

# Joyful Noises



**L**ynette's family seemed to always be on the move. Each time she went to a new school and a new church, she had to find new friends.

As she approached the new church, she heard lots of noise in the gym. Upon entering, Lynette saw a group in a huddle. The door slammed, and everyone turned to her. "Hi," she said shyly. "I'm Lynette."

"Welcome!" a friendly voice called out. "We were just assigning duties for the Winter Celebration next week. Can you help?"

Lynette responded, "Tell me what you need. I'm pretty sure I can do it."

First, she made door and stage signs. They weren't bold and vibrant enough. Next, she helped the decorating team. Everything she put up, they took down because it clashed with the setup. Pastor came in to see how everything was going. Lynette sat sadly on the side while everyone else was busy working and talking about the celebration.

"Work too much for you?" Pastor asked her with a concerned look on his face.

"Not really," she replied. "Every way I tried to help has been rejected. They're nice to me, but my ideas don't seem to fit."

"What are you good at? What has God given you to use to help people? He supplies us all differently so that together, we can get a job done," Pastor remarked.

Lynette began to hum to herself, and then she sang out loud. Everyone stopped. A few of them gathered closer to hear the beautiful sound. Pastor and everyone who was listening asked if Lynette would sing a solo at the celebration. Lynette felt good about being with the group and really being able to help. Now she understood why she had been sent.

## In My Heart

*"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:4–5, NIV).*

## WORD!

**Ephesians 4:1–16, NIV**—As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. **2** Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. **3** Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. **4** There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6** one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. **7** But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. **8** This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people." **9** (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? **10** He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) **11** So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, **12** to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up **13** until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. **14** Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. **15** Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. **16** From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

## SIDEBAR

### Unity in the Body of Christ

Christians should live according to the call of God. God gives spiritual gifts to believers to equip them to work together and to carry out the calling God has given them. The gifts are diverse for the multiple purposes found in ministry. As believers grow in maturity, they understand the concept of unity in Christ and the ways their gifts can be used to serve the church. In turn, Christians are exhorted to help others and speak the truth in an attitude of love while assisting them in finding where their gifts may be used in Christ.

### How to Carry out Your Calling

Jammers, use what God has given you to work together with others:

**G**—Give of your talents when called upon.

**I**—Initiate the process by offering your talents where they can be used.

**F**—Find out what gifts God has given you.

**T**—Tell the Body of Christ you are willing to use what God gave you.

## GOT IT!

### A. We Are One

Use Word! to help you fill in the words “one” or “Christ” to complete each statement.

1. “There is \_\_\_\_\_ body and \_\_\_\_\_ Spirit, just as you were called to \_\_\_\_\_ hope when you were called; \_\_\_\_\_ Lord, \_\_\_\_\_ faith, \_\_\_\_\_ baptism; \_\_\_\_\_ God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (verses 4–6).
2. “So \_\_\_\_\_ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of \_\_\_\_\_ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of \_\_\_\_\_” (verses 11–13).

### B. What is My Calling?

Everyone has a talent. Some have many talents. Complete the inventory to discover your calling.

1. Work with a partner.
2. Complete the answers in the Spiritual Gifts Inventory.
3. Tally each column.
4. Complete the grid to show where your highest talents or gifts are.

## JAM SESSION

### Living Together

After we have worked together on a project, when everything goes well, we all feel positive about life. The writer of Ephesians says that although each of us brings different gifts, we find true unity as we grow in Christ, who is the Head of the whole Body. *How do we gain a deeper understanding of who Christ is in our lives?* Lynette wanted to help, but she did not offer herself in the areas of her gifts. Even though she worked with the students, her efforts were fruitless. When Pastor encouraged her to look to what God gifted her with, she was able to offer a gift that was useful to the Body. The experience became fulfilling to all the members of the Body of Christ.

## JAM ON IT!

### Believers Have Talents

Use the “How to Use Your Talents” sheet from the Spiritual Gifts Inventory and find your top three gifts. Which suggested activities could you try to put those gifts into action? Circle the ones you want to try this week. Write down the results of what happened and how you felt after doing them. Be prepared to share one of the activities with the class next week.

