

## **Joy is Worship – Psalm 150**

**Intro:** Joy is an inside happiness that makes it through to the outside – like the bubbles and fizz in a bottle of coke when you shake it up (demonstrate)

When Christians get really joyful they do so because of God, because he is so great and big and loving. We get very joyful when we think about God coming as Jesus as a baby in Bethlehem. When the joy in God bubbles up it can come out as shouting, singing, clapping, playing instruments, or even dancing. Sometimes Christians write hymns or poems.

In the Bible we have things called Psalms which are both poems and hymns. We are going to use one today to be joyful about God and what he has done for us. But before we use it lets think about how great God is:

**List on flip chart:** everything we can think of that is great about God – like the things he has made, including us, and including time. Especially his coming in Jesus

**Psalm 150 – with actions and noise!** (Words on flip chart)

**Praise the Lord!** Everyone jump up with their arms in the air, saying it loud

**Praise God in his Temple!**

**Praise his strength in heaven**

**Praise him for the mighty thins he has done**

**Praise his supreme greatness**

Everyone show off their muscles and stomp like Sumo wrestlers

**Praise him with trumpets**

**Praise him with harps and lyres**

Everyone makes trumpet and whistling sounds

**Praise him with cymbals**

**Praise him with loud cymbals**

Everyone bashes tambourines, cymbals and any other instruments we can find

**Praise the Lord all living creatures**

**Praise the Lord!**

Everyone jumps up, with their arms in the air, saying it loud.

Repeat several times.

Then sit quiet and let the joy go quiet – say the Lord's Prayer and depart

# THE X FACTOR

## Value: Love

**1. Introduce the idea of the X Factor.** Get the children to stand and la, la the X Factor TV introduction tune and then go “woosh!” at the end, making the X Factor “sign” with their arms crossed.

**2. The Nativity X Factor:** Lets see who has the X Factor in the nativity story. Build the typical nativity scene with children, who hold signs saying their role: Kings, Shepherds, Inn Keeper, Angel, Animals, Joseph, Mary, Jesus (need a baby doll).

Introduce each character with the children standing and doing the X Factor intro followed by the “Woosh!”, and then everyone also does the X Factor “Big Voice” by saying who the characters are.

Each time say that they do not have the X Factor – the only vote that counts here is God's, not ours.

**3. Jesus:** When we reach Jesus he is announced like the others. Then say that Jesus is the winner of the X Factor because God has voted for him right from the beginning of time. Jesus has the X Factor not because he is good at singing or dancing but because he can love like no one else. And how do we know the quality of Jesus' love? Because he did not come to be a baby, but to be a man who gave his life for us on the Cross so he could be our Saviour.

**4. Final sign:** Everyone stands and does the X Factor into again, but instead of “woosh!” go “love” and make the sign of the + rather than X.

**5. Prayer:** Ask the children to keep their arms in the sign of the Cross. “Dear Jesus, thank you that you really do have the X Factor, that you love us like no-one else can. Thank you that you were born in a stable to die on a cross to be our Saviour. Help us to remember your love for us this Christmas. Amen.

## Advent: The Message

1. **A special message:** Take a large sheet of papers on which is written: JESUS IS COMING! GET READY!  
Fold the sheet up as small as possible. Unwrap slowly as you talk.
2. **Dress the part:** to deliver the message I need to be dressed correctly. Take a purple stole and put it on. This is the colour we started wearing in church this last Sunday because the message is from Jesus. This last Sunday was called Advent Sunday. Advent is from the Latin word “Adventus” which means “Coming”. So this is a message that is from Jesus and is about “coming”. *Unwrap/*
3. **Getting ready:** At this time of year we do seem to be doing a lot of getting ready – getting ready for plays in school, beginning to get ready for Christmas. In the church we are getting ready for Jesus' Advent message by lighting candles in a special ring called an Advent Wreath. We light one candle each Sunday over the next month. *Unwrap.* When we have to get ready for something special we have to make sure we get it right – so people we came and check on us sometimes. Who checks that you have got your play right for next week in school, who checks you are doing your work correctly in school? Who checks that you have had a wash and that you are up in the morning and that you have eaten your food? *Unwrap.*
4. **Unwrap the rest of the message:** At Christmas we think about how Jesus came as a baby in manger in Bethlehem. But now is this time of Advent we think about this special message – that Jesus is going to come again. We don't know when, just like you don't know when your teacher may come and look at your work to see how you are doing. When Jesus comes he will check up on what we have been doing – he is not going to worry about whether you have washed or had your breakfast – but he will check up on how you and I have been living out our values, because they are his values – the values of his kingdom. He will check up on how we have been living out peace, unity and all the others. Above all he will check up on how good we have been at living out the value of love – because he is love.
5. **Prayer:** Adapted from Times and Seasons p.54. Need to explain “Maranatha”

