

Lesson #3-15

Mary and Elizabeth's Visitors

Luke 1:26-45 [46-56]

3rd-6th

Key Verse:

“For the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is [God’s] name.”
Luke 1:49

The Point:

Nothing is impossible with God.

Making Connections:

The Hope of the Messiah

Bible Nuts & Bolts:

New Testament & Divisions

Spiritual Practice:

Prayer



Activities a la Carte

Activities

Supplies

Into the Story

Good News

Announce good news.

5 min.

† None

Bible Nuts & Bolts

New Testament & Divisions

Explore the New Testament.

10 min.

† Bibles

Learning the Story

The Unexpected

Draw a circle of hope.

15 min.

† Bibles

† Activity Sheet #3-15.A

† Paper

† Pens or pencils

† White board and markers

Living the Story

Prayers of Hope

Prayers for what God will do.

10 min.

† None

Activities a la Carte

Additional Activities

Angel Gabriel

Make angel ornaments out of yarn and felt.

15 min.

- † Activity Sheet #3-15.B
- † White yarn
- † Felt squares (white and yellow)
- † Scissors
- † Craft glue
- † Optional: permanent markers

Planning a Baby's Room

Design a room for the baby Jesus.

15 min.

- † Paper
- † Pen or pencils
- † Optional: baby store ads, scissors, glue sticks

The Evening News

Record a news broadcast of Mary's story.

15 min.

- † Bibles
- † Video or audio recording device

Bible Book

Optional ongoing activity.

5 min.

- † Bible Book page (found at end of lesson)
- † Cardstock or plain paper
- † Pens or pencils
- † Markers or crayons
- † Optional: three-ring binders, hole punch

Sending the Story

5 min.

- † None

Background for Teachers

Making Connections

Mary sings praises for the fulfillment of the promises that Isaiah announced in last week's reading. Now the future, when God recreates and renews the world, begins to unfold. Mary's son is the Messiah whom Isaiah proclaimed and the people have hoped for throughout the generations. This Messiah will usher in God's kingdom and deliver humanity from suffering and oppression.

Story Summary:

Mary and Elizabeth's Visitors

The angel Gabriel brought hope. He visited Mary to let her know that she would have a baby and that she should name him Jesus. He is the holy Son of the Most High. His kingdom will never end. Gabriel also said that Mary's relative Elizabeth was going to have a son, even in her old age. God can do what people might think is impossible. When Mary visited Elizabeth, Elizabeth's baby leaped for joy, and Elizabeth knew that Mary was carrying the Son of God.

Mary sang a song of praise to God. God chose her, a lowly servant, rather than some popular wealthy person, to carry Jesus. Mary sang of God's holiness, mercy, strength, and help. In a previous lesson, Hannah, who could not have a child for years, sang a similar song of praise when God answered her prayer and she gave birth to a son.

The Point

Nothing is impossible with God. In today's story we see God doing the impossible through ordinary people like Mary and Elizabeth. We often expect a mighty God to be among the mighty people, the powerful people, or the rich and famous people. However, God is always at work turning our assumptions on their heads. The Messiah came for those on the margins of society, just as he came for those in lofty positions. Our God walks with people in all areas of life. God's love is for everyone.

Bible Nuts & Bolts:

New Testament & Divisions

We read of the prophecy of a coming Messiah in the Old Testament. The New Testament is the story of that prophecy fulfilled. The first four books of the New Testament (the Gospels) are accounts of Jesus' time on earth from beginning to end. The Book of Acts is the early history of the Christian church. After that are the Letters. These letters tell believers in the early church how to live out their faith. At the end of the New Testament is the Book of Revelation, a letter to churches undergoing persecution, describing in figurative language how God will prevail against the evil in the world.

Spiritual Practice: Prayer

When we communicate regularly with God in prayer, we open ourselves to hearing the plans that God has for us. We also have the opportunity to express our love and admiration to God through prayer. In Luke 1:46-56, Mary's song of rejoicing provides an example for a prayer of worship and thanksgiving.



