

## Teaching the Joy of the Body

The first two units this year, The Joy of the Body and The Joy of the Earth, are wonderfully fun topics. They are not the most unique units of the Joy School program; by that, we mean that many preschool programs teach children to appreciate nature and their physical bodies, while few, if any other programs, teach things like The Joy of Sharing, The Joy of Spontaneous Delight, and certain other “exclusively Joy School” units. Still, we think you will find that Joy School looks at and deals with the earth and the body in a particularly joyful and fresh way. For those of you just starting Joy School, the units on body and earth will “break you in” and prepare you for even more unique units to follow.

No matter what time of year you begin your school, we suggest that you start Joy School with the first two “Getting Acquainted” lessons from the Introductory Unit: The Joy of Joy School. Then begin this unit, The Joy of the Body. There is more about yearly schedules in the Introductory Manual.

As with each unit, remember that a major part of teaching your child the Joy of the Body is fully feeling this joy yourself! The more you internalize the joy, the more you will impart it! That is the reason each unit and each individual lesson begins with an overview of the concept involved and of the lesson’s objective. There is also a set of simple objectives for each unit, called “By the end of this unit...” Take the time to think and ponder a little at the beginning of each unit and at the start of each lesson, tune-in your own appreciation--and you will find yourself radiating it to your child!

### Concept

Now, on to this month’s joy, **The Joy of the Body**. Let’s start by thinking together for a moment about the joys of the physical body.

Quoting from *Teaching Your Children Joy*, by Richard and Linda Eyre, this description of a farmer they knew offers a glimpse of what it might look like to really feel the joy of the body.

It wasn’t that he was extraordinarily healthy; it was just that he enjoyed things about his physical body that most take for granted. He was a farmer, middle-aged, living in the flat, middle plain of America. He loved the hard, sweat-producing work in his field. “The hot sun limbers up my body,” he would say, “makes me feel more loose and easy.” He liked winter work as well, “My lungs like to feel that cold mornin’ air a ‘fillin’ ‘em, and if I work hard enough,

in ten minutes, I'm warm as summer."

On Wednesday evenings, after a long day's work, he played softball. He was the oldest member of the team. He said that part of the enjoyment was the competition and the company, but most of it was the physical joy. The catch, the throw, the hit — each, for him, was a momentary splurge of physical pleasure, a bump of joy.

The same physical joy showed in a different way when he took out his old fiddle. His tone was sometimes wrong — his position always was — but the rhythm in the twitch of his shoulder and tap of toe told me that his wide smile reflected uninhibited joy.

This man loved his senses and his senses loved the earth. He'd close his eyes so he could listen better to whippoorwills singing at night. He'd stop just to breathe the lilac breeze in early May. He'd let the soft black soil sift through his fist just to feel its texture. And when his wife baked apple pie, he would hold the first bite in his mouth for half a minute "to be sure I taste it all."

He found amazement and wonder in the natural processes of his body — the rejuvenation of sleep, the fuel of food. Much of this world's progress and possessions had passed by this man, but his ability to feel the joy of his own body twinkled in his eye and brightened his face so that the world looked back with envy.

Enjoy this unit! There are endless opportunities to get out and experience The Joy of the Body ourselves. As you teach it to your children, learn it yourself. Appreciate your senses. Increase your capacities. Get in better shape. Let your children see the joy you feel. Example is always the best teacher, especially when you are teaching joy!

You can also make a point of getting exercise together as a family (go for walks and bike rides, go swimming, etc.).

## Tips and Reminders

1. Be sure you have read the Joy School Introductory Manual.
2. As mentioned in the introduction, teach the introductory "Get-Acquainted" lesson plans first. Then begin this unit. Each of the three weeks in this unit has a special "sub-theme" that builds collectively to a good grasp of The Joy of the Body.
3. Visit your local library with the book list and check out the books for your assigned lessons. If any in your group have kid's books that teach about the body or any physical anatomy books, you might ask to have those loaned to the *Joy School Box* for the entirety of the unit,

since they will be used throughout the unit for Gathering Activities and lessons.

4. Read the corresponding chapter in *Teaching Your Children Joy* by Richard and Linda Eyre, so you will better understand the joy you are trying to teach. (Free copies can be found online at [eyresfreebooks.com](http://eyresfreebooks.com))
5. Throughout the unit, help the children to be aware of just how wonderful their bodies really are. Watch for opportunities to say things such as, "Listen, what do you hear? I'm glad I can hear a bird singing." "Your legs can really run fast, can't they?" "Can your eyes see that little spider up there? Mine can." "Your hands can do so many things." etc.
6. If you have a child in your group with a disability, you will need to use good judgment and be careful how you handle some of the aspects of the lesson.
7. If all the children in your group are from the same or similar religious backgrounds, relate appropriate parts of the lessons to the fact that God created our wonderful bodies and that the happiness and gratitude we feel for them can be expressed to Him.
8. Remember to read the "Notes to Parents" to the children each day before they go home. Then staple or paper clip them on their art/craft project.

## Lesson Overviews

We feel the joy of our bodies through three broad channels or dimensions. First, we feel joy **mentally** as we understand and ponder and reflect upon the wonder and intricacy of our marvelous bodies. Second, we feel joy **emotionally** as we appreciate them, express gratitude for them, etc. Third, we feel joy **physically** as we use our bodies, learn skills with them, take care of them, improve them.

