

Christmas
PROMISES

TNCC
CHILDREN'S
CHURCH

MARY

HOOK & INTRO

LESSON (Luke 1:26-38)

We are continuing our Christmas series on God's promised Messiah and the people who were involved.

What do we know about Mary? *Mother of Jesus. Young girl. Not married. From Nazareth.*

Storytelling tips:

Gather a few stuffed animal props and simple costumes/scarves. Cast the kids as Gabriel, Mary, townspeople. Set the stage and mood by describing the little town of Nazareth and Mary's life. Narrate Gabriel's sudden appearance to Mary and her initial fears. Repeat key lines ("Do not be afraid Mary"...) and invite kids to echo.

A SURPRISE VISITOR

Nazareth was southwest of the Sea of Galilee, and a very small community and was located north of Jerusalem, well beyond Samaria. Being so small and far away from major cities, one would not expect anything good to come from Nazareth (John 1:46).

Mary was a teenager in Nazareth when angel Gabriel appeared to her one day.

Do you remember angel Gabriel? We learned about him last week. Who did he appear to then? *Zechariah.*

Angel Gabriel told Mary not to be afraid for she was highly favoured.

A SURPRISE MESSAGE

The angel then told her some shocking news: she will become pregnant and give birth a son, and she was to call him **Jesus**.

Angel Gabriel also told Mary that the child she was to give birth to would:

- be called the Son of the Most High
- be given the throne of his father David
- reign over Jacob's descendants forever
- have a never-ending kingdom

Mary was very puzzled and asked angel Gabriel how that was possible as she was a virgin. (For a baby to be born, a man and woman have to come together. Mary was engaged to be married, but she had not been with a man before, so humanly speaking, getting pregnant would be impossible.)

The angel replied that: *"The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God ... For no word from God will ever fail."* (Luke 1:35-37)

DISSECTING THE MESSAGE

The first words that Gabriel spoke to Mary were: *"Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you."* These were very important words. "Highly favoured" means "God's holy grace is upon you" — something that would have never normally been said to a peasant girl like Mary! She would have been very scared by this, and that is why Gabriel said "Do not be afraid."

The name **Jesus** (or Jeshua as it would have been said then) was a very common name in Israel at that time. But it means 'Saviour' and has a very important meaning in the story.

Mary would have been very surprised with Gabriel saying that the Holy Spirit would be in her, because in the Old Testament, only very important people had the Holy Spirit come into them. She might not have even believed that it was going to happen.

As proof, Gabriel had told Mary that her cousin Elizabeth is also 6 months pregnant, even though she is very old. Do you remember Elizabeth? *Zechariah's wife*. Who can recall what the name of her baby is? *John*. After her encounter with Gabriel, Mary went to see her cousin Elizabeth to see if it was really true.

MARY SAID YES

Imagine what was going through Mary's mind at that time:

- What would her fiancé Joseph think?
- What about her friends?
- How can this even be possible?

Despite her worries, Mary answered angel Gabriel, *"I am the Lord's Servant. May your word to be fulfilled."* Then the angel left her.

God's plans can seem very weird. Last week, we learned of how God blessed a very old couple (Zechariah and Elizabeth) with child. Today, He made a young virgin pregnant with the Son of God. *For no word from God will ever fail!*

God's plan to send Jesus seemed strange and scary even to Mary. But Mary had faith and said yes. Mary said yes to God, took a step of faith and trusted God with her life. She carried the Son of God in her womb, nursed, and raised Jesus into a man.

Mary was obedient to God's plan for the world through her – God became flesh and lived among humans to give us the grace of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Like the first Christmas, God still wants to use us to do big and unexpected things today. Even though God's plan may seem strange, scary or impossible, what will our answer be? Will we trust Him enough like Mary to say yes?

VIDEOS

Mary did you know?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9aH4pwB0K0>

ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

MEMORY VERSE

Luke 1:37 *For with God nothing shall be impossible.*

RELATED CRAFT

Prepare paper Christmas ornaments, each with a word from the memory verse. Get kids to hang them up in order on a paper Christmas tree.

HUDDLE TIME

Share about how it's sometimes difficult to say Yes to God and how we can learn to trust Him when things seem difficult or confusing. Pray for each other.

