

JOY OPENING SESSION | DAY 1



Key Question	How do I find joy?
Life Application	True joy is found in Jesus.
Bottom Line	Knowing Jesus is worth celebrating.
Basic Truth	I can choose joy by getting to know Jesus better.

DAY 1: JESUS & THE JOURNEY

What makes me feel joyful?

Supplies:

- Party Hat
- Present boxes
- Streamers
- Balloons
- Robes (Joseph, Mary, Inn keeper, Shepherd x2)
- Angel Costume
- Blanket for Jesus
- Walking Stick
- Sven head
- Sign for Inn
- Stable, Manger
- Baby Jesus
- Choir of Angels Sound Effect
- Baby Bump
- Nazareth Sign
- Bethlehem sign
- Big star

Characters:

Narrator	Innkeeper + Wiseman
Mary	3 Shepherd 1
Joseph	Wiseman 1
Angel	Wiseman 2

Host: Good morning, everyone, and WELCOME to VISTO Performing Arts Camp! My name is...

We are so excited that you are here with us this week! Some of you may recognize each other; and some of you may not know anyone in this room...YET! We can't wait to get to know YOU this week and for so many others around this room to get to know you too!

To my fellow VISTO staff & friends – let's make sure everyone meets you! Can everyone join me on the VISTO stage please?!

Introduce team.

Host: Alright team, I'm going to ask each one of you a series of important, silly & get-to-know-you questions!

DAY 1: JESUS & THE JOURNEY



keep it brief

- What is your favourite ice cream?
- What order do you get dressed in the morning? Shirt - then shorts? Or shorts - then shirt?
- What is your favourite Taylor Swift song of all time?
- On a scale of 1-10 - what's your favourite number and why?
- It's TV-time for 1.5 hours - which would you choose? Watch a game of hockey, watch a Netflix movie or catch a Disney favorite?
- Favourite footwear? Running shoes, sandals or crocs?
- Finding the perfect gift for someone, or watching someone open a gift from you - which is your favourite part?

Host: Thank you all for your very honest answers, you can head back down now!

Afterwards, staff exit stage and go back with their campers

Host: Got some joy to share? Share it everywhere!

Host: These fabulous Staff members will be travelling around with you from activity to activity all day long. And some of them will be teaching you singing, dancing & acting or capturing it on film or photos. We love VISTO!

If you ever have a question or need some help with something, these folks are always available.

Host: Okay, we would like to know a bit more about YOU! We're going to get you to stand up and make a circle in your crews so you can see each other and I'm going to read off a list of statements and what to do if that statement applies to you! So, I might say something like touch your nose if you love to swim [demonstrate]. Are you ready?

DAY 1: JESUS & THE JOURNEY



- Jump twice if you have an older sibling
- Touch your toes if you live in the country
- Flap your arms like a bird if you've been on an airplane before
- Stick out your tongue if you like chocolate
- Shake your hands high in the air if this is your first time at VISTO camp
- Do 3 jumping jacks if you like to go to the beach
- Pat your head once if you like playing sports
- Give us a twirl if you love to dance
- High five someone beside you if you're at VISTO Camp this week!!

Host: Wow, campers, thank you so much for diving in and playing along with us.

Host: Whether you're new to camp or returning, we have lots in store for you! Our days will be packed full of singing, dancing, acting, activities, learning and so much more.

Monday to Thursday you'll go through your days with "rotations", and then Friday everything goes topsy turvy and we present a Showcase! Each one of you will play an important part in our Showcase as our friends and family get to see all that we've been learning this week.

We have two quick ways that we like to get your attention. If you hear any staff member shout out VISTOOO, you're going to respond by also shouting out VISTO and then being totally silent. Let's give that a try!

Host: The second way one of our staff might try to get your attention is by holding up a V with their fingers just like this [demonstrate]. If you see this at any point, you know it's time to stop making noise, and time to tune in! Let's try.

Host: [Have Bible with you] Thanks everyone. We're going to switch gears and dive into our focus of the day. Each day this week you will hear about stories and lessons from a book called the Bible. The Bible is a bunch of stories, letters and poems from waaaaaay back when that we use to get to know God better. And the Bible is... TRUTH! Can we try that again? The Bible is... TRUTH! For those of you who have maybe never heard of God before, He's like a super loving and powerful friend who is always with us, even though we can't see Him. He made everything, including you and me, and He loves us very much.

