

Unit 1: Fruits of the Spirit

Lesson 1.3: Fruits of the Spirit – JOY

Teacher Preparation and Materials Needed:

Scriptural Reference:

Galatians 5:22–23, Nehemiah 8:10, Philippians 4:4

Activities:

Choose based on time available. Instructions and supplies listed below.

Activity 1: Joy vs. Happiness Faces

Activity 2: Joy Scripture Cards

Song:

JOY! JOY! JOY! JOY! Down In My Heart!

Words of the week:

ուրախութիւն - oo-rakkh-oo-tyoon - happiness

ցնծութիւն - tsun-dzoo-tyoon - joy

օրհնութիւն - orh-noo-tyoon - blessing

Objective:

Students will understand the difference between temporary happiness and lasting joy that comes from God through the Holy Spirit. They will learn practical ways to choose and nurture joy in their daily lives, even during difficult times, and memorize Nehemiah 8:10: *“The joy of the Lord is your strength.”*

Moral Character Focus:

Knowledge: Children will learn that joy is different from happiness - it comes from God through the Holy Spirit and stays in our hearts even during difficult times.

Understanding: Children will recognize that we can choose joy by trusting God's goodness, being grateful, and remembering His promises no matter what happens around us.

Application: Children will identify practical ways to choose and share joy in their daily lives (thanking God each day, helping others smile, praying when sad, remembering God's love during hard times).

Values: Children will develop a desire to be joyful people who trust God and bring His light to others through

Memory Verse:

“The joy of the Lord is your strength.”

— Nehemiah 8:10

Lesson

Open with prayer:

Իմաստութիւն Յօր՝ Յիսուս, տո՛ւր ինձ իմաստութիւն, զբարիս խորհել եւ խօսել եւ գործել առաջի Քո՝ յամենայն ժամ. ի չար խորհրդոց, ի բանից եւ ի գործոց փրկեա՛ր զիս. եւ ողորմեա՛ր Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն:

Eemasdootyoon Hor Heesoos, door eents eemasdootyoon uzparees khorel yev khosel yev kordz arachi ko hamenayn jham. Ee char khorhrtos, paneets yev kordzots prgya zees yev voghormya ko araradzots eents pazmameghees. Amen.

Wisdom of the Father, O Jesus, grant to me the wisdom to think, speak, and do that which is good in Your sight. Save me from all evil and distracting thoughts, words, and deeds. Have mercy upon your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.

**Wisdom Prayer, written by St. Nersess the Grace-filled (Shnorhali).*

Lesson Body: Fruits of the Spirit - JOY

Have you ever felt so happy that you couldn't stop smiling? Maybe it was your birthday, or you were playing with your best friend, or you had your favorite ice cream. That's happiness, and it's a wonderful feeling! But did you know there's something even deeper and more special than happiness? It's called joy. Joy is a gift from God that the Holy Spirit plants in our hearts, like planting a special seed that grows into something beautiful.

Today, we're going to discover how joy is different from just being in a good mood and how God gives us this special joy even when things around us aren't perfect.

Song: JOY! JOY! JOY! JOY! Down In My Heart!

Joy vs. Happiness: What's the Difference?

Think about happiness like this: It's like when the sun is shining and you feel warm and good. But what happens when clouds come? The warm feeling goes away.

- **Happiness** usually depends on what's happening around us, like getting a new toy or having a fun day at school.
- **Joy is different.** Joy is like having a warm light inside your heart that never goes out, even when it's cloudy outside.
- **Joy comes from God** and stays in our hearts even when we're having a difficult day.

The amazing thing about joy is that it's not something we have to wait to feel. It's something we can **choose!** We can choose joy by remembering how good God is, no matter what else is happening around us.

Words of the Week:

ուրախութիւն - oo-rakkh-oo-tyoon - happiness
ցնծութիւն - tsun-dzoo-tyoon - joy
օրհնութիւն - orh-noo-tyoon - blessing

Memory Verse:

“The joy of the Lord is your strength.”

— Nehemiah 8:10

Joy in Our Church

In the Armenian Church, we believe that the **Holy Spirit gives us this special kind of joy** when we are baptized (that’s when we’re welcomed into God’s family with water) and chrismated (when the priest puts holy oil on different parts of our body). That joy is a sign that God is with us and that we belong to Him.

If you’ve ever been to the Divine Liturgy (that’s our special church service we attend every Sunday), you’ve probably felt the joy in the room. We sing beautiful songs called hymns, we listen to God’s stories, and we receive Holy Communion. All of this fills us with the joy of being close to Jesus.

During the liturgy, you can witness the JOY in moments like the Kiss of Peace and the hymns before and after Holy Communion. Even during special times like Great Lent (when we prepare our hearts for Easter by praying more and being extra kind), there’s still a quiet, peaceful joy. Why? Because we know we’re getting closer to God, and that makes our hearts happy in a deep way.

A Story of Great Joy: The Brave Christians of Vartanantz

Long ago, there was a very brave Armenian Christian soldier called Vartan. A powerful king from the neighboring country threatened Armeia and commanded, “Stop believing in God and following Jesus, or you’ll be in big trouble.”

But this brave soldier gathered his army and fought until the end for God’s love and joy, knowing that the enemy’s army was a lot bigger and stronger than his.

Even when they were scared and facing danger, they sang psalms (songs from the Bible) and celebrated their love for Jesus. It filled their hearts with strength and power to move forward and keep fighting. They had joy not because everything was easy, but because they knew God was with them and nothing could take away their love for Him. The sacrifices they made and the strength of their faith inspired the Armenian people. Today, we know these brave heroes as Sts. Vartanants (St. Vartan and His Companions). They show us that real joy comes from knowing God loves us, no matter what happens around us.

