

ADULT NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP

What Sparked Jesus' Joy?

Luke 10:21–24 · The Gospel of Luke, Vol. 5

Reformed · Christ-Centered · Baptist | 60–75 minutes

Aim: That believers would rejoice with Christ that the Father freely reveals himself to the lowly through the Son—and that any who are still hiding would come to Jesus.

Leader Snapshot

Thesis. Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit because the Father is not a hiding God, not a conceited God, and not a stingy God: he reveals himself to the lowly through the Son.

Gospel center. We do not climb up to God by wisdom, status, or effort. The eternal Father gives the eternal Son. Knowing God is a gift of grace received by faith, not a prize for the impressive.

Watch-outs for this passage

- Do not let “little children” become a vague call to niceness or anti-intellectualism. Jesus is contrasting self-sufficiency with need.
- Do not let “God prefers the lowly” become “God loves losers more than winners.” The issue is pride, not IQ, income, or personality.
- Keep the Trinity in view: the Son rejoices in the Spirit and thanks the Father. Revelation is the work of the triune God.
- End with Christ, not with self-inventory. The passage is not “try harder to be humble.” It is “receive the Son.”

1. Hook — Get the Room Talking

8–10 minutes

Marie Kondo became famous by asking one question about every object in a house: “Does this spark joy?” If it does, keep it. If it doesn’t, let it go. The point was not only a tidy closet. The question forced people to name what they actually treasure.

Ask two or three of these. Do not chase every story.

1. What is one ordinary object in your house that, if you held it, would immediately spark joy? Why?
2. What would you least want to part with—and what does that object say about what you value?
3. When was the last time you saw someone else’s joy so full that it was almost startling?

Bridge to the text. Only once in all four Gospels are we told that Jesus experienced this kind of overflowing, Spirit-given joy. Luke 10:21 says he “rejoiced in the Holy Spirit.” His heart burst. Why? Not because the Seventy-Two had impressive résumés, and not because the wise of the age finally approved of him. He rejoiced because the Father reveals himself to the lowly through the Son. That is the beating heart of this study.

LEADER HINT

Keep the hook light and human. Do not preach during the icebreaker. After two or three answers, read the text. If someone goes long on a sentimental object, thank them and move on: “That is exactly the kind of treasure this passage is about to redefine.”

2. The Passage — Read, Outline, Summarize

10–12 minutes

Have someone read Luke 10:21–24 aloud (the translation your church uses). Then read it a second time if the group is small.

In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” Then turning to the disciples he said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”

Luke 10:21–24, ESV

Immediate context

Jesus had sent out seventy-two messengers to heal and preach. They returned rejoicing that even the demons were subject to them in his name (Luke 10:17–20). Jesus redirects their joy from power in ministry to names written in heaven—and then he himself overflows with joy in the Holy Spirit.

Simple outline

- v. 21 — The Son thanks the Father: revelation is hidden from the self-assured and given to “little children,” according to the Father’s gracious will.
- v. 22 — The Son alone knows the Father, and the Father is known only as the Son chooses to reveal him.
- vv. 23–24 — The disciples are blessed. Old Testament prophets and kings longed for this unveiling and did not see it.

Summary

The God of Scripture is eternally Father. Before he created, before he gave a law, he loved the Son (John 17:24). Because he is Father, he is not a solitary miser. He delights to give himself. Yet sinners hide, and the proud assume they can reach him by wisdom. So the Lord of heaven and earth hides these things from the self-sufficient and reveals them to the needy. That revelation is not a vague spiritual feeling. It is the Son. No one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son is pleased to make him known. The disciples stand in a privilege kings only dreamed of: they see the Father in the face of Christ.

The text shows	Therefore God is not...	The good news is...
The Father delights to reveal himself	a hiding God	Distance from God is almost always on our side.
He reveals himself to the lowly	a conceited God	You are not disqualified by emptiness; emptiness is the qualification.
He reveals himself through the Son	a stingy God	He has not rationed himself. He has given his only Son.