Basically, the three weeks of this unit follow these three ways of feeling the joy of the body. The three aspects overlap in many ways. Some of the methods and teaching ideas in week one involve the senses and the physical games of week two and week three, etc. But if you, as a teacher, think of the three weeks as a division and concentrate on helping children to actually feel and experience The Joy of the Body mentally, emotionally, and physically, then you will find that you succeed with the children as well as with yourself.

## Mental Joy of the Body

### **Lesson 1.1: Body Parts**

The children will learn to name the body parts and more specifically learn how things work.

### **Lesson 1.2: The Wonder of Our Body**

This lesson is a general overview of our bodies and some of the basics of how our bodies work. It is especially important that this week's teacher show joy in appreciating his/her own body. It will be catching.

## Our Senses

### **Lesson 1.3: The Five Senses**

The children will learn about their five senses.

### **Lesson 1.4: Our Senses Help Us**

The children will appreciate how their senses help them enjoy the world.

## The Physical Joys of the Body

### **Lesson 1.5: Taking Care of Our Bodies**

The children will learn how important it is to take good care of their bodies and will be easing into the transition of The Joy of the Earth as they enjoy fresh vegetable stew with all their senses. (This week's teacher will be calling the other parents to send a vegetable with their child next time to make vegetable stew.)

### **Lesson 1.6: Gratitude for Our Bodies**

*Show and Tell* will happen during this lesson, so have your child bring something to show.

This week's lesson is an overview of the Unit, bringing together the joy we feel when we appreciate our bodies and all that we can do with them, when we relish in the beauty of the world around us, and when we take good care of our bodies.

## By the End of This Unit...

By the end of the Joy of the Body Unit, the children should be able to name basic body parts, name some of the five senses, and talk about some of the ways to take good care of their bodies.

The children should feel a greater appreciation for their bodies. Hopefully, you will find your children pointing out the majesty and wonder of the things their body can do or the ways their body helps them enjoy the world.

If the children are just beginning Joy School, you should begin to see some growth in the ability to pay attention to and cooperate in group discussions. However, this will most likely be a slow, incremental increase throughout the year. Children will naturally find more interest in *talking* about concepts as they mature over the course of the year.

Do not be discouraged if kids' get wiggly and have a hard time participating in a non-disruptive way at first. If this is the case, keep lessons somewhat short and spend more time with the hands on, musical, or activity based teaching. Increase the amount of interaction from the children by asking more questions. But do not merely add more free play time. While the children may seem as though they want to have more free play time, most experienced Joy School parents will tell you that both you and the children will enhance your Joy School experience when more time is spent with structured activities.

Free Play Time is wonderful and offers the teacher time to prepare for snack time or the art project, but it should not be the foundation of a Joy School day. In addition, you will help the next parent teacher by building an expectation of active cooperation from the kids. By the next time you teach the lesson, you will surely see much progress in this area.

## Book List

- The Unit Book List contains current children's books that could be used to supplement the lessons. Some or all of these books may not be available in your state or country. The books with a denoted Lesson Plan are those included within the lessons, but they could easily be substituted with other similarly themed books from this list or from your own personal or public library. Other books on the list can be provided to the children to look through during Free Play or Gathering Time.

1.1	<i>The Human Body: A First Discovery Book</i>	Sylvaine Perols	Children will love this simply illustrated first anatomy book.
1.1	<i>Usborne: See Inside Your Body</i>	Katie Daynes	This in depth book can be used for illustrating the basics. Lifting flaps.
1.1	<i>Your Insides</i>	Joanna Cole	Plastic overlay illustrations of the body.
1.1	<i>Outside In</i>	Clare Smallman	Illustrated flap book about anatomy.
1.3	<i>My Five Senses</i>	Aliki	Simple introduction to the senses.
1.5	<i>The Growing Story</i>	R. Kraus	
1.5	<i>I'm Growing</i>	Mandy Shur	
1.5	<i>I'm Growing</i>	Aliki	
1.6	<i>Mice Squeak, We Speak</i>	Tomie dePaola	A rhyming book: our bodies are especially suited to communicating with each other.
	<i>Clap Your Hands</i>	Lorinda Bryan Cauley	This book gets the kids to move around and use different parts of their body in a fun way. This is ALWAYS a hit. Every time.
	<i>A Bad Case of Stripes</i>	David Shannon	A creative favorite about a girl who gets a bad case of "stripes" and her body changes into whatever she hears.
	<i>Piggies</i>	Don and Audrey Wood.	This fantastic book goes through the different fingers and how they are different.
	<i>From Head to Toe</i>	Eric Carle	Classic book about about body parts of animals.
	<i>Go Away Big Green Monster</i>	Ed Emberley	Watch the monster grow part by part and then tell him to "Go Away!". Watch him disappear, one body part at a time.
	<i>Parts</i>	Tedd Arnold	Hilarious book about a boy who thinks he's literally "falling apart".
	<i>The Ear Book</i>	Al Perkins	Great book about listening to the world around us.
	<i>The Foot Book</i>	Dr. Seuss	Body parts described through classic Dr. Seuss poetry and illustrations.