How to Grow Joy in Your Heart

Just like we water a plant to help it grow big and strong, the Holy Spirit helps joy grow in us when we:

- **Thank God** for the good things in our lives
Try this: Each night, think of three things you’re grateful for
- **Pray and sing** to keep our hearts close to God
Even humming a church song can fill your heart with joy!
- **Help others** and feel joy when we see them smile
When we make someone else happy, God fills our hearts with joy too
- **Remember God’s promises**, especially when things are hard
God promises to always love us and be with us

What the Bible Says About Joy

“The joy of the Lord is your strength.” — Nehemiah 8:10

This means God’s joy helps us be brave and strong, even during hard times. It’s like having a superhero power that comes from God! The Holy Spirit plants joy in us like a tiny seed. And the more we trust God, the more that joy grows into something beautiful.

Activity 1: Joy vs. Happiness Faces

Materials Needed:

- Paper plates (2 per child)
- Crayons/markers
- Popsicle sticks
- Tape or glue
- Scenarios written on cards

Instructions:

1. Give each child two paper plates
2. Have them draw a “happy face” on one and a “joyful face” on the other (joy face should look peaceful/content even if not grinning)
3. Attach popsicle sticks to make face paddles
4. Read scenarios and have kids hold up the appropriate face:

“You got a new video game” (Happy)

“You’re sick but you know God loves you” (Joy)

“It’s your birthday party” (Happy)

“Your friend moved away but you’re praying for them” (Joy)

“You got a big scoop of your favorite ice cream” (Happy)

“You’re nervous before a school play, but you pray and feel calm” (Joy)

“You’re watching your favorite movie with popcorn” (Happy)

“You didn’t win the game, but you cheer for your friends and feel peace” (Joy)

“You went to a birthday party with games and cake” (Happy)

“You felt lonely, but remembered Jesus is always with you” (Joy)

“You just opened a present and it’s the toy you really wanted” (Happy)

“You didn’t get what you hoped for, but you’re still thankful” (Joy)

“You’re jumping on a trampoline with your cousins” (Happy)

Activity 2: Joy Scripture Cards

Teaching Connection: “These cards are like little reminders of God’s joy that you can carry with you! Put one in your backpack, give one to a family member, or keep one by your bed to remember that God’s joy is always with you.”

Materials Needed:

- Index cards or cardstock (cut into 4x6 rectangles)
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- Stickers (any kind - stars, hearts, smiley faces)
- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- Construction paper scraps

Instructions:

1. Prepare the card - Give each child 2-3 index cards
2. Write the verse - Help them write “The joy of the Lord is my strength” on one card in their best handwriting
3. Decorate - Let them color borders, add stickers, and glue on construction paper shapes
4. Personal touch - On the back, have them write or draw one thing that gives them joy
5. Make extras - Create additional cards with “Choose Joy Today!” or “God’s Joy Lives in Me”
6. Laminate option - If available, cover with clear tape for durability



Review

Memory Verse Review:

“The joy of the Lord is your strength.” (Nehemiah 8:10)

Words of the Week Review:

ուրախութիւն - oo-rakkh-oo-tyoon - happiness

ցնծութիւն - tsun-dzoo-tyoon - joy

օրհնութիւն - orh-noo-tyoon - blessing

Lesson Review:

Questions:

1. What is the difference between joy and happiness? *(Joy comes from God and stays with us even when things are hard. Happiness depends on things around us)*
2. Who gives us true joy? *(The Holy Spirit gives us joy when we belong to God)*
3. How can the Holy Spirit help us have joy when life is difficult? *(He reminds us of God’s promises, helps us pray, and keeps our hearts close to Jesus)*
4. What do we do in church that fills us with joy? *(We sing, pray, receive Communion, and worship Christ)*
5. What is one way you can share joy this week? *(Answers will vary: help someone, encourage a friend, say thank you, etc.)*
6. What verse says “The joy of the Lord is your strength”? *(Nehemiah 8:10)*
7. How did the martyrs of Vartanantz show joy? *(They sang and rejoiced in Christ, even in danger)*
8. What helps joy grow inside us? *(Gratitude, prayer, helping others, and remembering God’s love)*
9. Why is joy a fruit of the Spirit? *(Because it’s something God grows in our hearts when we follow Him)*

Life Application

What are we going to do with what we have learned today?

Joy isn’t just a feeling we have when everything goes our way. It’s a choice we can make every day because we know God loves us and is always with us. This week, try keeping a “Joy Journal” by writing or drawing one thing you’re thankful for each day, or help make a “Joy Jar” at home filled with happy thoughts and prayers. When something hard happens, pause and say, “God is with me, so I choose joy!” You can also grow joy by helping others smile, singing a favorite church song when you’re upset, or remembering a Bible verse like “The joy of the Lord is my strength.” Joy grows when we water it with prayer, thankfulness, and kindness.

* *Departing Prayer, written by St. Nersess the Grace-filled (Shnorhali).*

Close with prayer:

Պահապան ամենայնի Քրիստոս, աջ Քո հովանի լիցի ի վերայ իմ, ի տուէ եւ ի գիշերի, ի նստիլ ի տան, ի գնալ ի ճանապարհ, ի ննջել եւ ի յառնել, զի մի երբեք սասանեցայց եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Bahaban amenayn Kreesdos, ach Ko hovanee leetsee ee vera eem; ee dveh yev ee keesheree, ee nsdeel ee dan, ee knal ee janabarh, ee nunchel yev ee harnel, zee mee yerpek sasanetsayts yev vog-hormya Ko araradzots yev eents pazmamyghees. Amen.

O Christ, guardian of all, let Your right hand guard and shelter me, by day and by night, at home and abroad, in sleeping and in waking, that I may never stumble. Have mercy upon Your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.