HOOK & INTRO

Ask the children some questions:

- What is their father's full name?
- What is their father's occupation?
- What is something fun/interesting about their father?

Last week we learnt about Mary, the mother of Jesus. As you might have guessed, this week's lesson is about Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus.

Why do we say "earthly father"? Because Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus. He was more of an adopted father. *(What does it mean to be adopted? To make someone or something part of your family that isn't there naturally.)*

Jesus' real father is God.

But Joseph was chosen by God to play a special part in bringing His Christmas gift to earth.

LESSON (Matthew 1:18-25)

If you remember from last week, one day Mary had a surprise visitor. Angel Gabriel appeared in front of her to give the surprise message:

- Mary is highly favoured by God
- Mary will be conceived by the Holy Spirit
- Mary will give birth to Jesus, the Son of the Most High.

What do we know about Joseph? There are not much details about him in the Bible. We do know that Joseph was:

- a carpenter
- a descendant of King David
- a righteous man
- engaged to Mary, i.e. Joseph and Mary were going to get married.

JOSEPH'S DILEMMA

When Joseph and Mary were engaged to each other, they did not live together as husband and wife. So can you imagine how Joseph felt when he found out that his wife-to-be, Mary, was suddenly pregnant and that he was not the father of the child?

The news must have been devastating to Joseph. It also put him in a dilemma.

The Bible records that Joseph was a righteous man. Under the Jewish law, Joseph had two options. First option: Joseph can declare to the public that Mary is pregnant and not with his child. This choice would subject Mary to public disgrace (and she might even be stoned to death due to sexual immorality! Deuteronomy 22: 23).

Second option: Joseph can quietly divorce Mary. Because Joseph loved Mary, he wanted to choose the second, quieter, option.

VISITS FROM AN ANGEL

After Joseph had made up his mind to quietly divorce Mary and keep her from public disgrace, he also had a visit from the angel Gabriel. The angel appeared to him in a dream and said, *"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name **Jesus**, because he will save his people from their sins."*

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him. He married and took Mary home as his wife and became Jesus' earthly father. Jesus is recorded as the son of Joseph in his genealogy (*"or so it was thought"*, Luke 3:23).

One interesting point to note is that God spoke to Joseph several times through dreams (much like Joseph the Dreamer in Genesis).

Apart from this occasion, God's angel also appeared to Joseph to bring Jesus and Mary to Egypt to escape King Herod (Matthew 2:13), and after Herod died, God's angel told Joseph to bring Jesus and Mary back to Israel (Matthew 2:19), avoiding Judea (Matthew 2:22).

We can see how Joseph listened and followed whatever God told him to do. Even though we may not see God's angel in our dreams or hear His voice very audibly, we can still listen and follow what He says.

GOD'S PROMISES FULFILLED [optional]

Even though not much is recorded about Joseph in the Bible, Joseph's seemingly small and minor role helped fulfil some of God's promises and prophecies.

Mary getting pregnant by the Holy Spirit fulfilled the promise that: *"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel."* (Isaiah 7:14)

Joseph bringing his family to Egypt fulfilled another prophecy: *"Out of Egypt I called my son."* (Hosea 11:1)

And when Joseph brought his family back to Israel, he decided to settle in a town called Nazareth, fulfilling prophecy that Jesus, the Messiah, would be a Nazarene.

BRING IT HOME

Christmas reminds us of God's gift of love and faithfulness.

We can also see the love and faithfulness of God in the way He chose to adopt all of us into His family. Just like Joseph adopted Jesus as his own son. We all have an earthly father; when we believe in Jesus, we too can call God our heavenly Father, like Jesus, and we become His children forever.

Would you like to be part of God's family?

VIDEOS

Try to get the kids to imagine what Joseph must have felt/thought as he accepted the role of Jesus' earthly father.

Little Yeshua <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4JBS31zIxU>

Joseph's Song <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hINfyhuTt0>

ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

RELATED CRAFT

A carpenter tool (e.g. hammer) to represent Joseph. Joseph was a carpenter. He was also a useful tool used by God to fulfil His promises.

