

Mary Praised God

BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 1:26-56

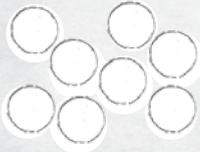
MAIN POINT: God chose Mary to be Jesus' mother.

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Timothy 1:15

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What makes Jesus different? Jesus is fully God and fully man.

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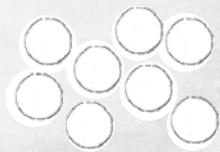
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Leader BIBLE STUDY

God's people had not heard a clear message from God for hundreds of years. Then one day, Gabriel—an angel of the Lord—told a man that his wife, Elizabeth, was going to have a baby. The baby's name would be John. Then the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her that she would have a baby, and her baby would be God's Son.

Mary and Elizabeth were relatives. Elizabeth was old and barren; she and her husband, Zechariah, had no children. Mary was a young girl—likely in her early teens. She was a virgin, engaged to be married to Joseph. The announcements of these pregnancies were miraculous for both women. Both babies had been foretold by the prophet

Isaiah—John in Isaiah 40:3 and Jesus in Isaiah 7:14.

The angel Gabriel told Mary that Elizabeth was pregnant too, and Mary hurried to see her. The journey would not have been easy. Mary traveled nearly one hundred miles to see Elizabeth, and her arrival brought great joy to both Elizabeth and Elizabeth's unborn baby. In the presence of the unborn Messiah, John leaped in Elizabeth's womb. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she said, "Mary, you are blessed!"

The story of Mary's visit with Elizabeth gives us a remarkable picture of women living by faith. Being a young, unwed pregnant woman could have caused Mary to worry. Instead, her response is marked by her trust in God. Mary's song reflects her knowledge of God's Word and her understanding of who God is.

Mary worshiped God because the coming of the promised Savior was good news! As you teach, remind kids that people had been waiting hundreds of years for the Messiah. Being the mother of Jesus would be no small task, but Mary trusted that God was in charge.



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Additional resources for each session are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use dramatic dialogue:** Stand in one spot when telling the angel's words. Then turn and face that spot as you speak Mary's words. Move to a third spot when speaking for Elizabeth.
- **Dress like Mary:** Ask a small group leader to wear a long dress and a scarf over her head and shoulders. Her facial expressions should show emotion appropriate to the events in the story.

Mary Praised God

Luke 1:26-56

One day, God sent an angel named Gabriel to a town in Galilee called Nazareth. The angel went **to visit** a young virgin named **Mary. She was engaged to be married to Joseph**, a descendant of King David.

The angel said to Mary, “Rejoice! You have found favor with God. He is with you.” Mary was very afraid and puzzled. Why would God find favor with her? She had done nothing special.

The angel told Mary to not be afraid. He told Mary that she was going to have a very special and unique baby, and they would call the baby Jesus, which means “the Lord saves.” The angel explained that the baby would be great—He would be God’s Son! He would even be a king—the King God had promised would come.

Mary asked the angel, “How can that happen? I am not married yet.”

The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come, and a miracle will happen. The baby will be God’s Son.”

The angel Gabriel told Mary, “Nothing will be impossible with God!” He told Mary that her relative Elizabeth was pregnant, even though she was old and did not have any children.

Mary replied, “I belong to God. May everything happen just as you said.” Then the angel left her.

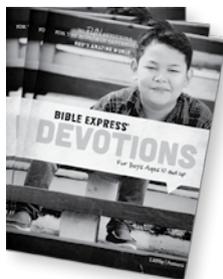
Mary hurried to her relative Elizabeth’s house. When she arrived, the baby inside Elizabeth leaped for joy! The Holy Spirit filled Elizabeth and she said, “What an honor, Mary! Your baby will be blessed too!”

Mary was so happy. She praised God with a song

about how great God is. Mary knew every family in the future would say she was blessed because God was going to do great things through Jesus. **God was keeping His promise to Abraham to bless the whole world through Jesus.**

Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months. Then she went home.