Lesson Plan



Into the Story (5 minutes)

Good News

Announce good news.

You will need:

† Nothing

Before class:

1. Prepare to share good news that you or someone in the congregation has had recently. If you are sharing good news that is not your own, please use discretion by either sharing news that has been announced in church or news that someone has given you permission to share.

During class:

1. It is fun to have things to look forward to, and it is very exciting to have good news to share. Let us share good news with each other.
2. **Make your hands into a megaphone to use when you make your good news announcement.** Demonstrate. **Let us practice first. Put hand megaphone to mouth. Testing one, two, three. Testing, one, two, three.**
3. **Take a moment to think of something good in your life you can tell people about. Or, choose something that you are excited about that's coming in the future. This is your good news.**
4. **Now we will take turns announcing our good news.**
5. **I will go first to give you an example.** Announce the good news you prepared using your megaphone hands.
6. After everyone who wanted to share has shared, say: **Today we will learn about some good news that people were hoping to hear for many years. Finally, the good news was announced, but it was announced to someone that the rest of the world least expected.**

Bible Nuts & Bolts (10 minutes)

New Testament & Divisions

Explore the New Testament.

You will need:

- † Bibles

During class:

1. **Where do you keep your shoes? Where do you keep the toothpaste? Where do you keep your coat? Where do you keep your school work?** *[Answers will vary.]*
2. **We have a place for almost everything. We do not always remember to use it, but we have a place. Why do you think we put things in the same place, keeping our shoes in the closet and our toothpaste in the cabinet above the sink?** *[So we can find them later, to keep organized.]*
3. **Some people are more organized than others, but when things are organized we know where things are and can find what we need when we need it.**
4. **The New Testament of the Bible is organized. Turn to the table of contents, and let's take a look.**
5. Invite a volunteer to read the names of the first four books of the New Testament. *[Matthen, Mark, Luke, John.]*
6. **The first four books of the New Testament are known as the Gospels. Each book tells the story of Jesus's time on earth from beginning to end. It is the same story told by four different people.**
7. Invite a volunteer to read the name of the next book in the New Testament. *[Acts.]* **The Book of Acts is the early history of the Christian church. In this book, we learn how the church started and how it grew.**
8. **How many books are left, not including the last book?** *[21.]*
9. Those 21 books are the Letters. These letters guided believers in the early church how to live out their faith. We can also learn how to live our faith from these letters.
10. **At the end of the New Testament is the Book of Revelation. Revelation reveals that God will get rid of evil forever and bring a new world of peace and love.**
11. **When we understand how the New Testament is organized, we know where to look to find what we need.**
12. Ask for a volunteer to identify the divisions in the New Testament.

Learning the Story (15 minutes)

The Unexpected

Draw a circle of hope.

You will need:

- † Bibles
- † Activity Sheet #3-15.A
- † Paper
- † Pens or pencils
- † White board and markers

During class:

1. This Bible reading is broken into three parts: an announcement of hope, a confirmation of hope, and a celebration of hope. As the Bible story is read and discussed, the students will be drawing circles of hope to create a story line. Draw one on the board during the reading that they can use as an example. A sample of the completed project for you to use as a guide is on Activity Sheet #3-15.A.
2. **Draw a big circle that fills the page, and write the words “The Hope of the Messiah” at the top.**
3. **We are going to read about Mary, a girl who was not considered very important. Many Jewish people had been hoping for years and years that God would send a Messiah, a leader who would bring justice and peace to the people. Mary lived her day-to-day life like many other girls at that time. She became engaged to be married to a man named Joseph.** Draw the arrows along the upper right of the circle to indicate Mary’s life going on.
4. Help the students locate Luke 1 in their Bibles.
5. Ask a volunteer or volunteers to read Luke 1:26-38. If you have a younger group without many strong readers, you may choose to read or paraphrase the verses throughout this lesson.
6. **Mary was going about her day-to-day life when something unexpected happened to her. What has happened to you that was unexpected? What did it feel like? How did you react?** [*Answers will vary.*] Be aware that some students may share negative events or experiences.
7. **Write “Hope Announced” on the right side of the circle. What happened? An angel appeared to Mary and told her that the Messiah**