“Joseph was a righteous man” or “Joseph obeyed God”

HUDDLE TIME

Share about how we can obey God even when it may be very difficult or what it means to be part of God's family. Pray for each other.

HOOK & INTRO

ICEBREAKER: SHEPHERD SAYS

Teacher/1 kid in front is the Shepherd, while the rest of the kids are sheep. Tell the kids that the sheep have to follow the Shepherd's voice only, i.e. when the instruction starts with "Shepherd says ...".

E.g. Shepherd says jump left, Shepherd says touch your head, Shepherd says touch your toes etc

If the instruction is not preceded by "Shepherd says ..." then do not follow.

INTRO

As Christmas draws nearer, we are continuing with our Christmas series. We started with Zechariah, Mary, and last week was Joseph. This week we focus on the Shepherds.

If your mother or close relative had just given birth, who is the first person to whom you will share the good news?

When Prince William's son, Prince George was born, the birth was announced to the public and many 'important' people like the Prime Minister, heard about it.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/royal-baby-arrives-duchess-kate-gives-birth-to-a-boy/>

Today's lesson is about how God chose to announce the birth of Jesus, who is the King of kings, Lord of lords.

LESSON (Luke 2:4-20)

On the night Jesus was born in Bethlehem, angels appeared to shepherds in very bright lights and the shepherds were terrified (Luke 2:9).

We can imagine why the shepherds were terrified when they saw the radiance of God. The shepherds were terrified because they thought they would die when God appeared in front of their face. (During those days, people usually are scared when they see angels because they are scared that they would be punished for something they did wrong).

But the angel said to them, *"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."* (Luke 2: 10-12).

Followed by an army of angels, so many of them till it was difficult count, appeared praising God and saying *"Glory to God in the highest heaven, on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests."* (Luke 2: 13-14)

After the angels left the shepherds, they said to one another, *"Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."* They immediately hurried off to Bethlehem town, leaving their sheep in the field to see baby Jesus. (Luke 2: 13-16)

When the shepherds arrived, they shared what the angel had told them about baby Jesus; Jesus is the Messiah who will bring peace to those who rest in his favour. Those who heard the shepherds were amazed. Mary heard it too. She treasured what was shared and pondered them in her heart.

The shepherds then returned to tend to their sheep. They glorified and praised God on they way back. (Luke 2: 17-20)

GOD CHOSE TO ANNOUNCE TO THE SHEPHERDS

During Jesus' time, the shepherds were not people of high standing in society. They were regarded as not important and would not be in most people's list of guests to invite to their party. In fact, shepherds were from the lowest levels in society. Their words and testimonies were not even accepted in court as evidence!

You would ask, why didn't God tell his angels to announce to the so-called 'important' people during that time, for example:

- Kings? *King Herod did try to kill Jesus, so maybe not a good idea.*
- Religious leaders, like the Pharisees? *They were proud and had no heart for God. They didn't even recognise Jesus as the Messiah/Saviour when they saw him face to face and witnessed his miracles.*

But, come to think of it, even the people God chose as earthly parents for Jesus were not people of high standing or considered important by the world. Joseph and Mary were poor and insignificant in the eyes of society.

We can find out how God thinks from this letter written by the Apostle Paul to the Corinthian church, *"Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him".* (1 Corinthians 1:27-31)

No one is stronger, wiser or more important than God. It's only when we know how weak, foolish and insignificant we are compared to God and allow Him to use us that He can use us for His glory, like in the case of Mary, Joseph and the shepherds.

THE SHEPHERDS REJOICED AND SHARED THE GOOD NEWS

The outcast shepherds who were not allowed to speak in court as witnesses were the first group to receive the good news of salvation. They became the first to bear witness of God's glory, love and goodness, and the listeners were amazed with their testimony. Hallelujah God is faithful.

The good news that the angel told the shepherds was not to be afraid, as in the town of David a Savior has been born, the Messiah, the Lord.

Today, we have the same good news: despite all the bad news in the world, the wars, the diseases, famine, natural disasters, family member sick, etc, we need not be afraid. We have a Saviour, His name is Jesus. Let us, like the shepherds, rejoice, praise and glorify God for what he has done. Moreover, we have more than what they have then, we have Jesus' blood that washed away our sins and Him living in us to help us face all our challenges. Let us also share the good news with our relatives and friends this Christmas!

