

JOY OPENING SESSION | DAY 3



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 3: Who's Invited to the Party?

Why does Jesus want me at His party?

Supplies:

- Masquerade mask
- Sunglasses
- Party invitations
- Table with party supplies (bowl)
- Podium/other table (tax collection booth)
- BINGO cards for each camper and pencils/pens
- Dance music prepared for skit
- Clothing for Jesus
- "Tax collector" label for Matthew & clothing for Matthew + disciples + Pharisees

Host: Welcome to VISTO, campers! I hope you are all enjoying this week of camp. This week, we are celebrating how Jesus brings joy into our lives! We started with celebrating the birth of Jesus as a baby and then learning about how he loved people and brought joy into their lives when he walked on Earth.

Host: Let's start with a game today. This one is going to show us some of the ways that we are different – not everyone is made the same. It's VISTO BINGO! Can we have campers pair up? Bombershay campers, you'll partner with someone from Olio. Parlando campers, you can partner with someone from Olio or someone from your own crew!

Host: Once you have a partner, come up to the front to get a Bingo sheet and a pencil. Together, you and your partner will walk around the room to find people who match the descriptions on your VISTO Bingo card. They must sign your Bingo card in the square of their description. Your goal is to be the first to get five in a row on your card! Everyone ready? Action!

Host: We have a winner! Congratulations, _campers who won_. Did you all learn some new fun facts about each other?

(VESPER enters the stage, holding invitation cards with various designs on them, muttering to herself)

DAY 3: WHO'S INVITED TO THE PARTY?



Host: (confused) Hi Vesper, what do you have there?

VESPER: OH MAN! This is useless! (she throws all the invitations into the air) I'm deciding the best way to invite people to my party for Jesus, and I just can't decide what invitation is the best.

Host: Oh wow, that does sound complicated. Inviting people is an important part of throwing a party!

VESPER: I *know*. And that's not even the worst part! I have no idea *who* I should invite to the party. I want it to be super joyful, and I want all of you campers to be there, but... I don't know.

Host: What aren't you sure about, Vesper?

VESPER: Well, I know that some parties have a guest list that not everyone gets to be on. And sometimes people have to all match in order to come! Like, my friend once threw this masquerade party, where everyone wore cool masks, like...

(runs to side of stage and picks it up)

this one! And I've seen in movies that there are parties only for VIPs, who wear cool sunglasses like

(picks them up)

these! But... what if someone doesn't have a mask to wear? Or what if they don't want to wear sunglasses indoors? Do I still invite them? Does everyone have to look the same to come to my party? What if someone feels different from everyone else? What if people don't think they belong?

Host: You know what, Vesper? That reminds me of a great story in the Bible – another one with Jesus that's full of joy. I think it might help you with your invitation problems. (crew leaders/other staff come up to help with skit)

VESPER: Okay, I sure hope so!

Cue Bible Story Time SFX

Host: This is a story from the Bible. And the Bible is... TRUTH! That's right. While Jesus was living on Earth, he collected a group of friends and followers called disciples who listened to his teachings and shared life with him. They were very joyful, because they got to learn from Jesus and be loved by him.

DAY 3: WHO'S INVITED TO THE PARTY?



While this happens, Jesus and disciples enter stage and are dancing to a song for a few seconds (dance music), then freeze

Host: In Jesus's time, there were some people called tax collectors whose job was to collect money from the people who lived near them. People didn't like tax collectors very much, because tax collectors often charged them more than they were supposed to and then took the extra money for themselves. One of those tax collectors was named Matthew.

Matthew comes on stage to the tax collection booth, sad and with a name tag that says "tax collector"

Host: One day, Jesus and his disciples walked by Matthew's tax collection booth, when Jesus did the unthinkable.

Jesus and disciples are dancing by and then see Matthew and stop dancing. Jesus walks up to Matthew and takes off "tax collector" label, then beckons for Matthew to come with him

Host: Jesus invited Matthew to be a part of his followers – and Matthew followed him! Even though Matthew was disliked by many people, including some of Jesus's followers, Jesus invited him in because he loved Matthew.

Jesus and Matthew dance with the rest of the disciples

Host: Matthew was so excited to be invited by Jesus that he threw a huge party for Jesus, and he invited many friends, including other tax collectors, to come. Jesus filled him with so much joy that he had to celebrate with others!

Jesus, disciples, Matthew and Matthew's friends (come onstage) are dancing together

Host: Suddenly, some religious leaders called Pharisees heard about the party and complained to the disciples! They didn't like tax collectors, either. They thought that the people eating with Jesus didn't deserve to receive joy from Jesus.

Dancing stops as Pharisees confront Jesus and the disciples

Host: But Jesus told the Pharisees that they had it all wrong. You see, the Pharisees thought they had enough joy in their life and that they didn't need Jesus. But Jesus came for everyone, and everyone needs his joy in their life. He invites everyone to experience his love and joy!

Host: And you know what, campers? That means you, too! Each one of you is invited by Jesus to experience his love! Let's all get up and dance to celebrate!

all people on stage and campers dance for a minute or so

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Host: Let's give our staff a round of applause for that amazing dancing. So, Vesper. Did you learn something from this story?

VESPER: Oh yeah, big time. The Pharisees didn't think that everyone should be invited, but Jesus totally proved them wrong! Everyone is invited to Jesus's party, even if people don't like them, or if they make mistakes. And if Jesus did it, I want to do it, too! I'm going to invite everyone to my party for Jesus, even if we are different.

Host: That sounds like a great idea, Vesper! I'm so glad this story helped.

VESPER: Thanks, _Host's name_! I'm going to finish my invitations now. Bye everyone!

Host: Campers, I hope this story taught you something, too. Matthew discovered that knowing Jesus was worth celebrating- and that's why he threw the party!

Got some joy to share? Share it everywhere!

And Jesus invites everyone to know him and experience his love, no matter what we've done or what others think about us. He values each of us individually, for the special ways that we have been made. I want you all to reflect on the special ways that God has made you, as you consider this question:

CANVA ANIMATION

Question of the Day: Why does Jesus want me at His party?

Host: Can we pray together before we move on with the rest of our awesome VISTO camp day? Let's bring our attention to God.

Host: Dear God, thank you for inviting all of us into camp today, and inviting all of us to get to know Jesus, too. Even when we don't feel like we belong, or others exclude us, you want to get to know us. Help us to discover more about how you invite us in and get to know us this week. In your name we pray, Amen.