



CHRISTMAS JOY

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

CHURCH LEADERS—PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

December 19, 2021 Christmas Joy Offering (CJO) Multiage Curriculum

(for ages 5 and older with some activities younger disciples may enjoy)

Proverbs 18:16: *A gift opens doors; it gives access to the great.*

Goals:

Participants will explore the purpose of the Christmas Joy Offering through the methods of storytelling, visual learning and imagining. Utilizing the method of art, participants will interact with Proverbs 18:16: “A gift opens doors.” Participants will offer others the opportunity to learn more about the CJO through sharing their art with their congregation, families and friends.

Prepare/gather before facilitating the class:

- ★ Read the CJO Theme [“A Gift Opens Doors”](#) to prepare for the class.
- ★ Make copies of the [“Shining Hope”](#) coloring sheet by A Sanctified Art for each student
- ★ Crayons, markers and/or colored pencils
- ★ Mounting tabs/tape to adhere the coloring pages to the walls
- ★ Glory to God hymnals for each student or to share
- ★ Piano, keyboard or guitar if you plan to use instrument accompaniment with the hymn
- ★ Resource 1 images — print images. If you use your own images, only use images that are free for use or are under your church image use [copyright license](#).
- ★ Electronic device/laptop/phone/tablet
- ★ Internet connection or Wi-Fi
- ★ Scissors
- ★ Glue, glue sticks or glue dots
- ★ Resource 2 “A Gift Opens Doors Collage Activity”
 - Instructions
 - Print door image for each child.
 - Print and cut the collage tag page into squares so each child has one square.
- ★ Magazines with child-friendly images they will use for a collage.
- ★ 8 x 11 sheets of paper for each child to use for collage. Consider using paper designated to be recycled.

*Note: This resource is a guide. Though some parts are written as a script, please adjust to your voice and your words. The best result of any curriculum is to stir creative juices. Use your great ideas and share them with the [Special Offerings Facebook group](#)!

Entering Activity (5-8 minutes)

“Shining Hope” coloring sheet by *A Sanctified Art*

(Supplies: crayons, markers, or colored pencils; “Shining Hope” coloring sheet for all students; and mounting tape.)

As children enter, invite them to color the coloring sheet as they wait for more friends.

Ask: What do you think about the image on this coloring sheet? How does it make you feel? (hope, joy, love). This artwork was created by [A Sanctified Art](#) for us to explore the Christmas Joy Offering, a special offering we collect in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). We will talk more about that offering in a bit.

Note: When children are finished with their coloring sheet, ask if they would like to display their coloring sheet in the hallway for others to see or if they would like to take it home and show it to family and friends. Adhere them to the walls after class.

Idea: If you display the coloring sheets in the hallway for others to enjoy, be sure to type up a description for the artwork. Something such as:

Christmas Joy Offering artistic creations by the (church) children using “Shining Hope” art by A Sanctified Art.

After children have gathered, if it is your practice, light the candle in your Advent wreath.

Gathering: Hymn Sing (5-10 minutes depending on how many hymns you sing)

(Supplies: Glory to God hymnal for each student or to share. Musical accompaniment.)

Anytime is a great time to sing hymns, and Advent is a special time to sing as we watch and wait for the Messiah. Start your time together by singing one of the following hymns from the Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal or a hymn or song of your own choosing.

Idea: Ask one of the children to read through the hymn before you sing together.

Idea: Talk with your worship leaders to inquire if the hymn you choose could be part of worship allowing your learners to receive a special treat of hearing the song they sang in class also part of the order of worship.

Note: These hymns can be sung a cappella, however you might wish to find an adult or youth who would accompany on the piano, keyboard or guitar.

#84 Creator of the Stars of Night
#92 While We Are Waiting, Come
#94 Now the Heavens Start to Whisper

Idea: If it is your practice to collect an offering during your children's gathering, collect it now and consider giving it to the Christmas Joy Offering.

The Perfect Gift: Explore the Christmas Joy Offering (15-20 minutes)

(Supplies: Resource 1 Images or images you have gathered; electronic device and internet connection or wi-fi to access the PPAS and Menaul School online galleries.)

Together as a church, we have been journeying through a special season of hope, peace, joy and love — the season of Advent — a time of watching and waiting for the Messiah. What are some symbols or colors you have seen in the sanctuary that help us learn more about Advent? (Give time to answer: Advent wreath, Chrismon tree, the color purple or blue, poinsettias, etc. Idea: Have some of these symbols in your learning space as a visual reference.) We have many resources that help us celebrate this season.

Another way to know hope, peace, joy and love during this season is through receiving a special offering in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) called the Christmas Joy Offering. How can the Christmas Joy Offering be a gift to others? (Give time for answers. Consider asking a child to write answers on the whiteboard/chalkboard/newsprint.) I heard some wonderful ideas! Let me share a bit of the good ways this special offering helps others. We are going to learn using storytelling and our imaginations, and I know you all have wonderful imaginations!