- people had been waiting for was coming soon, and she was going to be his mother! How do you think she reacted? [*She was surprised.*]
8. **Now Mary's life would be very different. There would be many changes. She traveled to visit her relative Elizabeth.** Draw the arrows toward the lower part of the circle to indicate Mary's life as the mother-to-be goes on.
 9. Ask a volunteer or volunteers to read Luke 1:39-45.
 10. **Write "Hope Confirmed" at the bottom of the circle.** If Mary doubted the angel's message for a minute, she was assured by Elizabeth's words that she was indeed going to be the mother of Jesus.
 11. **Sometimes we need someone to reassure us that everything is going to be okay or that something is really going to happen. Can you think of an example in your life when someone has encouraged you and helped you know that things are going to work out?** [*Answers will vary.*]
 12. Draw arrows up the other side of the circle to indicate that Mary's new way of life continues.
 13. Ask a volunteer or volunteers to read Luke 1:46-56.
 14. **Write "Hope Celebrated" on the left side of the circle.**
 15. **Mary started out with hope that someday the Messiah would come, then an angel told her that she would be his mother, then Elizabeth told her that it was true, and now she sings praises to God that God is going to fulfill the promise through her.**
 16. **Write "God of Hope" in the middle of the circle.**
 17. **Today's story ends with the hope of the Messiah.** Draw arrows back up to the top of the circle. **But we know that later Mary gave birth to the baby Jesus.**
 18. **Trace the circle with your finger, stopping at each place where we wrote words. How would you feel if you were Mary getting the announcement from the Angel Gabriel?** [*Answers will vary.*] **How would you if when your relative Elizabeth confirmed the announcement?** [*Answers will vary.*] **What would you say to God in celebration?** [*Answers will vary.*]



Living the Story (10 minutes)

Prayers of Hope

Prayers for what God will do.

You will need:

- † Nothing

During class:

1. **Often we pray for something we need. When we do this, we can praise God for something that has not happened yet and trust in God's faithfulness. This is a prayer of hope and trust that what God will do will be good, even if God does not answer our prayers the way we want God to. When we hope in God, we are waiting expectantly. We show trust in what God will do rather than just wish with our fingers crossed.**
2. Ask the students to line up side by side for this prayer. **Take a step back and remember what God has done in the past, in the Bible stories we have learned, in today's reading and in your own lives, church, or family.** Go down the line and invite each person to say something.
3. **Then, take a step forward, and we will think of what we can hope for or count on God to do in the future based on the past.** *[Examples may include: God will comfort us, provide for us.]* Go down the line this time and pray with hope for what God will do: maybe something in their own lives, or it may be that they do not know what to pray for in the future, but they can pray with thanks that they can have hope or confidence in knowing God will fulfill all promises.

Note: you can do this with one student at a time taking a step back and saying something, or the entire line can step back and you can go down the line and ask them each to say something. For those who are uncomfortable speaking out, you might suggest they say "Thank you, God."

Additional Activities

Angel Gabriel (15 minutes)

Make angel ornaments out of yarn and felt.

You will need:

- † Activity Sheet #3-15.B
- † White yarn
- † Felt squares (white and yellow)
- † Scissors
- † Craft glue
- † Optional: permanent markers

Before class:

1. Make an ornament to use as an example. See the instructions, example, and pattern pieces on Activity Sheet #3-15.B.
2. If needed, cut out the shapes from the felt squares.

