

Teaching the Joy of Honesty and Communication

As the name of this unit suggests, we are dealing with a broad category of things here — first, the fulfillment, strength, and self-esteem kind of joy that comes from being forthright, candid and honest; second, the self-accepting, comfortable kind of joy that comes from being real, from being ourselves and accepting the various kinds of emotions that we feel; third, the joy that comes from being kind and friendly; and fourth, the joy of using our natural abilities of communication.

Concept

In this new version of Joy School 2.0, the previous units of The Joy of Honesty and Candor and The Joy of Communication and Relationships have been combined into one unit containing all of the previous concepts: This resulting new unit is called The Joy Honesty and Communication.

While all of the “joys” in this month’s unit are “social,” it is well to realize and keep in mind that some are joys to *preserve* in children while others are joys to teach them.

As you think about it, you’ll realize that that differentiation is an interesting and important one. Young, preschool age children are naturally truthful and even blunt about things. They have to learn to lie, hedge, and exaggerate from adults and their friends.. The objective of the first part of this unit is to provide methods and means whereby we can avoid teaching children those negative qualities and reinforce and preserve in them the beautiful and natural quality of honesty and candor. There is a real power in utter candor, and a true joy in simply saying what you really think, in being right with self and with others. The freedom of a clear conscience is endless.

Relationships and communication, on the other hand, while they are joys that come very naturally to children, are clearly joys that require certain skills that children have to discover. As children learn to enjoy the consequences of being kind through being a good friend and practicing good manners, they will want to expand on those skills and natural inclinations. The power of good verbal communication and the beauty of meaningful relationships filled of kindness are things we spend lifetimes pursuing, but very small children are fully capable both of understanding their value and of wanting the joy and satisfaction that both can bring.

Tips and Reminders

1. Read the corresponding chapters of the book, *Teaching Your Children Joy*, by Richard and Linda Eyre. (Free copies can be found at eyresfreebooks.com)
2. Since, in the unit on The Joy of the Body, the children got used to the term “feel” or “feeling” in reference to the sense of touch, you may need to clarify the term in this unit as it refers to emotions.
3. Throughout the teaching of this unit, the teachers should verbalize their own feelings of anger, fear and frustrations, as well as feelings of joy and love. Show control, but show honesty. Tell the children how you feel. For example, “When you do that, I feel very angry.”
4. Watch for opportunities to make comments such as, “How did you feel when that happened?” or “I’m glad you told me how you feel,” or “It’s alright to cry. That really hurt, didn’t it?”
5. Following are some simple definitions you could use in explaining the meanings of some of the emotional terms that children may not be familiar with:
Frustrated The way you feel when you try and try but something just won’t work out the way you want it to.
Disappointed The feeling you have when something doesn’t happen the way you expected or hoped it would.
Ashamed The way you may feel when you have done something you know was not right.
Embarrassed A way you may feel when you have made a silly mistake.
Jealous A kind of angry or sad feeling you may have when you wish you had what someone else has.
Proud The way you feel when you have done something very well, or when someone tells you how well you did.
Frightened Another way to say “scared.”
Lonely The way you might feel when you are all alone or you have no one to play with.
Sympathetic The way you feel when someone else is sick or hurt or sad and you feel sorry for them.

Lesson Overviews

The first three lessons deal primarily with honesty, emotions and feelings. The last three lessons deal with kindness, friends, and communication.

*Note: If your schedule fits, and your group agrees to it, you may consider having a Halloween-themed Joy School day, or days. See **Lesson 3.31** for the Optional Halloween Party. If you do use the Halloween Lesson, you may want to insert some of the songs into previous lessons so the children have time to learn them fully before the Halloween Party.*

Lesson 3.1: Emotions

This lesson introduces the foundation of many of the concepts in this unit: it teaches different names for various emotions, and **helps the children recognize these emotions in themselves.**

Lesson 3.2: Candor

The children are taught and reminded to recognize and express emotions honestly and openly. Knowing that such candor is acceptable and appropriate can really help children this age build a feeling of self-worth and integrity. This lesson also helps teach skills for expressing emotions in a safe and calm way so that others can see past the outburst and keep the communication open.

