

Youth Worship Lesson – December 13, 2020

WE PREPARE WITH JOY

Youth issue:
teen pregnancy

Focus Scripture: Luke 1:47-55

Purpose: To experience what Mary felt and sang about in her song of praise
To understand why Jesus' birth was good news and "joy to the world"

Preparation

Worship Table – purple or blue cloth

Pictures for Bible story and activity materials at the end of the lesson.

Lighting of the Christ Candle: We light this candle to remember that God is always with us.

Advent Wreath



This is the third week of Advent, the third week of waiting and preparing for the arrival of Jesus. Two weeks ago, we lit the first candle, the **HOPE** candle. (Light the **HOPE** candle.) Last week, we lit the second candle, the candle of **PEACE**. (Light the **PEACE** candle.) This week's candle is the candle of **JOY**. (Light the **JOY** candle.) This week, we think of the joy that Mary and Joseph felt as they waited for their baby to be born, and the joy that Jesus brought to the world.

Opening Prayer

O God, we celebrate during this time of preparation and patient waiting.

Be with us this day as we reflect on the joy that Mary felt.

Fill our hearts with joy as well. Amen.

Introducing the Theme

How do you feel when something great happens to you? What do you say? (**"Wow," "Awesome,"**) What do you do? (**laugh, shout, jump for joy**)

If you had some really good news to celebrate, who would you want to tell? Can you think of something from the past week that you could share or celebrate as good news? (**Encourage each child to share something. Help your children to recognize the good news in our everyday lives: a message from a friend who lives far away, a good or improved mark, a heart-warming story on the news, a day of beautiful weather, etc.**)

Exploring the Theme

Jesus' mother, Mary, had something incredible happen to her. Let us look at the story as told in the Gospel of Luke. **(Read Luke 1:26–33.)**

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. In addition, having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" However, when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Moreover, behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

- What was Mary's first reaction when she heard the news from Gabriel? **(confusion, verses 29)**
- Why do you think she felt this way? **(she had never seen an angel before and doubted her senses)**
- Do you know how old Mary was? **(12-14 years old – the usual age of marriage in that culture)**
- She was a young teen, and she was not married. How might the community around her have felt about her pregnancy? How do we treat unmarried teenage girls who become pregnant in our culture? Do you think Mary had anything to be afraid of? Mary's reaction to Gabriel is to trust in God.

She tells the angel: **(read Luke 1:38)**

Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Mary then travels to see her elderly cousin, Elizabeth, who Gabriel has told her is also pregnant. Do you remember who Elizabeth's baby grows up to be? **(John the baptizer)** And then Mary's feelings come pouring out. They are recorded in the Bible, in Luke 1:46-55. Let's turn there now. **(Read the passage.)**

And Mary said: "My soul^{bl} magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior, for He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.

For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.

And His mercy is on those who fear Him, from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever."

- How does Mary characterize God? (**mighty, holy, merciful, strong, just**)
- How does she characterize herself? (**God's lowly servant**)
- What does Mary mean when she says that God is "remembering Israel?" (**God is sending the promised Messiah, whom the Israelites have been waiting for for generations.**)

What feelings does Mary express in this passage? (**joy, humility, thankfulness, blessedness**) This passage is sometimes called, "Mary's Song of Praise." Mary knew that her life wasn't going to be easy, but her joy was that God was with her. Mary's song is one of the most popular passages of the Bible. Its message of hope and joy especially resonates with people who are experiencing oppression. In 1981, the military government of Argentina banned this song from the national radio network, calling it "subversive."

Memory Verse: *For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name.* Luke 1:49

Integrating the Theme – Christmas Quiz

Instructions for leader:

1. Copy both sides of this sheet, onto card stock if possible. Do NOT copy back to back.
2. Cut cards apart on solid lines and place face down.
3. Invite the youth to take a card and ask the group the answer. After people have guessed, questioner can share the answer in italics.
4. After playing, discuss: How important are the details of the Christmas story? How much does it matter what we believe?

Did the baby Jesus cry?

(Kind of a trick question – the Bible doesn't say whether Jesus cried or not, but there's no reason to think that he didn't.)

Were Mary and Joseph married when Jesus was born?

(According to Matthew 1:24 they got married after Mary learned she was pregnant, but before the baby was born. But according to Luke 2:5 they were only "betrothed" – kind of like being engaged.)

The Bible says Jesus was born on December 25 – true or false?

(False. The Bible doesn't give us any clue as to when Jesus was born. We have celebrated his birth near the winter solstice (December 21) to celebrate the birth of the "light of the world" at the darkest time of the year – at least in the northern hemisphere.)

What time of day does the Bible say Jesus was born?

(It doesn't.)

True or false: Joseph was excited when he heard Mary was pregnant.

(False. According to Matthew 1:18-25 he was upset. He wanted to divorce her – to spare her from being killed. However, in a dream God told him to marry her, and so he did.)

How many people were in the stable when Jesus was born?

(We don't know. However it was not uncommon for servants and children to sleep in the family stable, so it's quite likely that Mary and Joseph were not alone when she had her baby.)

True or false: angels have wings.

(According to the Bible, angels look like everyday people – that's why people often don't realize they have spoken to an angel until afterwards.)

What emotion did the shepherds have when they first saw the angel?

(They were terrified.)

What was King Herod's reaction when the magi came and asked where the new king of the Jews was born?

(He was troubled, and so was everyone else.)

Did the magi go back to King Herod to report what they saw?

(No; they had been warned in a dream that Herod was dangerous, and so they went home by a different road.)

True or false: after the magi brought their gifts, Mary, Joseph, and Jesus returned home.

(False: an angel warned them to be wary of King Herod, and so they fled to Egypt and lived there for several years.)

What is the name of Jesus' famous relative who is roughly the same age as Jesus?

(John the baptizer, or John the Baptist. We're not sure of the relationship, but John's mother Elizabeth was a "kinswoman" or relative of Jesus' mother, Mary.)

Where do we find the Christmas story in the Bible?

(Matthew chapter 1, Luke chapter 2.)

True or false: Matthew's gospel begins with a long list of men.

(True...and false. It does begin with a long list of men, but it also includes 5 significant women: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba – listed as "Uriah's wife" – and Mary.)

What animals does the Bible say were in the stable when Jesus was born?

(It doesn't say.)

How many kings were there?

(First of all, they were not kings – the Bible says they were magi or astrologers. Secondly, it doesn't tell us how many there were, but it does mention three gifts.)

Every Christmas pageant has an innkeeper. How many inns did Mary and Joseph go to before they got to stay in the stable?

(None. The word in the Bible is actually "living space" and refers to any room in the house. They probably would have tried to stay with Joseph's relatives.)

Where did the magi visit Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus?

(In a house – Matthew 2:11. Some scholars think Jesus may have been as old as two when the magi arrived.)

Closing Prayer

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.
Amen.