Christ Connection: Mary was willing to follow God's plan, even though being Jesus' mother would not be easy. Mary wanted to bring praise to God. Likewise, Jesus brought praise to His Father by willingly dying on the cross to save people from sin.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD'S WORD?
GET
BIBLE EXPRESS!**

Invite kids to check out this week's devotionals to discover that Mary praised God for keeping His promise to send a Savior. Simeon later saw Jesus and praised God for keeping His promises. (Luke 2:30) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Mary Praised God

BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 1:26-56

MAIN POINT: God chose Mary to be Jesus' mother.

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Timothy 1:15

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What makes Jesus different? Jesus is fully God and fully man.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group.

Invite kids to think about a job they've been given. Invite them to share the biggest responsibility they have ever had. Did they do a good job? How did they feel about it?

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to examine the "What's Different?" pictures on the activity page. Challenge them to find and circle the 10 differences in the picture.

SAY • The picture you see is of Mary and Joseph. Mary and Joseph had an important part in God's plan to send Jesus into the world. Today we will hear how Mary reacted when an angel told her she would be the mother of God's Son!

- "What's Different?" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers



Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Joy scenarios

Form two teams of kids. Explain that you are going to announce some good news. Kids should imagine the news

is true and react accordingly. If they think the news is good, they should shout and cheer. If they think the news is very good, they should shout and cheer even louder!

Announce the scenarios one at a time. Prompt one team to react and then the other team. Sample scenarios:

- Snow days! School is canceled for a week.
- The cafeteria is serving your favorite meal today.
- You received an invitation to a friend's party.
- You won tickets to see your favorite band in concert.
- Your parents announced that they are going to have a baby.

SAY • Today we are going to hear a story from the Bible about a time that Mary praised God. An angel told her good news that brought her great joy.

OPTION 2: Impossible or not?

Give each kid an index card and a pencil. Instruct kids to write on their cards a special talent or ability they have. Kids should also write their names on the cards. Collect the cards and read them one at a time.

- index cards
- pencils

After you read a card, ask: "Possible or impossible?" Allow kids to respond. Challenge them to guess which kid has that talent or ability. Call for the kid to stand. Consider allowing him to perform the talent if he wants to. Continue until you read all the cards.

SAY • These were some special talents. Some of them even seemed impossible! In today's Bible story, an angel told Mary that something amazing was going to happen. The angel said, "Nothing will be impossible with God!" Let's find out what happened.

Transition to large group

Large Group LEADER

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Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire
• backpack
• notebook
• Bible

[Large Group Leader enters carrying a backpack, notebook, and Bible. Leader sets down the props and addresses the kids with a big smile.]

LEADER • Oh, boy! What a wonderful day! I just received a phone call that one of my relatives is going to have a baby! I am so excited. I just love new life. Little babies are so cute and cuddly.

Have any of you ever received news about a new baby coming? How did you feel? *[Allow kids to respond.]* Whether you were excited or a little worried about what changes a new baby would bring, all babies are a wonderful gift from God. I can't wait for you to hear today's Bible story. In this story, an angel told a young woman named Mary that she was going to have a baby. Even more wonderful was that this baby would be God's Son! Incredible!

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • The big picture question we have been learning is, *What makes Jesus different?* Does anyone remember the answer? [*Allow kids to respond.*] That's right. *Jesus is fully God and fully man.* Jesus is God the Son, and He came to earth on a rescue mission. Remember that as we hear today's Bible story.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Point to the giant timeline or big story circle and briefly review previous Bible stories. Then point out today's Bible story.

• Giant Timeline or
Big Story Circle

LEADER • Much of the Old Testament is about God's people—the Israelites. The people faced a big problem; their sin separated them from God. But God had a plan to bring His people back to Himself. He spoke through the prophets and promised to send a Messiah. The people weren't exactly sure how God would keep His promise, but they trusted Him. In the New Testament, we see how God kept His promise. [*Point to "Mary Praised God."*] Today we will hear what an angel said about how God was going to bring the Messiah into the world.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Luke 1:26-56. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Mary Praised God."

LEADER • Wow! Remember, God's people had been waiting a long time for the promised Messiah. At the end of the Old Testament, the prophet Malachi told God's people that a messenger was coming who would

• Bibles
• "Mary Praised God" video
• Big Picture Question Poster
• Bible Story Picture Poster

get people ready for the Messiah. After Malachi's message, God was silent for 400 years. The people waited. Some of them probably wondered if God was still with them.