## LAST JAM

**Glorify God and grow: Use what He gave you!**

## QUESTIONS FOR CLASS

**Use this space to write down questions you have about this lesson.**

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# Five Generations



**F**amily! Family! Now that we've exchanged gifts, let's go into the family room, gather around the fireplace, and listen to Granddaddy Lewis tell the Christmas story," said Jaylin's Uncle Lee. This had been a Wilson family tradition for the last 50 years. Granddaddy Lewis and Grandma Lila were now in their late 80s, with five generations living. The family Christmas dinner tradition originally started at their home until the family expanded through births and marriages. Their home soon became too small to hold the family's annual Christmas celebration.

This year the family Christmas dinner was held at Uncle Lee's house. The sounds of joy and laughter covered the house like a warm blanket in winter. Family members came from near and far to feel each other's affectionate embrace. The cares and woes of the year eased away during the Wilson family Christmas gathering. This was the true meaning of Christmas.

"The love of family is a weapon against the cruel world," expressed Grandma Lila. "Jesus in the family brings joy."

Granddaddy Lewis added, "The angels proclaimed the birth of Jesus would bring joy to everyone and peace on earth."

The little children sat at their grandparents' feet; the adults sat on the sofa and in chairs. Jaylin and his cousins took their usual spots along the wall. It didn't matter how old they were—this was a special moment. Everyone—all five generations of the Wilson family—gazed at Granddaddy Lewis in anticipation of the rest of the traditional Christmas story.

## In My Heart

*"[The Lord] has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promises he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever"*  
(Luke 1:54–55, NIV).

## WORD!

**Luke 1:46–55, NIV**—Mary's Song

**46** And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord

**47** and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

**48** for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed,

**49** for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name.

**50** His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.

**51** He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

**52** He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.

**53** He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.

**54** He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful

**55** to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors."



## SIDEBAR

### According to the Promise

Today's Scripture passage is called The Magnificat, or Mary's Song of Praise. Here, Mary is praising God for choosing her to fulfill His promise. She recognizes the nature of God's kingdom and that in the birth of Christ, the promise to Abraham and his descendants would be fulfilled.

### How to Remain Faithful

1. Practice the Word.
2. Read the Word.
3. Obey the Word.
4. Meditate on the Word.
5. Integrate the Word into your daily routine.
6. Seek truth in the Word.
7. Expect to grow from the Word.

## GOT IT!

### A. Mary's Song

Use WORD! to help you determine whether the statements below are TRUE or FALSE.

1. God sent the rich away empty.  
TRUE FALSE
2. God was merciful to Abraham and his descendants.  
TRUE FALSE
3. Mary said, "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God."  
TRUE FALSE
4. The Lord has performed mighty deeds with His hands.  
TRUE FALSE
5. God has gathered the proud and brought up the rulers.  
TRUE FALSE
6. He filled the hungry with small things.  
TRUE FALSE

### B. Kind Words for Christmas

1. Write your name on an index card.
2. Give the card to your teacher.
3. Your teacher will give you a new index card with someone's name on it.
4. Think of encouraging, motivating, and uplifting things about that person.

5. On the card, write those thoughts under the person's name and give it back to your teacher. You'll get your card back—with kind words for you—at the end of class.

## JAM SESSION

### Celebrating Promises Fulfilled

Faithfulness has timeless benefits. How are acts of faithfulness rewarded in a time far from the actual acts? Because Abraham was faithful to God and God was faithful to the promise to give Abraham many descendants, God acknowledged Mary's faithfulness to Him by choosing her to be the mother of the Savior. Granddaddy Lewis and Grandma Lila had many descendants to pass on the true meaning of Christmas to each year. Their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren experienced the true meaning of love and family centered on Christ. Jaylin and his cousins cherished those moments, and they are sure to pass the tradition on to their children.

## JAM ON IT!

### The Wait is Great

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was the fulfillment of a promise to Abraham's seed. Have you ever waited a long time for a promise to be fulfilled? Think about the feelings associated with the fulfillment of a long-awaited promise.

## LAST JAM

God is faithful to keep His promises!

## QUESTIONS FOR CLASS

Use this space to write down questions you have about this lesson.

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