: JOY TO THE WORLD; AWAY IN A MANGER or any favorite Christmas song.

SHARE A SNACK: Many Christmas snacks will be on a table and each child will prepare a small candy bag with a few treats and then will sit in a circle, until everyone has finished their treat bags (but will not eat from the bag). When they are all finished and seated, the teacher will suggest to one child to SHARE treats from his bag with another child, such as, "Johnny, you can share your treats with Sally." This will continue as all the children share treats with one another to learn the gift of sharing with others.

Song: "Joy to the World"

Words and Music



MP3 Piano accompaniment Track (right click to save to your computer)

Song: "Away in a Manger"

Words and Music



MP3 Piano accompaniment Track (right click to save to your computer)

About Carol Williams

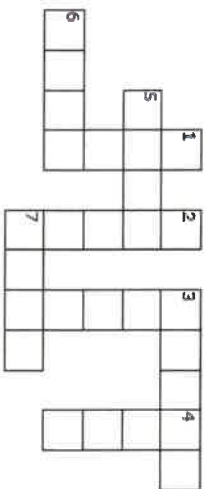
Carol and her husband have served churches in Illinois, Minnesota, Mississippi, Michigan, and Indiana. Carol loves to work with children so you will find her teaching in Junior Church and children's Sunday School. She also has clowning ministry in which she is known as Bubbles tc (the clown).

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Crossword Puzzle



- ACROSS**
1. What we eat
 2. The sweet food that grows on a tree
 3. To give part of what you have to someone else
 4. The part of a tree that grows under the ground
- DOWN**
1. An item of clothing that is worn on the upper half of the body
 5. To have very little money or possessions
 6. The opposite of bad
 7. A tall plant that has a trunk, branches, and leaves

ROOT	TREE	POOR	SHARE
FOOD	GOOD	FRUIT	SHIRT



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Children's Worship Bulletin

The Joy of Christmas

Luke 3:7-11

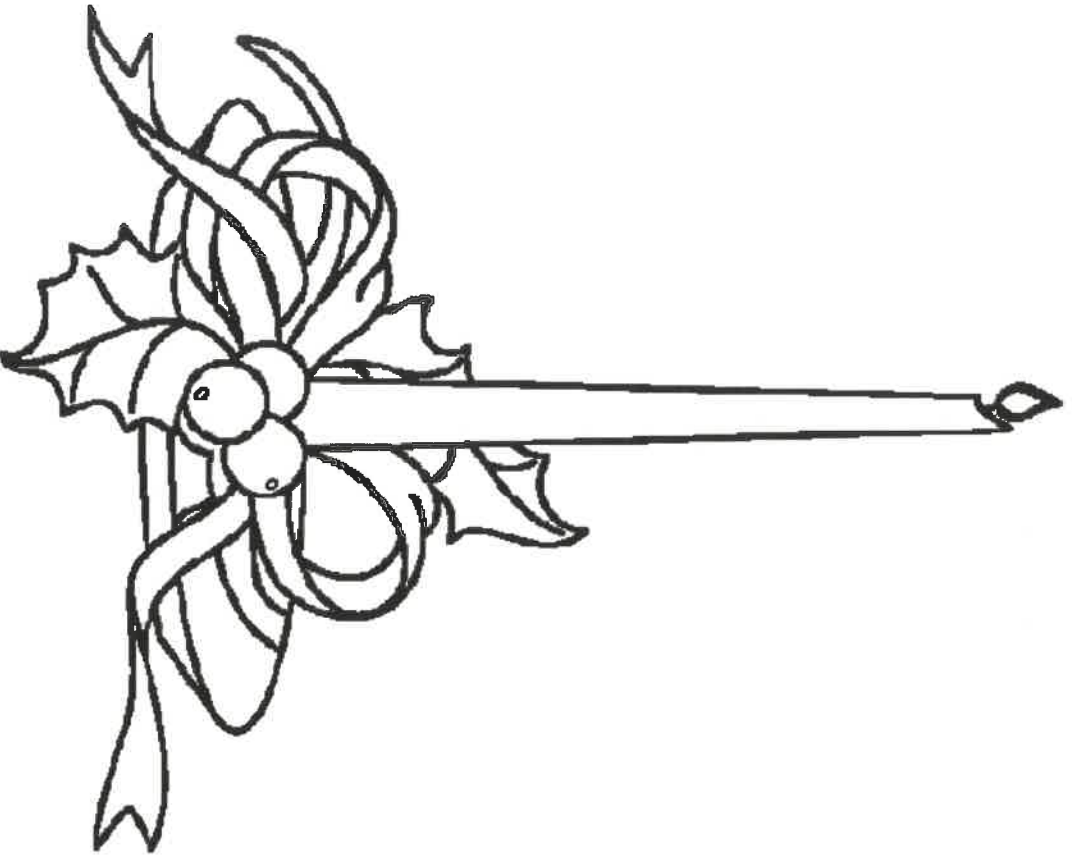
Word Search Puzzle

V H Z L G N E R T T R E E W X
 K Y P D M R Y H R L B E W T
 Q A N S H L K I H U S L B K O
 I I W T N P M X B A C N W B Y
 M C M O S D E F C R O W D U M
 R V M N L H E G Y U G V F J G
 O S O E S S F I W V O O J Z
 O H D S B R T S D X D I O M S
 T A A O E J T P Z E Z H D M V
 I R P P E R L F Z Q Z O B T O
 C E I N I C I E Y O O I D E
 R V O H W B T R B R K U T O I
 W N S Q S P I X B Z R A W K K
 W L D P A F N Y M F C T K D O
 I S R B C H I L D R E N B R M

FIRE	CROWD	TREE	FOOD	CHILDREN
ROOT	SHARE	STONES	SHIRTS	BAPTIZED
VIPERS	NONE	TWO	FRUIT	BROOD

Your Church Name Here
Anytown, Anywhere

Coloring Page



The Candle of Joy

Decoder Puzzle

Each number represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute the correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words.