During class:

1. **We are going to make angel ornaments to remind us of Gabriel's message to Mary: a message of God's love for everyone. You can give these as gifts or hang them on your family's tree.**
2. **This ornament is made by cutting felt shapes for a halo, wings, and body. The shapes will be glued together with a length of yard between them.**
3. Demonstrate the steps.
4. With each piece of the angel, stop and ask a question:
 - **Why do you think God sent an angel to tell Mary about Jesus?** [*Answers will vary.*]
 - **If God sent an angel to tell you that you needed to do something that might interrupt your personal plans, how would you react?** [*Answers will vary.*]
 - **What is your favorite part of today's story?** [*Answers will vary.*]
5. Optional: use permanent markers to draw faces on the angels.

Note: consider using yarn in the color that your faith tradition uses to celebrate the fourth Sunday of Advent. If you do, be sure to explain the symbolism.



Planning a Baby's Room (15 minutes)

Design a room for the baby Jesus.

You will need:

- † Paper
- † Pens or pencils
- † Optional: baby store ads, scissors, glue sticks

Before class:

1. You can create a sample drawing to show students, if you think that would be helpful.

During class:

1. In this activity, students will draw floor plans and fill them with items to show what the students would do if they could prepare for Jesus by getting his room ready. The students will be drawing shapes that represent items (labeling them or making a legend). Optional: students may cut pictures from store flyers and glue them onto an outline of a room.
2. **You are going to design a room for the baby Jesus. What kinds of things do parents buy for their baby's rooms? Some things we may need and others are things parents want for their babies.** [*New curtains, changing table, dirty diaper barrel, mobiles, crib, baby monitor, large stuffed animals, etc.*] **Perhaps you can think of other things that you would put in the room you design that parents do not usually include in the rooms they set up.**
3. **Draw an outline of a room on your paper, and then draw shapes for the things you would want to put in the room. The pictures do not need to look like the things they represent. You can then label the items.** You may explain a legend or map key if it would be appropriate for your students.
4. Give the students time to determine the outline for the room's shape, the labels or legend to represent furniture and other items, and to create the room.
5. After the rooms have been designed, give the students the opportunity to share their floor plans, explaining where they would put each item and why. **Mary was not planning to have a baby at that time, so she might be thankful for your ideas if the happened today.**

The Evening News (15 minutes)

Record a news broadcast of Mary's story.

You will need:

- † Bibles
- † Video or audio recording device

During class:

1. Divide the class into small groups, about four per group.
2. Explain to the groups that they are going to make a news report to announce that Mary is going to have a baby. In the news report, the newscaster will interview the Angel Gabriel, Mary, and Elizabeth.
3. Encourage the students to use their Bibles to help with this activity. Help them locate Luke 1:26-56.
4. If you have students who would feel uncomfortable speaking for the recordings, create groups of more than four and encourage students to take different parts, like camera person, researcher, or even pretend jobs you would find at a news broadcast.
5. Each group will make up its own short broadcast that will be recorded. After that, the broadcasts can be played for the class.
6. To get them started, suggest they come up with who, what, when, where, and why questions to ask each of the people being interviewed. They might ask two questions per person. Beyond that, let them be creative with the questions and the way they run their news show.
7. After playing the broadcasts back for the class, say: **God sure used an unexpected way to fulfill the hope of the Messiah!**

Bible Book (5 minutes)

Optional ongoing activity.

You will need:

- † Bible Book page (found at end of lesson)
- † Cardstock or plain paper
- † Pens or pencils
- † Markers or crayons
- † Optional: three-ring binders, hole punch

Before class:

1. Make copies of this week's Bible Book page on cardstock or copy paper for each student.

During class:

1. Hand out Bible Book pages.
2. **What are some of the important things we have learned from today's story?**
[Answers will vary.]
3. **On the bottom of your page, please write one or two important things that you have learned from the story today. In the middle of the page, draw a picture from the story or illustrate one of the important things you've learned. Don't forget to put your name on the back of the page, please!**
4. Optional: Collect and three-hole punch the pages, and put them in individual binders for each student to be kept at church until the end of the year. If you wish, you can investigate other options for binding the Bible books through a local print shop at the end of the year instead of using a three-ring binder.