Then God spoke through an angel! Mary found out that she was going to have a baby—God's own Son!—and that her relative Elizabeth was going to have a baby too. Elizabeth's baby would be the messenger whom Malachi told about. He would get people ready for Jesus.

Think about how Mary must have felt when she heard that **God chose Mary to be Jesus' mother**. She wondered how God could make this happen, but the angel said, "Nothing will be impossible with God!" When Mary went to Elizabeth's house and saw that Elizabeth was pregnant, she knew that the angel had been telling the truth.

Mary praised God! She believed that God would do what He said He would do. God was going to keep the promise He made long ago to Abraham. Mary's baby was going to be the Savior of the world.

Christ connection

LEADER • When the angel Gabriel told Mary that she was going to be the mother of God's Son, how did Mary react? [*Invite a volunteer to read aloud Luke 1:38.*]

Mary was willing to follow God's plan. Being Jesus' mother would not be easy, but Mary wanted to bring praise to God.

When Jesus grew up, He too brought praise to His Father. Jesus was willing to follow God's plan to save sinners. Following God's plan was not easy. Jesus gave

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

up His own life by dying on the cross to save people from sin. Following Jesus and trusting Him as Lord and Savior won't be easy, but we can bring glory to God when we willingly follow His plan for us.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead boys and girls to read together 1 Timothy 1:15. Ask the following questions:

1. Is 1 Timothy in the Old or New Testament? (*New Testament*)
2. Who wrote these words to Timothy? (*Paul*)
3. Why did God send His Son into the world? (*to save people from sin*)

LEADER • Try to memorize our key passage this week.

Memorizing God's Word helps us remember what is true. Let's sing.

Lead boys and girls to sing "This Saying."

- Key Passage Poster
- "This Saying" song

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • **God chose Mary to be Jesus' mother.** Being Jesus' mother would not be easy! Has anyone ever asked you to do something difficult? Watch this.

Show the "Unit 19, Session 2" discussion starter video. Lead kids to discuss the following questions:

- How could Benjamin choose to react to his mom's request?
- How do you react when you have to do something difficult?
- How can our response to difficult situations show others what we believe about God?

LEADER • We can be willing to follow God's plan even through difficulty and suffering. By willingly obeying

- "Unit 19, Session 2" discussion starter video

God, we show that we trust that He is good and in control. In this way, we can honor God and show others that He is most important, even more important than our own plans or desires.

Sing (4 minutes)

• “The Savior We Need”
song

LEADER • God used Mary—an ordinary girl—as a part of His plan to send Jesus into the world. God loves to use ordinary people to do extraordinary things! Will you sing with me?

Sing together “The Savior We Need.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

LEADER • God, thank You for Your Word. We know that You can do great things through anyone who is willing to trust You. We pray that You would help us be willing to follow Your plans, even when that means we will face suffering. Nothing is impossible for You, and we want to honor You with our lives.

Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, who willingly gave up His life to save us from sin. We love You. Amen.

Dismiss to small groups

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

Small Group LEADER

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Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- paper circles, 3
- marker
- scissors
- watch or timer

Before small group, write the words of 1 Timothy 1:15 across three paper circles. Cut each circle into four pieces. Mix up the pieces and scatter them on the floor or a table.

Start a watch or timer, and challenge the kids to arrange the pieces to assemble the key passage.

When kids finish, guide them to read the key passage aloud. Play again as time allows.

SAY • A man named Paul wrote these words to his friend Timothy. Try to memorize our key passage this week. It tells us exactly why Jesus came into the world: to save sinners! Now that is very good news.

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster
- strips of paper
- pen
- gift bag

Write the following review questions on separate strips of paper. Write the answers and Scripture references on separate strips. Place the strips in a gift bag. Invite each kid to pull a strip from the bag. Then challenge kids to match up the questions and answers. If they need help, encourage them to look up the Scripture reference in the Bible. Make sure each kid gets at least one strip. If you have more than 16 kids, prepare two sets and form two groups to review.

When kids finish, ask the questions and invite them to call out the answers.