DAY 1: JESUS & THE JOURNEY



ENTER VESPER wearing a party hat and holding a lot of party supplies
– streamers, present boxes, balloons...

VESPER: WAIT, WAIT! Hold on a second! What about me?!

Host: VESPER? What are YOU doing here?

VESPER: Yes ME! I was told there was a party happening here, and I just HAD to join.

Host: VESPER, do you want to introduce yourself to the campers?

VESPER: I would LOVE to. Hi everyone! It is so nice to meet all of you. I'm VESPER and I'm so excited to be at camp this summer! Some of you guys might know my cousin Vera who was here last summer, but she's working at Starbucks this whole summer, so I get to hang out at VISTO with every one of you campers.

Host: VESPER, what are all your party supplies for?

VESPER: Well, I did hear that it was a party at camp this week, but I'm also in the middle of planning my birthday party! My birthday is September 7, and I'm already so excited – I have BIG plans.

Host: That sounds very exciting, VESPER! And you'll never believe it, but we're talking about a birthday today at camp! One birthday party that is not like any other...the story of Jesus' birth. It's the craziest birthday story of them all. A lot of us know what Christmas is, but not everyone knows that Jesus's birth is the real reason we celebrate Christmas!

The designated staff should be set up around the gym

You know where a good place to start is? The beginning! So, today we're going to go on a journey together to better understand the beginning of Jesus' story – and why Jesus' birth brought so much joy to the world. VESPER, do you want to join some campers so you can learn about Jesus and the Christmas story, too?

VESPER: I would love to! (drops her party supplies and takes a seat with campers)

Cue Bible Story Time SFX

DAY 1: JESUS & THE JOURNEY



Mary is sitting quietly, perhaps reading, when Angel Gabriel appears.

Narrator: Once upon a time, in the small town of Nazareth, there lived a young woman named Mary. One day, an angel appeared in front of her!

Angel Gabriel: (appearing to Mary) Hi, Mary! God is with you. Don't be afraid, for you will have a baby boy, and you are to name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.

Mary: (astonished but humble) How is this possible, since I'm not yet married?

Angel Gabriel: The Holy Spirit will come to you. The baby to be born will be holy, and He will be called the Son of God.

Mary: (bowing her head) I will do what God says.

Narrator: Even though it was scary, Mary accepted God's plan with joy. Joseph, the man Mary was supposed to marry, didn't understand Mary when she tried to tell him, and he was worried what other people would think. But that night, Joseph was also visited by an angel in his sleep.

Angel: Psst, Joseph, don't be afraid to make Mary your wife.

Joseph: [mumbling in his sleep]

Angel: The child that she's going to have is from the Holy Spirit. It is a boy, and you are to name him Jesus. He will come to save the people of Earth.

Narrator: Shocked by this news, Joseph quickly went to Mary to tell her of what had happened.

Joseph: [waking up] Mary! Mary! I was wrong. An angel told me everything- let's get married!

Narrator: When it was almost time for Mary to have her baby, the Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus, ordered everyone to return to their hometowns.

DAY 1: JESUS & THE JOURNEY



to be counted. So, Mary and Joseph travelled on a donkey a long way to the City of Bethlehem.

Joseph: (looking around) Mary, we need to find a place to stay. You must rest.

Mary: Yes please, Joseph. I'm very tired.

Joseph knocks on a door. The Innkeeper answers.

Joseph: Excuse me, do you have any room for us to stay?

Innkeeper: I'm sorry, all my rooms are full. But I do have a stable out back where you can stay. It's not much, but it's warm and dry.

Mary: [smiling gratefully] Thank you so much.

Narrator: And so, Mary and Joseph settled in the stable, where the animals were kept.

[In the stable, Mary and Joseph prepare a makeshift bed. The baby Jesus, represented by a doll, is placed in a manger. Animals gather around.]

Narrator: That night, in the little town of Bethlehem, baby Jesus was born. Mary wrapped Him in cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the Inn. Nearby were some Shepherds are on a hillside, watching over their sheep. Suddenly an angel appeared!!

Angel 1: Do not be afraid. I come with good news that will bring great joy! Today in the town of David, the son of God has been born. Go to him; you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and sleeping in a manger.

Shepherd 1: We shall go to Bethlehem and check it out!!