Sending the Story (5 minutes)

The key verse today is, “for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is [God’s] name” (Luke 1:49).

What great things did God do for Mary? [*Chose her to be the mother of Jesus, sent an angel with a message for her, allowed Elizabeth to confirm the message.*] **What great things has God done for everyone?** [*Sent Jesus, fulfilled the hope of the Messiah.*] **What great things has God done for you?** [*Answers will vary.*]

Prayer

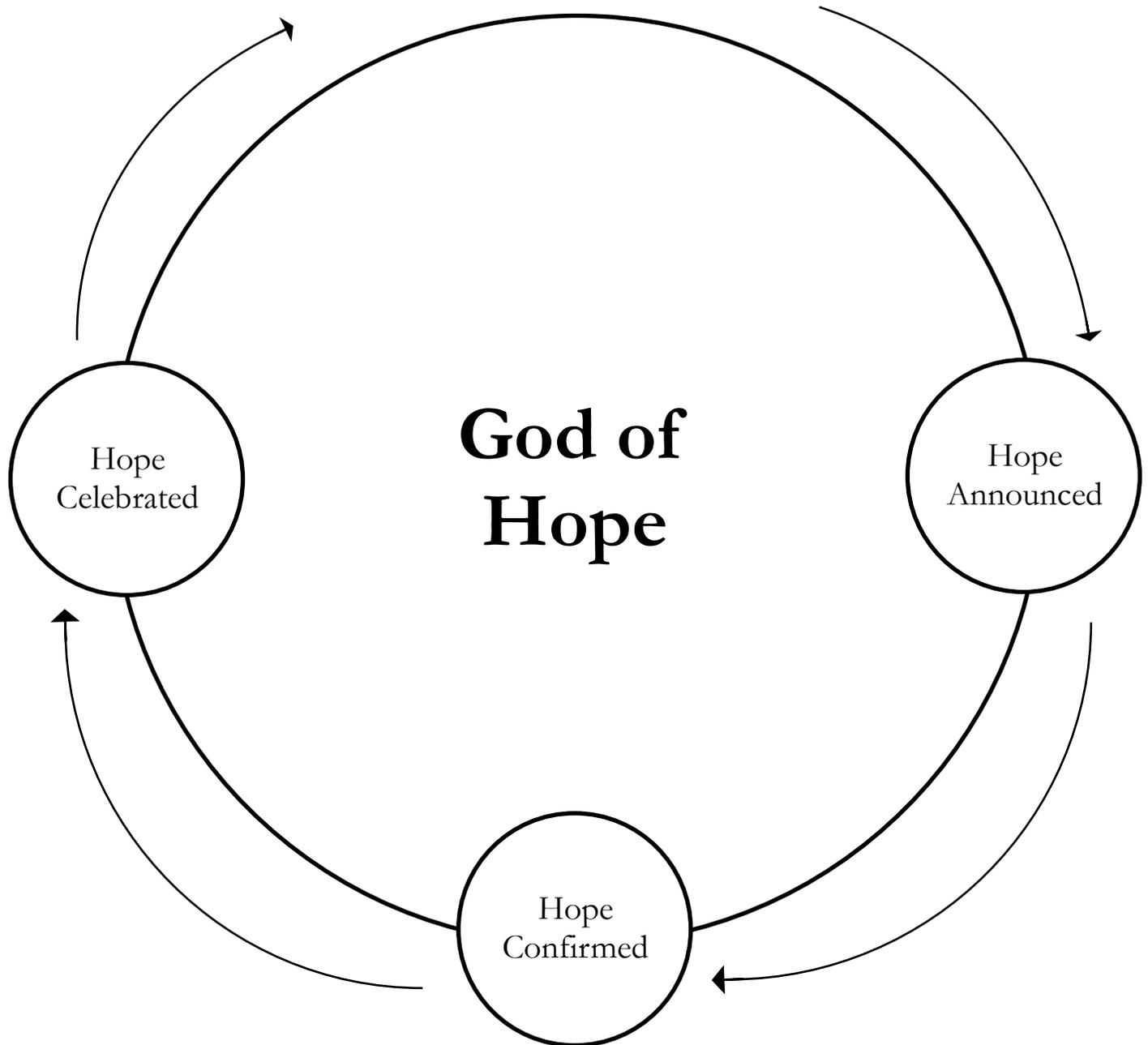
Before ending class, make a point to come together to pray. Use the following or say your own prayer.

