

Family Togetherness Week of Prayer
September 3 - 9, 2023

2023 Resource Book

KEYS TO HEALTHY MINDS

Flourishing Families

Adventist Family Ministries

WEDNESDAY

CHOOSE

JOY

Key Verse

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Phil 4:4 NKJV

Sing this verse using the familiar song or try singing it to another joyful tune!

Exploring Joy

Joy is the happy delight we feel that comes with a sense of peace and contentment. When we experience joy, we feel good from our head to our toes. Laughter is another kind of happiness. We might laugh when something is funny or amusing, or because we are surprised. Sometimes we laugh just because we feel happy!

Joy is good for us! Solomon said: 'A merry heart does good, like a medicine' (Prov 17:22 NKJV). Joy protects us from being overwhelmed by the challenges in our lives. Sometimes we can be so sad that we forget to enjoy the things that make us happy. When we choose to have some happy experiences during our sad times, it gives our heavy hearts a much-needed break. God loves to see His children enjoying the world that He created for them. Jesus enjoyed bringing joy to the children He blessed, and to those He fed and healed. Paul reminds us to 'rejoice with those who rejoice' (Rom 12:15). Whenever we share joy with others, our joy is doubled by theirs, and we can all thank God for the joy we experience in our lives.

Jesus

Shares Joy!

(John 2)

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was very busy. She was grinding barley to make flour for bread, and she was making cakes from honey, raisins, figs, and almonds. Everything looked very special. She was making all these delicious things to serve at a local wedding. She wanted everything to be just perfect for the bride and groom.

At long last it was time for the wedding to start. Everything was ready. The groom's house was finally finished and decorated with flowers. The food was laid out on the tables and the cups were waiting for the grape juice, which was stored in a cool place. Mary wore her best dress and Jesus put on a clean robe. His disciples were invited too! Everybody in the whole village was going to be there because a wedding was such a wonderful celebration!

It was a very special time! All the family's friends were there to celebrate with the bride and groom. There would be several days of feasting, music, joyfulness and laughter!

But, in the middle of all the festivities, Mary came to find Jesus. She looked sad. And Jesus noticed that it wasn't only Mary who looked sad. Other people were sad too, especially the bridegroom and the bridegroom's father. Mary took Jesus into a quiet corner, 'They've run out of grape juice for the guests,' she whispered. 'The family are really embarrassed, but they don't have enough money to buy any more.' Jesus took a deep breath. He knew what she was thinking. She wanted him to find a special way to solve the problem. She told the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you!'

Jesus prayed and asked His Father what to do. Then He told the servants to fill up some massive water jars that were standing nearby. When they were all full, Jesus told them to dip a ladle into the water jar, and to pour the grape juice into a cup for the host of the feast.

When the host tasted the grape juice, he said to the bridegroom, 'Wow, this is delicious! Where did you find such amazing grape juice? And why didn't you serve this first?' The bridegroom just smiled and smiled! He was so happy! He hugged his beloved bride and she smiled! She was glad to see her husband wasn't sad anymore. And Jesus smiled too. He was happy that He and His Father could change water into a celebration grape juice and change sad people into happy people. Jesus watched everybody laughing and celebrating, and His heart was filled with joy.

Mary came and hugged Jesus. There were tears in her eyes. 'Thank you for making everybody happy!' she said.

Jesus smiled again. 'I am especially happy because my friend, the bridegroom, is almost the happiest man on earth today!'

'So, who can be happier than the groom?' Mary asked with a puzzled smile.

'My Father and I!' Jesus laughed! 'Making people happy makes us both very happy. My Father and I are filled to overflowing with joy, just like the waterpots, whenever people celebrate with joy!'

Joyful Prayer

- Pray joyfully! Go through the alphabet together and say, 'We praise You, God, because You are A (adorable, admirable, Alpha, almighty).' 'We praise You, God, because You are B (beautiful, blessing, bountiful, brave, brilliant).'
- Notice how joyful this kind of prayer makes you feel!
- Count how many aspects of God you can list together! (Could be added to the gratitude journal from Monday)

Experiencing Joy Activities

Flourish! - Choose well - think well - live well - grow well!

The Joy List

- Make a list of 100 simple and small things that bring joy to your family. It's not as hard as it sounds when you think of 10 things you like to eat, smell, hear, see, do, etc.
- Write each one on a separate index card. Choose one idea every day.
- Write on the back of the card when you did it together and what you enjoyed most about doing it.

Joy Through Sharing

- Write an e-mail/mail to your grandmother, aunt, or a friend from church and share joyful messages or pictures with them.
- Choose 10 of your favorite Bible verses about joy. Write out the verses and find ways to share them with neighbors and friends.

Joy Activities

- Share the happiest things that happened to each of you today and rejoice with each other about all those good things (Rom 12:15).
- Make a joy bulletin board, where you gather happy or funny pictures, memories, Bible verses, and answers to prayer.
- Sing a joyful praise song together and celebrate God together.
- Make someone happy today and measure how much joy that gives you out of 10, where 0 is no joy and 10 is lots of joy! How much joy did you give to the other person?