LEADER HINT

After the summary, pause. Ask, “Where did you hear good news in that?” Let one or two people answer before questions. If someone only hears “God hides from smart people,” gently correct: the issue is not intelligence; it is the illusion that we can know God on our own terms.

3. Discussion Questions

30–35 minutes • Use all four if time allows. If the group is talkative, prioritize Q2 and Q4.

Read the verse again before each question. Leader notes are for you, not to be read as a lecture.

Question 1 — Content: The Father who reveals

ASK

Jesus thanks the Father that he has revealed “these things... for such was your gracious will” (v. 21). What does it mean that God is first and eternally Father, and how does that explain why he delights to reveal himself?

Follow-ups if the room goes quiet: What was God doing before creation? (See John 17:24.) If God were only Creator or only Lawgiver, how would that change the way we imagine him? After the fall, who hid—God or Adam? (Genesis 3:8)

LEADER HINT

Press the Trinity without turning the night into a seminar. The Father has eternally loved the Son in the Spirit. Love is not a hobby God picked up after making people. Michael Reeves’s point from the sermon is useful: God is Father “all the way down,” not Father as a day job.

Application edge: many in a neighborhood group feel God is distant because they have been hiding—busyness, shame, doubt, unconfessed sin. Name that tenderly. Do not force confession in the large group.

Baptist note: we do not wait for a priestly class or a secret knowledge. The Father has spoken in his Word and given his Son. Ordinary believers may know God.

Question 2 — Content: Hidden from the “wise,” revealed to “little children”

ASK

Why does the Father hide these things from “the wise and understanding” and reveal them to “little children”? Who are the “wise” in this text, and who are the children?

Follow-ups: Is Jesus against learning, study, or careful thinking? Where do you see this pattern elsewhere? (Matthew 5:3; 1 Corinthians 1:26–31; James 4:6) Calvin’s warning: if God preferred the noble and skilled, we would conclude that we obtain him by our ability.

LEADER HINT

Define terms early. “Wise and understanding” = the self-sufficient, those who will only have a God they can manage. “Little children” = the dependent, those who come with empty hands. C. S. Lewis is helpful: a proud man is always looking down, and therefore cannot see what is above him.

Watch the room. High-achievers may feel attacked. Low-achievers may feel romanticized. Both need the same gospel: God is not impressed by us and is not embarrassed by us. If someone says, “I have nothing to offer God,” that is not a problem to fix. That is the door. Say so.

Do not allow the group to list other proud people. Turn the question inward: “Where do I still want God as an accessory to my résumé?”

Question 3 – Content: Only through the Son**ASK**

Jesus says no one knows the Father except the Son “and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (v. 22). Why is it impossible to know the true God apart from Jesus Christ?

Follow-ups: What would change if we built our picture of God from our feelings, from nature alone, or from “the God I like to believe in”? How does the cross prove that the Father is not stingy? (Romans 8:32; the sermon’s Abraham/Isaac reversal) The disciples see what prophets and kings longed to see (vv. 23–24). What, exactly, are they seeing?

LEADER HINT

This is the Christ-centered hinge. Do not rush it. Reformed emphasis: revelation and salvation are sovereign gifts. The Son chooses to reveal the Father. That is not cold; it is how grace works. Dead sinners do not discover God; God makes himself known.

Hold particularity without being brittle. Jesus is not one option among many religious founders. He is the eternal Son, the radiance of the Father’s glory (Hebrews 1:3), the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6).

If someone asks about sincere people in other religions, be honest and kind: sincerity cannot create a revelation God has not given. Our call is not to score points. It is to hold out the Son. Connect verses 23–24 to privilege, not pride: we hold a completed Bible and proclaim a crucified and risen Christ. That should produce gratitude, not swagger.

Question 4 – Application: Will you stop hiding and receive the Son?**ASK**

Where are you tempted to treat God as hiding, conceited, or stingy—and what would it look like this week to come to Jesus as a little child?