Storytelling:

One way the Christmas Joy Offering is a gift to others is because it provides financial assistance, yes, money, to current and retired church workers. This type of aid can be a huge relief and comfort to those who are stressed, anxious and afraid of what will happen if they believe there is no help or hope.

A Story about Pastor Pete: (Show Resource 1 Images — Hospital Room or an image you have of someone in the hospital.)

Let's imagine together to better understand what this might mean for a church worker to receive help from the Christmas Joy Offering. I'll share a pretend story about Pastor Pete (or a name you choose) who was very sick and lost hope that he could pay for it.

(Idea: Consider using your name, your pastor's name, your Christian educator's name, etc., so the children can better associate different callings of church workers.)

"Pastor Pete" is a retired pastor of a church in (name your state). He was very sick and in the hospital for a long time. Have you ever been in the hospital? It costs a lot of money to stay in the hospital a long time. Sometimes it costs more than folks can afford, like Pastor Pete. After the hospital, Pastor Pete is going to need a lot of help getting up and walking and moving. Physical therapy costs add to his already big medical bill. What will Pastor Pete do? He has run out of money to pay for it and needs help!

Pastor Pete hears about the Christmas Joy Offering and how funds from this gift could help him during this time when he is scared and losing hope. Receiving funds from the Christmas Joy Offering would be like Pastor Pete getting a huge hug or high-five from every person who gave to the Christmas Joy Offering. Yes, like you giving him a high-five because you gave a gift to this offering!

The Christmas Joy Offering assistance lets him know that he is loved and not forgotten. To celebrate those who have received gifts from the Christmas Joy Offering and will receive gifts, and to celebrate that we are going to join in the giving of gifts to the offering, let's give each other a high-five (or elbow bump). Thank you, God, for your good gifts!

Imagining:

The Christmas Joy Offering also helps aid Presbyterian-related schools and colleges who equip people of color to become leaders in their communities.

Note: [Find out more here](#) about Menaul School, Presbyterian Pan American School and Stillman College, so that you have more information about the schools to share with your students.

Note: Scroll through the online galleries. Links to galleries in Resource 1 Images.

We are going to use our imaginations as we learn about these schools. Let's look at the pictures and imagine that we were students at the schools. Imagine yourself in the school uniform, sitting next to the students in the picture. Imagine that it is your favorite class. As we continue looking at the pictures:

Keep imagining! Think about the skills that students learn at the Presbyterian-related schools that receive gifts from the Christmas Joy Offering. Looking at the pictures:

- What leadership skill do you see?

- How do you think the students feel about being part of this community?
- What do you think the students in this picture will do when they graduate?
- I wonder how it makes you feel knowing that the gift you give to the Christmas Joy Offering will help young people attending these schools so that they may grow, learn and become leaders.

Activity: Opening Doors (15-20 minutes)

(Supplies: Resource 2 — instructions. Paper to be recycled, one sheet for each child. Door image from Resource 2 printed on paper for each child. Child-friendly magazines, nature magazines, food magazines, etc. Glue or glue dots. Scissors.)

The Christmas Joy Offering scripture is Proverbs 18:16: *A gift opens doors; it gives access to the great.* We are going to create some art as we think about gifts and doors. In a minute, we will create an art project called a collage to remind us of the Christmas Joy Offering, God's perfect gifts and open doors.

Have you ever walked to a door, tried to open it, and it would not open because it was locked or stuck? It is frustrating to want to get through the door to what is on the other side and not be able to get there.

Think about the schools we learned about — Stillman College, the Menaul School and Presbyterian Pan American School. Some students do not have the funds they need to attend schools that will help them learn and grow. They are at a stuck or locked door and waiting for the gift to open the door. It is as if they cannot open the door to the school to explore all the great opportunities for education and leadership on the other side of the door.

When we give gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering, we are saying thank you to God for Jesus, the perfect gift. Giving to the CJO is a way to say that we know that Jesus has opened doors to allow everyone access to the great gifts God provides. Giving to the CJO is being the body of Christ in this world and loving our neighbors as Jesus instructed us to do. What an amazing thing you are doing by giving a gift to this special offering!

Let's create our collage keeping these things of God's perfect gift and open doors in mind!

Note: Instructions for the collage are part of Resource 2 Door Collage.

Share the Art:

Gather together after they create and share your art. Ask each child to share one thing from their piece of art that they like. Celebrate their work and remind them to tell their family and friends about the collage, the door, the gifts and the Christmas Joy Offering.

Idea: Invite children to pick one way to share their art with others to help others know more about the CJO. Take home and share with family and friends OR tape to the walls at the church to share with their church family.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

It is time for you all to go, but before we go, we will pray together and ask for blessings upon those who give and those who receive the Christmas Joy Offering that they will know the perfect gift of Jesus who has opened the door to access the great.

(Invite one of the children to lead the prayer using this one or one from their heart.)

God of all great gifts, you have given us the perfect gift in Jesus, who opens the door to great things and invites us to walk through. May we be the hands, feet and heart of Jesus, sharing the gifts of God's love and opening doors. May our gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering be the perfect gift for those in need. Fill us with your light and love that we may shine your light for the world to see. Amen.

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