Children! Get Ready!  
God above all, maker of all is coming  
Marantha: **Come, Lord Jesus**

Come, the mighty God  
bends down in love to the earth  
Marantha: **Come, Lord Jesus**

God with us, God beside us,  
coming soon to the world he has made  
Marantha: **Come, Lord Jesus**

We are all God's children.  
We must get ready for the coming Jesus  
Marantha: **Come, Lord Jesus**

## **Peace-meal: A Special Meal of Peace**

**1. What special meals can you think of?** Birthday, Christmas. Meals can sometimes tell us something – if you get an invitation to a birthday tea, what does that tell you about the person? What is the story behind Christmas Dinner?

**2. Some religions have special meals:** What is the Jewish faith special meal? Passover – tells a story, the story of how the Jewish people escaped with God's help from slavery to freedom. Does anyone know of any other special meals that faiths have?

**3. Christians have a special meal:** called Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper. Meal has a story behind it and a meaning.

The story is of the most important part of Jesus' life – his death on the Cross.

The meaning is about Peace: because the reason Jesus died on the Cross was to make peace between God the Father and all people. Without the peace that Jesus brings through his death on the cross we cannot be part of God's family, and he cannot be our father and our friend.

This meal reminds Christians that real peace between us and God is very costly, the cost was Jesus' own life. That makes the meal of Holy Communion very special because as people share the meal they remember that they share in God's peace, and because they are at peace with God and part of his family they are at peace with each other.

**4. Do the meal, tell the story: The Holy Communion service is a peace meal.**

Get children to watch, take chalice and paten and wine and bread.

Be quiet – we are sorry to God for all the wrong, selfish and hurtful things we have done, and we ask his forgiveness so that we can be a peace with him again.

Celebrate, using prayer D – invite the children to join the response “Holy, holy, holy”, and “This is his story / this is our song” – write responses on flip chart.

Lord's prayer.

Only I can share in the bread and wine today because you have to be an adult to share in this meal, but we can all share in the peace that this meal tells us about.

**5. The Peace:** share the peace, and then ask each class to share the peace with each other. Then the last person in the class passes the peace on to the next class, finishing with the youngest.

END

## John the Baptist

1. Can you guess who this person is?

He is a Bible person

He is a man

He is related to Jesus

His mother is called Elizabeth and his father Zechariah

He lived in the desert for most of his life

He died before Jesus

He baptised Jesus

2. John the Baptist is called "The Baptist" because he spent much of his time out in the desert, baptising in the River Jordan many who came out to listen to his preaching.

Because he lived in the desert he did not have much to eat, he ate locusts and honey. GIVE CHILDREN LOCUSTS (CRACKERS) AND HONEY TO TASTE.

He wore clothes made out camel hair, (SHOW SOME SACKING – INVITE A CHILD TO WEAR A SACK) tied round his waste with a leather belt.

So John would not have been very comfortable or very fat.

3. What did John the Baptist say that made so many people go to him to be baptised?

John was telling people that they had to get ready because God was coming to them, by that he meant that Jesus was coming, and their lives had to be ready for him. John had to have lots of courage because not all the people wanted to be told that they had to get their lives in line with the way God wanted them to be – he set out to tell the people the true way from God.

HOW DO YOU THINK GOD WANTS US TO LIVE OUR LIVES? IF HE CAME A STOOD IN THIS ROOM NOW, WHAT WOULD HE TELL US TO STOP DOING?

This was that sort of thing John the Baptist was saying to people: live good lives that will please God. Repent of all the wrong things that you say and do, all the selfish things that hurt other people. Repent means to turn around, to turn away from. Somebody who has repented has turned their life around and started going in the opposite direction, i.e. God's way. To show that they were changing the direction of their lives many of the people who listen to John were baptised in the river.

**REFLECTION:** Think about your life and what you would like to turn away from doing so that you are loving like Jesus.

Let us be quiet for a moment and think of any selfish things we may have said or done that may have hurt someone else either today or yesterday.

Dear God, thank you for John the Baptist and his reminder to us that we should not be selfish, but live God's way, in his love. We are sorry for the selfish things that we have said or done that have hurt others, and we are sorry for the times when we forget you. Please help us to make a new start with our lives from this moment on. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus, for whom John the Baptist prepared the way. Amen."