Gather students to sit on the floor. Pray a pop-up prayer where students can “pop up” by either standing up or just speaking out. Every time a student pops up and says something that God has done, the entire class responds, **“For the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is [God’s] name” (Luke 1:49).**

The Unexpected

Draw a circle of hope.

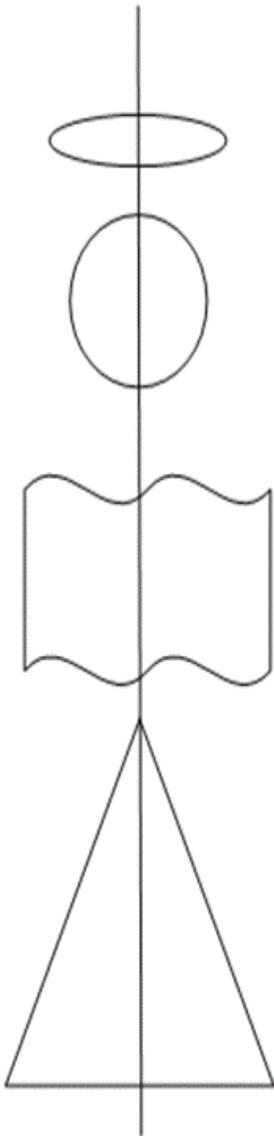
The Hope of the Messiah



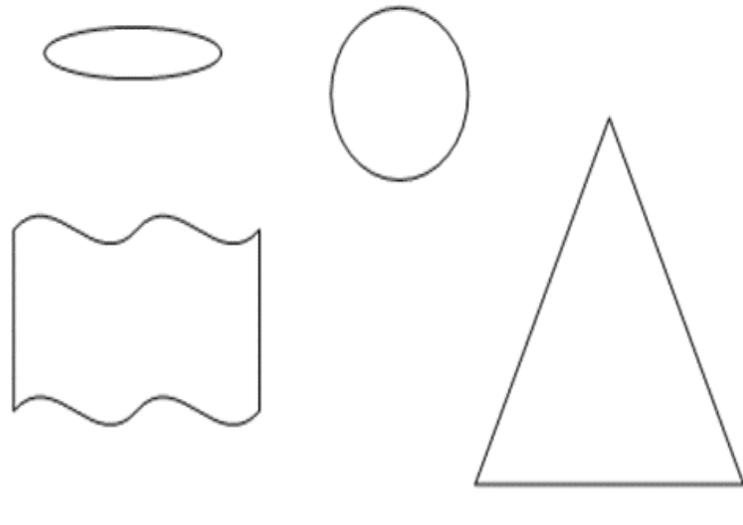
Angel Gabriel

Make angel ornaments out of yarn and felt.

Example:



1. Cut two of each shape per ornament (use yellow for the halo).
2. Arrange one set of the shapes on the table to make an angel, leaving space between each shape.
3. Rest the length of yarn on the shapes, so it goes straight down the middle, top to bottom. Leave enough yarn at the top to knot a loop if desired.
4. Glue the matching shapes to the shapes on the table, securing the yarn between the shapes. Let dry.
5. Optional: use markers to draw a face on the angel.



Mary and Elizabeth's Visitors

Luke 1:26-45 [46-56]

I Learned:



The Story @ Home

Living the Word: Teaching Kids God's Story
Narrative Lectionary, Year 3 (2020-2021)

Lesson #3-15
Luke 1:26-45 [46-56]

Last Week

Isaiah proclaims the promise that God will someday restore the people to their land and make life better than it was before, with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable (Isaiah 61:1-11).

