Opening Prayer
Dear Awesome God, with joy and exultation we come before You! We praise You for creating and sustaining our lives. We are sorry for the times we have sinned against You and have fallen into discouragement and even despair. Jesus Christ is our Savior from sin. The joy of our salvation is restored in and through Him. As the Holy Spirit works through Word and Sacraments, we are enabled to rejoice, give thanks, share Your message of salvation, and praise You. Bless our study of Your Word. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Living Joy
What do the following passages reveal about the living joy that our loving God gives to us?

Nehemiah 8:10b
Psalm 5:11–12
Psalm 16:1–11
Psalm 35:27
Psalm 51:10–12
Isaiah 35:10
Luke 2:10
John 15:9–11
1 Peter 1:3–9

Read Isaiah 55:11–13. How does the Holy Spirit engender and nourish faith in verse 11? What other means does the Holy Spirit use to engender and nourish faith? (See also 1 Peter 3:21a and 1 Corinthians 11:23–26.)

Continue with Isaiah 55:12–13. What word picture is given in verses 12–13? (See also Genesis 3:18 and Isaiah 35:1.)

Faith Talk
Psalm 30:5b reminds us that weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning. In light of the Bible passages above, share with a partner or the small group how you would explain this phrase to a friend. (See the context of this passage in Psalm 30:1–5, 11–12 for additional clues.)
Living Joy

We are blessed with a joy that is alive because it is connected to God and His good gifts of salvation, mercy, grace, faith, peace, hope, and joy! The Holy Spirit helps us to live out our joy each day. See Galatians 5:22–23 for a list of the fruit of the Spirit. Joy is given to each believer in Christ, along with all of the other fruit (the whole “bunch”) of the Spirit — it is ours!

Read Hebrews 12:1–2. How do we live our lives joyfully in the shadow of Christ's saving work of atonement for us? Be specific. ___________________________ ___________________________

The verb for the word “joy” is “rejoice.” In response to God’s gifts of salvation, mercy, grace, faith, peace, hope, and joy, how are we privileged to rejoice daily in living that joy? Identify those specific ways in the following passages.

Psalm 31:7
Zephaniah 3:14
Romans 5:1–5
Romans 12:11–13
1 Corinthians 12:26
2 Corinthians 13:11
Philippians 2:1–4
Philippians 4:4–9
Colossians 1:10–12
1 Thessalonians 5:15–17
3 John 4

If time permits

Read Luke 15:1–7, the Parable of the Lost Sheep. What lesson is Jesus teaching the Pharisees and scribes (and us)!? __ ___________________________ ___________________________

Faith Talk

Share with a partner or the small group specific ways that you can share the joy of your salvation in your daily living. How is everlasting joy pictured in Isaiah 51:11 and Revelation 19:6–10? ___________________________ ___________________________

Faith Talk

Share with a partner or the small group about a time when the joy of the Lord was your strength.

Faith Walk

1. By the power of the Spirit, rejoice in your salvation in Christ and share the joy of your salvation with a special woman in your life.
2. Memorize a particularly meaningful “joy” passage used in this study, and start each day by repeating it.
3. Joyfully sing (at the top of your voice!) the hymns during worship this month. Meditate on the words and the message of each one.
4. Make a list of the joyful times in your life, and thank God for giving you the grace, mercy, hope, and joy to experience them.

Closing Litany (1 Chronicles 16:23–34):

Leader: Sing to the L ORD, all the earth! Tell of His salvation from day to day,

Group: Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous works among all the peoples!

Leader: For great is the L ORD, and greatly to be praised, and He is to be feared above all gods.

Group: For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the L ORD made the heavens.

Leader: Splendor and majesty are before Him; strength and joy are in His place.

Group: Ascribe to the L ORD the glory due His name; bring an offering and come before Him!

Leader: The sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it!

Leader: Then shall the trees of the forest sing for joy before the L ORD, for He comes to judge the earth.

All: Oh give thanks to the L ORD, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever! Amen.

Closing Song

“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee” (LSB #803) or “Joy to the World” (LSB #387; LW #53; TLH #87).

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