Lesson 3.3: Honesty

This lesson teaches or reinforces the children's understanding of what it means to speak the truth. **It helps the children recognize the consequences of telling lies and to make commitments to act and speak honestly.**

Lesson 3.4: Friends and Kindness

This lesson brings really brings the three previous lessons together, taking the inward, self-refining joys of honesty and candor, and turning them outward into empathy and kindness. **Children are reminded that friendships are strengthened when we recognize the emotions and needs of others and treat them accordingly.**

Lesson 3.5: Kindness and Manners

This lesson is often a favorite of parents who afterwards see a marked difference in their children's manners. The lesson focuses on the *joy and fun* of having good manners, saying please and thank you, being kind to all the other people in our lives, and treating everyone as you would want to be treated through a lesson on the Golden Rule.

Lesson 3.6: Talking and Listening

This lesson is really a review of everything taught in this Unit, exemplified through reinforcing the importance of using all the skills of expressing emotions candidly, always telling the truth, and being kind. **Children are reminded of the benefits of being able to talk and listen.**

By the End of This Unit...

The skills learned in this unit should be found in both the parents and children. By the end of the unit you should feel comfortable expressing your emotions honestly and openly to your children, and they should feel the same as they interact with you. Encourage them to be truthful and don't set them up to lie by putting them on guilt trips or threatening them with "dire consequences." You will be better at making the emotional rewards for telling the truth out-weigh the penalties for whatever a child has done. You and the children will feel more natural and more aware of the use of good manners and kindness with those around you.

In turn, you should see an increase in the joy your children feel and expressing in their emotions, even the "bad" ones. And you should see them using their increased skills in communicating, such as telling you how they feel instead of resorting to tantrums or outbursts. You should also find yourself encouraging and praising them in their efforts to use good manners and to be kinder to their friends through sharing and talking things out. You may even have them reminding *you* of having good manners and being candid.

Book List

(Bold numbers are the lessons in which these particular books are used)

3.1	<i>My Many Colored Days</i>	Dr. Seuss	Emotions and colors in one.
3.3	<i>Where the Wild Things Are</i>	Maurice Sendak	Classic book about anger and reconciliation.
3.3	<i>On Monday When it Rained</i>	Cherryl Kachenmeister	A book of emotions and matching photographs of facial expressions.
	<i>I'm Frustrated</i>	Elizabeth Crary	Teaches children ways to handle their frustrations.
	<i>When I Feel Scared</i>	Cornelia Spelman	A little bear explains his fears and that it is okay to feel scared.
	<i>The Bravest of Us All</i>	Marsha Arnold	Even those who seem brave have fears.
	<i>"Let's Talk About" Series</i>	Joy Berry	Books for this section: Needing Attention, Feeling Sad, Feeling Angry, Feeling Afraid
	<i>Let's Go Home Little Bear</i>	Martin Waddell	Big Bear quiets Little Bear's fears and helps him to feel safe.
	<i>Today I Feel Silly</i>	Jamie Lee Curtis	Rhyming text and silly pictures of many different emotions.
	<i>I'm Gonna Like Me: Letting Off a Little Self-Esteem</i>	Jamie Lee Curtis	Two best friends explain what they like about themselves.
	<i>Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day</i>	Judith Viorst	Some days are just bad. This one is filled with lots of emotions.
	<i>Feelings</i>	Aliki	Pictures, dialogues, poems, and stories portray various emotions.
	<i>A Big, Fat Enormous Lie</i>	Marjorie Sharmat	A child's simple lie grows to enormous proportions.
	<i>The Honest-to-Goodness Truth</i>	Pat McKissack	Libby learns that telling the truth is harder than it sounds.
	<i>The Way I Feel</i>	Janan Cain	This board book aims to give children words for their emotions.