

## Dive into the Bible!

Mary, Mother of Jesus: Mary (Luke 1:26-38, 46-55) was very likely a young, unmarried teenager when an angel told her she would have a baby, God's son, and name him Jesus. Nothing is impossible with God. God is with us, even in seemingly impossible situations. Try the ideas that fit your family the best.

**Pre-K:** Gather paper, any paper! Now you'll need a coloring utensil of your choice, this could be pens, makers, crayons, paint, anything you have at home. You may want to outline a heart or cut one out for your child, depending on their level of creative energy today. Let your camper decorate said heart however they see fit. Then, tape the finished product in a window where your neighbors would see. It can be really hard to feel God's love and the love of your neighbors, especially right now. We won't always see the love that we are receiving but this heart craft can be a reminder to your kiddos and neighbors that God loves them and so do you!



**Elementary:** Review the previous Bible stories to identify who the helpers were in situations that might have seemed impossible. The angel and Elizabeth helped Mary, Abraham's family supported each other in the move across the country, Pharaoh helped Joseph, and the prophet Samuel helped David. No matter what, God is with us and provides the support we need.

Give scenarios to the group that require help from someone else to solve, and ask them to identify who they would go to for help with each one, and how they would solve the problem. Use these scenarios or come up with your own that are specific to the needs and situations of your children and family.

*There is a stray dog wandering through your yard.*

*A good friend asks you to hurt someone on the playground at school.*

*Your friend is moving across the country and you want to throw them a great party before they leave.*

*You win an award that your best friend was expecting to win.*

*Your teacher asks you to sing a solo in the concert, and you are afraid.*

With each scenario, emphasize that they are surrounded by people who can help them figure out what to do. For younger campers, the scenarios may need to be simpler.

**Junior High:** In accepting her vocations as a faithful Jewish woman and the mother of Christ, Mary showed God’s love for the world. *Invite campers to find 1 John 4:14-16 in their Bibles. Read it together and summarize.* People who show love are alive in God and God is alive in them. To “show love” means more than just being nice or sharing what we have. It goes deeper. It’s related to actually being alive and being life-giving. The word vocation is sometimes used to describe the kind of work a person does, usually for money. (For example: “What’s her vocation?” “She’s a plumber.”) Vocations are like the relationship maps. By being who God made us to be, we have many vocations. One person can be a child, a parent, a grandparent, a neighbor, a mentor, an employee, an employer, and a citizen of a town, state, and country. We demonstrate our trust in Jesus and that God’s promises are forever by showing love in all our vocations. It does no good to show love as a teacher, but to be spiteful and bitter as a neighbor. It doesn’t help to show love as a parent, but then be a mean and overbearing boss at work.

*Take some time to respond and think together about these questions:*

- What are some of your vocations? (Possible answers follow: student, sibling, child, friend.)
- What does it mean to show love as a student? (Possible answers include respecting teachers, being responsible about schoolwork, and caring for other students.)
- How do we show love to a person who may have hurt us or is hurting us? (A potential answer is that we will forgive them. This is right and good. It is also true that we can ask for help to get out of the situation. God does not want us to be hurt, nor does God want the other person to continue to cause pain. Asking for help for yourself can also bring help to a perpetrator.)
- Do our vocations change over our lives? (Yes. Potential answers include getting married and becoming a spouse, having children and becoming a parent, changing jobs, retiring, or volunteering for new or different groups.)

**Senior High:** Relationship Map

Materials: Paper, Writing Utensils

The point of a relationship map is to show how many different people we are connected to in our regular life. Distribute paper and pencils and invite campers to write their name in the center of the paper and then write the names of their family, friends, church community, teachers, neighbors, employers, and coworkers around their name. No relationship is too small to be significant and noted.

*Allow 3–4 minutes for the writing.*

Ask campers to reflect on their relationship map. Looking at the map, have them do the following.

- Draw a circle around the people to whom they would tell a secret.

- Put a star next to the people they've known for at least three years.
- Underline the people whom they could ask to pray for them.
- Draw a square around the people who might fade from their life if they went through a hard time.

Invite campers to respond to the question, who stands out and why?

**Adult:** Take some time to journal about responding to challenges with faith. Here are some prompts you can use:

- Describe the challenge in detail, those affected and the duration.
- Name the emotions of those affected and of those who may be expected to address the challenge.
- List the approaches used to make a decision and any outcome of the decision(s) made.
- Which is easier—responding to the challenge or evaluating the response?

Remember responding involves making the best choice with the available information at the time. When the time frame is critical, some potential responses may not be tried or even considered. Evaluating the response involves reflecting and learning from the decision made at the time and acknowledging that other approaches may be used in the future. God's faithfulness shows in ALL of these.

#### Craft: Bible Bookmarks

Materials: Paper, Markers, Stamps, Embellishments (The possibilities are endless!)

Directions:

1. Cut paper into bookmark-sized pieces.
2. Decorate!
3. Invite campers to write words they associate with today's Bible story about Mary on their bookmark. (Some ideas are faith, promise, adored, blessed, holy, servant, rejoice.) Or they could choose words associated with other stories from earlier this week.

#### Environmental Education: I Spy!

1. Explain the concept of the game I Spy. In this version, campers are asked to play I Spy from the perspective of the characters in today's Bible reading: Mary, Elizabeth, an angel.
2. Reread the text from Luke 1:26-38, 46-55. Ask campers to imagine how Mary and Elizabeth, both expecting a baby, might see the world similarly, but also how they might see the world differently.
3. Then have the campers quietly observe their surroundings or walk around briefly, or you can draw a circle in the dirt. Then play I Spy with campers "spying" small bits of nature within the circle or natural items found within a larger playing area.
4. Have each camper take a turn saying, "I spy with my little eye . . ." The chosen object

must be visible to everyone. The other campers take turns asking questions until they land upon the correct answer. I Spy-type statements might include the following:

- new life about to burst forth
- something old (a rock, for example)
- something scary
- something surprising
- something that gives them joy

5. After the game, find out what the Elizabeths and Marys noticed or missed.

- What natural things did almost everyone notice?
- Who found or saw something that others missed, maybe something rare or hard to spot, and what was it?

6. Conclude by discussing how our perspective shapes what we see in our environment and what we miss completely.