**SOUND CLIPS OF ANGELS SINGING 'GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST
AND PEACE TO HIS PEOPLE ON EARTH'**

Narrator: So, the shepherds hurried off and found Mary, Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger, and they were filled with joy and thanked God. Later, wise men also came to celebrate Jesus after following a star that guided them.

DAY 1: JESUS & THE JOURNEY



[The Wise Men enter from gym door and travel across to the stable, following a star. They bring gifts.]

Wise Man 1: Look, the star has stopped over this place. The King we have been searching for is here.

Wise Man 2: Let us bring our gifts and celebrate Him.

Wise Man 3: Here is gold

Wise Man 2: And Frankincense.

Wise Man 1: And Myrrh, a gift for a king.

Narrator: The Wise Men bowed down and celebrated the baby Jesus, offering their gifts and their hearts.

All characters gather around the manger, forming a tableau

Narrator: And so, the birth of Jesus brought people together from all walks of life—shepherds, wise men, and humble parents—each understanding that this tiny baby would one day save the world. His birth is a reminder to us all of God's great love.

This week, we hope you will learn more about Jesus and how joy can be found in him.

Host: Let's hear it for our incredible staff! [Applause].

VESPER: Wow, _Host's name_, that was an incredible story. I know I was thinking about throwing myself a birthday party, but what I really want to do now is celebrate Jesus – he seems pretty amazing! I better start planning this new party right away. Bye everyone!

Host: VESPER is right; this story of Jesus is pretty amazing. Today we learned that Jesus' birth was good news. Knowing Jesus brings joy, and that joy is worth celebrating. Even when things seemed confusing or crazy for Mary and Joseph, God had a good, joyful plan. And because Jesus came to Earth, we can experience joy too – we'll learn about that more this week.

Today as you travel around and spend time in your crews, I want you to think about this question:

DAY 1: JESUS & THE JOURNEY



CANVA ANIMATION WHAT MAKES ME FEEL JOYFUL?

To end of our time together this morning, we're going to pray as one big VISTO family. Raise your hand if you've heard of prayer before!

Prayer is talking to God. God hears us no matter where we are, what we're doing, or who we're doing it with! We don't have to be scared to pray, or feel like we need the perfect words to talk to God. God wants to hear from us about everything in our lives, whether we are feeling joyful, lonely, sad, or stressed. He loves hearing our prayers, and He loves talking to us! Prayer can be a time for us to be quiet and listen to God, too.

Let's pray to God now and thank him for bringing us to such a joyful camp this week.

Dear God, thank you for today and for bringing each of these campers to VISTO camp this week. You have a plan for each of us, just like you had a plan for Jesus's birth on Christmas many years ago. We are so grateful for the different ways you have allowed us to be joyful; help us to identify things that make us joyful, and to enjoy our day of camp today. Amen.

One of the best ways we can experience joy together this week is by creating a camp where everyone feels safe, included, and celebrated. Now, in order to make our week at camp the best it can possibly be, we have a few rules or VIRTUES that are important for all of us! As VISTO Company, we need you to listen to, respect and follow these VISTO VIRTUES....

CANVA ANIMATION VISTO VIRTUES

Host: Be respectful & kind. VISTO Camp wants everyone to feel safe. No bullying, or nasty comments. We're here to support you- if you have a problem and need help - let us know. There will be actions taken if you are involved in any bullying.

VISTO is all about everyone feeling safe - cared for, protected & a place where you can go for it and explore your artistic abilities - no matter what!

DAY 1: JESUS & THE JOURNEY



We're excited to see you go above & beyond in kindness towards everyone. Consider welcoming a new friend to eat lunch with you, share those kind thoughts that come to mind when you hear a friend singing or excelling at a game. I don't know about you, but I definitely feel joyful and like partying when people are kind to me.

We're excited that we have an awesome outdoor space to use during our days together. This means you can only be outside when given permission and you have staff with you. We will also be staying within the boundaries of the fence outside- no wandering off. Besides, VISTO is all about working together!

Host: Another VISTO Virtue is to keep your hands to yourself. There are some amazing things around VISTO for us to explore but this is when you're invited to do so. Distractions away and toys should be away at all times. No Phones - we want to get to know YOU; so keep these things in your bag.

There is so much going on at VISTO that we hope you won't even miss these things.

Host: Lastly, DIVE IN! We hope that you will jump into activities and learning with enthusiasm!! We want you to feel courageous enough to try new things and excited to learn about yourself and your incredibly unique abilities. Our entire staff will be participating and cheering you on - so let's do this!