This Week

God chooses Mary to be the bearer of the Messiah, and she goes to her cousin Elizabeth's home. Mary sings her gratitude in a song echoing the reversals in Isaiah 61 (Luke 1:26-45 [46-56]).

The Point

Nothing is impossible with God.

Bible Nuts & Bolts

New Testament & Divisions

We read of the prophecy of a coming Messiah in the Old Testament. The New Testament is the story of that prophecy fulfilled. The first four books of the New Testament (the Gospels) are accounts of Jesus' time on earth from beginning to end. The Book of Acts is the early history of the Christian church. After that are the Letters. These letters tell believers in the early church how to live out their faith. At the end of the New Testament is the Book of Revelation, a letter to churches undergoing persecution, describing in figurative language how God will prevail against the evil in the world.

Next Week

The Messiah arrives, born of Mary in the town of Bethlehem. He is heralded by angels and visited by lowly shepherds. (Luke 2:1-20).

Story Summary

Mary and Elizabeth's Visitors

The angel Gabriel visited Mary to tell her that she would have a baby and that she should name him Jesus. He is the Son of God. Gabriel also said that Mary's relative Elizabeth was pregnant, even in her old age. When Mary arrived, Elizabeth's baby leaped for joy, and Elizabeth knew that Mary was carrying the Son of God. Mary sang of God's holiness, mercy, strength, and help. God can do the impossible.

Practice: Prayer

When we communicate regularly with God in prayer, we open ourselves to hearing the plans that God has for us. We also have the opportunity to express our love and admiration to God through prayer. Mary's song of rejoicing was a prayer of praise and admiration. Using Mary's song (Luke 1:46-56) as an example, write your own prayer songs and sing or say them together.

Family Discussions

Use the questions below or other questions you think of to discuss today's Scripture reading (listed above) with your family.

- ✚ What surprises were in today's reading?
- ✚ What does today's reading tell us about God's love?
- ✚ What does today's reading tell us about having hope in God?

Family Devotions

As you hear and study these stories each week, consider what God has to say to you and your family. What is God's message to us? How should we respond?

Sunday—Read Luke 1:26-45 [46-56]

Although Mary hoped for the Messiah, she never expected to be the mother of Jesus. Take turns sharing something nice that you hope a family member will do for you. Write each person's name on a slip of paper. Draw names. Later, when least expected, do what that person hoped for.

Monday—Read 1 Samuel 1:9-18

Hannah wanted a baby boy and promised to dedicate her son to God when her prayers were answered. Lay hands on each of the children, one at a time, and say prayers that dedicate them to God. Ask them to talk about what that was like for them.

Tuesday—Read 1 Samuel 2:1-10

Hannah honored and praised God when her prayers were answered. Make a list of everything you know about God and about what you think God is like. Add a few words from the list to your table grace and some to your bedtime prayers, thanking God for being God.

Wednesday—Read Genesis 18:1-15

God had special plans for Abraham and Sarah. They were surprised by God's promise to give them a son. What are your detailed plans for today (or tomorrow) from when you get up until you go to bed? How would you respond if God changed those plans for new plans?

Thursday—Read Isaiah 7:13-17

Isaiah tells of a sign of Immanuel. Put on your coats and shoes. This is a sign that you are going out. Take off your coats and shoes. This is a sign that you are staying home. We can tell what is going to happen by looking and listening.

Friday—Read John 1:1-13

Jesus is the Word that became flesh. Use rope or string (or shoe laces) to loosely attach one person's wrists to another's. Stay like that for a while. Talk about how what one person did, the other had to do too. God and Jesus do things as one.

Saturday—Read Luke 2:1-7

We celebrate the birth of Jesus. Wrap a doll in a towel and rest it in a box. Jesus did not have a nice crib or fancy blankets. The Son of God was born in a manger. What can you do for God that is simple but that shows great love? Do it.