

Explore It

FOR LEADERS



FAITH

Luke 1:26-38 The Virgin Mary

God's people waited a long time for Jesus to come to Earth. They had heard God's promise from Isaiah, and now it would come true through Mary, a young woman with a lot of faith. In our second Advent session, we are going to think about faith and how we can follow Mary's example of faith in our own lives.

Each child will need:

- ➔ 'Grow your own Christmas tree' – available from www.shop.scouts.org.uk/search/Grow%20your%20own%20Christmas%20tree
- ➔ Water, soil
- ➔ Plant pot – a Christmassy pot or resources to decorate a pot – glitter glue, stickers ... (optional)

Start It

Play a treasure hunt game. Can the children find an item that starts with the beginning of each letter of the word 'Faith'? Give them five minutes to search for the five items.

Sing It

- **Say:** Today we're learning about faith, especially the faith Mary showed when she trusted in God. Our song for today tells us what faith as small as a mustard seed can do.

'Faith as small as a mustard seed' by Doug Horley (2 mins 8 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPylxzfN-Oo>

Tell It

- **Say:** In our last session we read Isaiah's prophecy to the people of God.

'A child will be born to us.

God will give a son to us.

He will be responsible for leading the people.

His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God,

Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace.'

— Isaiah 9:6 (ICB)

- **Say:** The people had to wait a really long time for that promise to come true. In the last session we learned about Isaiah who was talking about Jesus 700 years before he was born. The very last book in the Old Testament was written by Micah, and he was talking about Jesus 400 years before he was born. And then there is a gap, a 400 years gap, before we have the book of Matthew and the story of Jesus.
- **Say:** There are lots of good reasons why God waited as long as he did to send Jesus into the world.

Video

Between the Old & New Testaments by Time of Grace Ministry (2 mins 2 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9az0yoTHRU>

Watch the clip or paraphrase the key message for your group and discuss two of the possible reasons God might have waited so long to keep his promise.

- Everyone now spoke the same language (thanks to the Greek Empire – and Alexander the Great)
- There were good transport links everywhere (thanks to the Roman Empire)
- 💬 **Say:** As we discussed in the last session, waiting can be hard. Sometimes we get frustrated when we are waiting for God to answer our prayers and we want things to change.

Ask:

- What do you feel like when you know something is going to change but you are waiting for it to happen? Can you think of any examples?
- How do/did you react when change is on the way?
- 💬 **Say:** Before God could send his son to live on Earth, he needed to make sure everything was in place. God's people waited a long time for his promise to come true. Their strong faith in God helped them to keep believing that he would keep his promises.
- 💬 **Say:** Like many Jewish people, Mary was waiting for God to keep his promise. I wonder if she knew what a large part she would play and how much faith she would need to be part of the story.

Screen share: Luke 1:26-38 (ICB)

'During Elizabeth's sixth month of pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to a virgin who lived in Nazareth, a town in Galilee. She was engaged to marry a man named Joseph from the family of David. Her name was Mary. The angel came to her and said, "Greetings! The Lord has blessed you and is with you."

But Mary was very confused by what the angel said. Mary wondered, "What does this mean?"

The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary, because God is pleased with you. Listen! You will become pregnant. You will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and people will call him the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of King David, his ancestor. He will rule over the people of Jacob forever. His kingdom will never end."

Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen? I am a virgin!"

The angel said to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you. The baby will be holy. He will be called the Son of God. Now listen! Elizabeth, your relative, is very old. But she is also pregnant with a son. Everyone thought she could not have a baby, but she has been pregnant for six months. God can do everything!"

Mary said, "I am the servant girl of the Lord. Let this happen to me as you say!"

Then the angel went away.'

Ask:

- Gabriel came to tell Mary that her life was going to completely change. What did Gabriel say straight away to reassure Mary? (v28)
- Have you ever felt confused, like Mary, about things changing in your life?
- What does Gabriel say to Mary to when he saw that she was confused? (v30)
- 💬 **Say:** Gabriel had two important messages for Mary:
 - God is with you.
 - Don't be afraid.

Ask:

- How do you think Gabriel's messages help Mary to keep her faith in God's plan for her life?
- How does Gabriel's message help us to have a strong faith even when things are uncertain?

🗨️ **Say:** Mary had no idea what the future would hold or how the people around her would react to her pregnancy. She put all her faith in God and promised to do exactly what he asked of her.

'Mary said, "I am the servant girl of the Lord. Let this happen to me as you say!" Then the angel went away.'

— (Luke 1:38 *ICB*)

🗨️ **Say:** God does amazing things when we put our faith in him and we can trust him to look after us no matter how many changes we face.

Action It

🗨️ **Say:** In Matthew 17:20 (*ICB*) Jesus said these words:

"I tell you the truth. If your faith is as big as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there.' And the mountain will move. All things will be possible for you."

Christmas Tree

🗨️ **Say:** Today we're going to have the faith of a Christmas tree seed instead! (Use the materials from the Scout Shop.)

Ask each child to put some soil in a pot, then plant their seed and fill up the pot with soil. Water carefully. They may wish to decorate their pot to make it Christmassy.

Discuss:

- ➔ How quickly do you think your Christmas tree will grow?
- ➔ What will you need to do to make sure that your Christmas tree grows?
- ➔ Just like the seed, our faith in God grows stronger when we take care of it.
- ➔ What kind of things can we do to grow in our faith?
- ➔ How can a strong faith like Mary's help us during times of change?

Pray It

When Mary was facing big changes in her life, she decided to have faith in God and praise him. For our prayer today, we going to listen to what Mary had to say.

Video

Christmas 2020 - The Magnificat by Christian Aid

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2UjaQpzaXQ>

Explore It

Remember to send home the Explore It (For Me) and Explore It (Together) ideas for children and families.