1. Who told Mary she was going to have a baby? (*the angel Gabriel; Luke 1:26-27,31*) Mary was engaged to be married to whom? (*Joseph, Luke 1:27*)
2. How did Mary feel about the angel's announcement? (*afraid, deeply puzzled; Luke 1:29*)
3. What did the angel say the baby's name would be? (*Jesus, Luke 1:31*)
4. The angel said the baby would be whose Son? (*God's Son; Luke 1:32,35*)
5. Who else did the angel say was going to have a baby? (*Mary's relative Elizabeth, Luke 1:36*)
6. What did Elizabeth's baby do when Mary came to the house? (*He leaped for joy, Luke 1:44*)
7. How did Mary praise God? (*with a song, Luke 1:46-55*)

SAY • God chose Mary to be Jesus' mother. This was a great responsibility, but it brought Mary so much joy. Mary praised God with a song.

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Humble or prideful?

Before small group, write the following on four separate index cards:

- *You have been chosen to host a special guest to your school. (React HUMBLY.)*
- *You have been chosen to host a special guest to your school. (React PRIDEFULLY.)*
- *You have been chosen to be the next class president. (React HUMBLY.)*
- *You have been chosen to be the next class president.*

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.



- index cards
- marker

Tip: If your group is small, select one scenario for two groups to act out.

(React **PRIDEFULLY**.)

Form four groups of kids. Review the meanings of *humble* and *proud*. *Humble* means being modest or meek in spirit or manner, not proud or bold. *Prideful* means having or displaying excessive self-esteem; or thinking you are better, smarter, or more important than other people.

Explain that each group will receive a scenario. Kids should briefly decide how to act out the scenario based on their assigned reaction. Allow kids a couple of minutes to plan. Then invite each group to share its scenario.

SAY • How did Mary react when the angel said that **God chose Mary to be Jesus’ mother?** Mary didn’t say, “It’s about time you showed up! I just knew I was so awesome that God would want to use me in His plan.” That would have been a prideful way to react. But Mary reacted humbly. She knew she hadn’t done anything special. Mary said, “I belong to God. May everything happen just as you said.” Mary believed God and was willing to follow His plan.

God has shown favor and grace to sinners by sending His Son, Jesus, to rescue us from sin. Salvation is a gift from God; we have done nothing to deserve it. Believers should humbly receive the good news of the gospel and be willing to follow God’s plan because He has been so gracious to us.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

OPTION 2: Make instruments for worship

Provide materials for kids to construct simple instruments. Kids may make drums, guitars, or rhythm sticks.

As kids work, play the unit theme song or key passage song. When kids finish their instruments, invite them to play along with the music.

• “The Savior We Need”
or “This Saying” song

- *Drums*—Allow kids to decorate the sides of containers by covering them with construction paper. Kids may also use markers to draw designs on the containers.
- *Guitars*—Encourage kids to decorate the sides of an empty tissue box by covering them with construction paper. Show kids how to wrap a few rubber bands lengthwise across the opening of the box. Kids may gently pluck the rubber bands.
- *Rhythm sticks*—Invite kids to use markers to decorate wooden rulers or paint stirrers. Demonstrate how to string several jingle bells on a chenille craft stem, and then help kids wrap the stems around the wooden sticks to shake along with music.

SAY • **God chose Mary to be Jesus’ mother**, and Mary praised God with a song. Singing songs is one way we can worship God and bring praise to Him. God deserves our worship. Nothing is impossible for Him!

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Encourage kids to list in their journals a few reasons they would be willing to follow God’s plan for their lives.

SAY • **God chose Mary to be Jesus’ mother**, and Mary was willing to do God’s plan even though it wouldn’t be easy. We honor God with our lives when we are willing to follow His plan. Let’s pray.

God, nothing is impossible for You. Please change our hearts and help us to trust You. We want to honor You and point others to Your Son, Jesus. What an honor it is to live for You. Amen.

As time allows, lead kids to complete “A Special Purpose” on the activity page.

Drums:

- empty cardboard or plastic containers with lids
- construction paper
- tape
- markers

Guitars:

- empty tissue boxes
- rubber bands
- construction paper
- tape

Rhythm sticks:

- jingle bells
- chenille craft stems
- wooden rulers or paint stirrers
- markers

- pencils
- Journal Page
- “A Special Purpose” activity page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week’s *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.