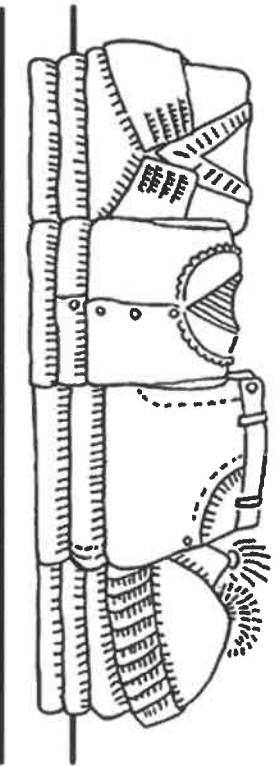
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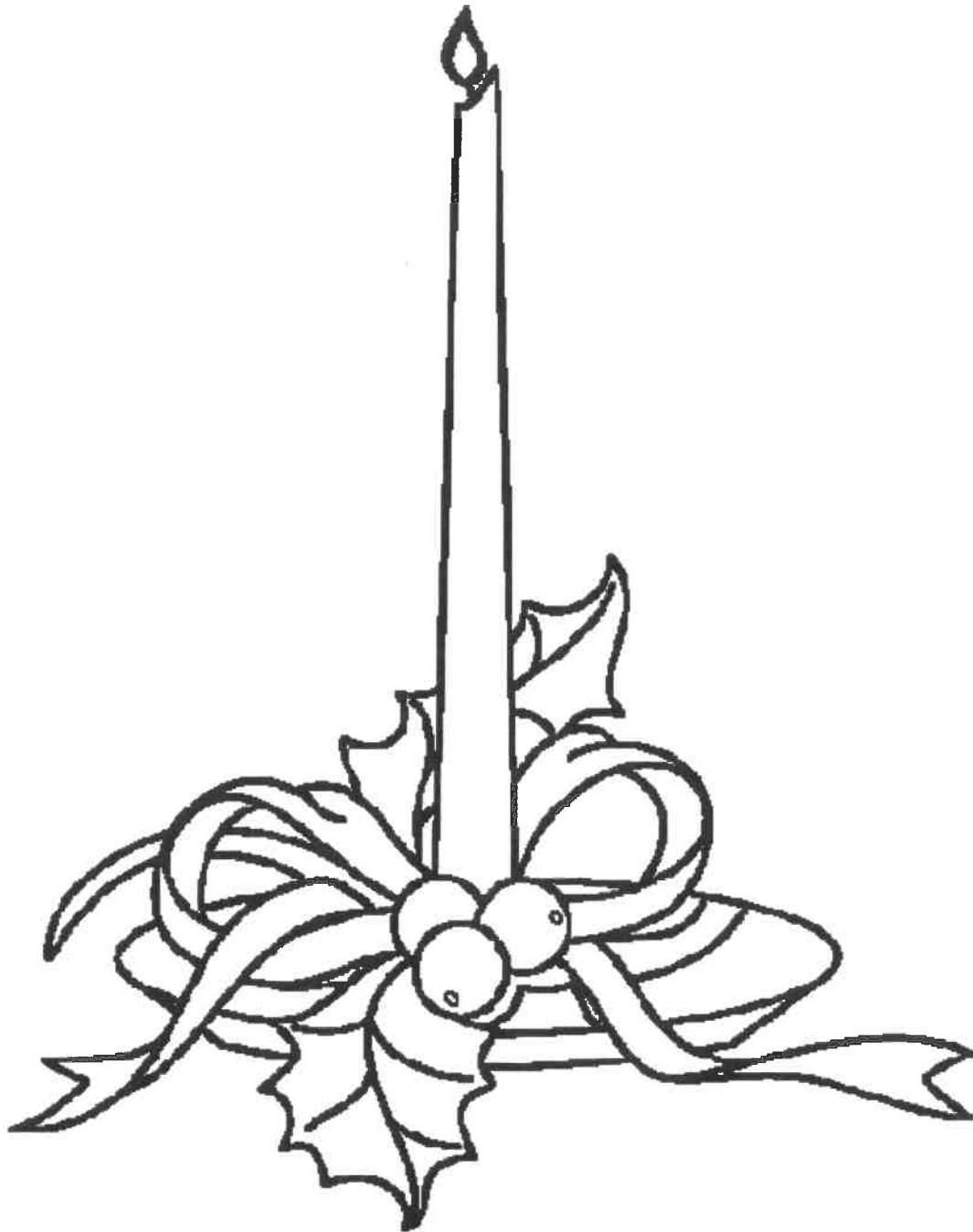
- 22-10-16-25-23 _____
- 10-21-21-23 _____
- 23-10-18-18 _____
- 23-17-21 _____
- 9-12-25-10-23-9 _____
- 9-12-20-10-18 _____
- 14-21-14-18 _____
- 22-21-21-7 _____

NONE	ROOT	FRUIT	FOOD
SHIRTS	SHARE	TWO	TREE

"If you have two shirts, give one to the poor."

Luke 3:11a (NLT)





They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Isaiah 35:10 (NIV)