Possible angles (do not force all of them):

Hiding. I keep God at arm’s length because of shame, busyness, or fear that he will demand too much.

Impressing. I still believe he would love a cleaned-up version of me more—more Bible reading, fewer habits, a better marriage.

Stinginess. I interpret unanswered prayer or hard providence as proof that he withholds his heart.

Joy. Jesus rejoiced that the Father gives himself this way. What would it mean for his joy to become ours?

LEADER HINT

This is the conversion-and-sanctification question. In a Baptist neighborhood group you will likely have covenant members, doubters, and perhaps an unbelieving neighbor. Speak so that all three can hear.

For the exhausted moralist: “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden” (Matthew 11:28). Rest is not the prize at the end of improvement. Rest is Christ. For the ashamed: there are no second-class children in the family of God. Union with Christ, not performance, is the ground of acceptance.

For the sufferer: God may withhold lesser gifts. He has not withheld the Son. That is how we interpret the dark. For the unconverted: do not only “know some things about Jesus.” Trust him. Fall upon him. The Father is not waiting to be found; he finds sinners through the preached Christ. Leave silence after this question. Do not fill every pause. Then pray.

4. Leader Helps — Running the Night Well

Suggested flow

Minutes	Movement
0–10	Welcome, hook, bridge
10–22	Read the text, context, outline, summary
22–55	Discussion (Q1–Q4)
55–65	Gospel restatement and prayer
65–75	Informal lingering and follow-up conversations

Tone

Warm, clear, unhurried. Neighborhood groups die by two extremes: the lecture and the therapy circle. You are a shepherd of a text. Keep bringing people back to Luke 10:21–24.

If discussion stalls

- Reread one verse and ask, “What word surprises you?”
- Ask for a story after a truth: “Where have you seen God choose the unlikely?”
- Use the sermon’s three denials: hiding / conceited / stingy. Which accusation against God is most believable to you right now?

If discussion goes sideways

Intellectual rabbit trails (Calvin, election, other religions): affirm the question, give a one-minute answer, and return to the text. Offer to talk after.

Self-loathing disguised as humility: distinguish gospel poverty of spirit from despair. Children are welcomed; they are not despised.

Cheap grace: receiving the Son includes repentance. Coming as a child is not remaining in willful sin.

Anti-intellectual swipe: the church needs pastors, teachers, and thoughtful disciples. The warning is against autonomy, not against study.

Doctrinal ballast (use only as needed)

Trinity. The Son rejoices in the Holy Spirit and addresses the Father. Christian joy is participation in the life of God, not a mood we manufacture.

Sovereign grace. Hiding and revealing are the Father’s gracious will. Effectual calling is behind “anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

Sola Scriptura and the sufficiency of Christ. We do not seek extra revelation to know the Father. The Son has made him known, and the Spirit bears witness through the Word.

Believers’ church. Those who see and hear (vv. 23–24) are disciples. Baptism and church membership are for those who have come to the Son, not for the respectable or the merely curious.

Already / not yet. We see more than prophets saw, yet we still walk by faith. Full sight waits for glory.

Closing word you can almost read

*The Father reveals himself. He is not a hiding God.
He reveals himself to the lowly. He is not a conceited God.
He reveals himself through the Son. He is not a stingy God.*

*You do not have to find him. He finds you.
You do not have to impress him. He chooses the unimpressive.
You do not have to pry anything from his grip. He opens his hand to give his only Son.*

And that is what made Jesus rejoice. It is what still sparks the joy of heaven. And that same joy can be kindled in you today. Come to Jesus.

Pray along these lines

- Adore the Father for his gracious will to reveal himself.
- Thank the Son that we know the Father only because he has made him known—supremely at the cross.
- Ask the Spirit to humble the proud, lift the ashamed, and give childlike faith.
- Pray for neighbors who are still hiding, and for this group to speak of Christ with joy rather than superiority.

This guide follows the sermon *What Sparked Jesus’ Joy?* on Luke 10:21–24. Use supporting voices sparingly. Let Luke do the heavy lifting.