VIDEOS

excerpt from the Chosen: https://youtu.be/cm_nsxptHdl?si=sgh3fe1k47kcvlpU

ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

MEMORY VERSE

Luke 2:10-11: *"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."*

RELATED CRAFT

A card or something that kids can give to friends and families who do not yet know Jesus to share the good news of Christmas ... just as the shepherds did.

HUDDLE TIME

Encourage the children that each of them can be witness to the gospel of salvation to their friends and family. Get them to pray for their friends and families to get to know Jesus.

HOOK & INTRO

GUESS THE PICTURE

Show a picture bit by bit until it's fully revealed. Get kids to guess what it is as soon as they can.

E.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kffd0F1AYWU>

<https://wordwall.net/resource/2637008/guess-the-picture>

LESSON

Over the past few weeks, we went through lessons on God's Covenants:

- God's Covenant with Abraham: God always keeps His promises
- God's Covenant with the Israelites through Moses: Only Jesus can keep God's Law perfectly
- God's New Covenant: He does it all for us!

We can see how from the start, God knew that He would be the One to come and fulfil the Covenant with us, so that we can be free from the curse of sin and part of His family forever. And He revealed His plan slowly but surely.

THE BIG PICTURE

Wasn't guessing the pictures fun? Sometimes we see only a small part, and we don't know what it is until all the many parts come together to form a big picture.

That's what God did for us. He had a plan from the beginning of time, and through thousands of years, He revealed bits of the puzzle, little by little, through His prophets.

What was this big picture? **That Jesus will come to save the world from sin.**

There were more than 300 clues/prophecies about Jesus recorded in the Bible. We'll look at some of them in the next few weeks. One of the earliest prophecies about Jesus was revealed early on, way back in the Garden of Eden.

[use pictures so kids, esp younger ones, can associate and remember better]

THE BIG PROBLEM

You see, back in the Garden of Eden, we were all in trouble. God told the first man Adam and the first woman Eve not to eat from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

But the snake (the devil) tempted them and lied to them, telling Adam and Eve that they can be like God if they ate the fruit.

So Adam and Eve believed the snake. They disobeyed God and ate the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. When they did that, they sinned. And the punishment for sin is death!



Because of one man, Adam, sin entered the world, and everyone after that (including you and me) were separated from God. That means ALL of us would have to die because of sin!

"When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned." (Romans 5:12)

That's a BIG problem.

THE BIG PROMISE: Jesus will defeat Satan

Thankfully, God loved us sooooo much that He already had a BIG solution to our BIG problem — Jesus would come to earth to die, so that you and I can live in Him.

Even in the Garden of Eden, God told the snake (devil) that one day, one of Eve's descendants will destroy Him.

"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." (Genesis 3:15)

Adam and Eve didn't understand it then. But one day, Adam and Eve's great, great, great, great great grandson would be born as a little, helpless baby.

He would grow up and do many wonderful miracles.

But when he was 33 years old, He would die. On the cross. Not because He did anything wrong. But He would allow Himself to suffer and die on the cross and take all the punishment for our sin — from Adam until the end of time.

That little boy, Adam and Eve's great, great, great, great great grandson, was Jesus.

Satan thought he had power over all of us because of sin. But on the cross, Jesus defeated Satan and paid for all our sin, so Satan had no more power over us. Game over!

So as we come near to Christmas time, let us remember that:

Because of Adam, sin entered the world and we had to die.

Because of Jesus, we can have His righteousness. We can live in Him, and He in us!

"Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous." (Romans 5:19)



ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

MEMORY VERSE

Romans 5:19 *"Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous."*

Today, any of us who believes in Jesus will not die but have eternal life. If you would like to accept Jesus, you can accept Him today. If you have already accepted Jesus, you can thank Him for coming to die for you and give you eternal life!

Pray for each other.

HOOK & INTRO

CHARADES

Choose some fun words for kids to act out without talking.

(Today's lesson is about someone who couldn't talk for a while.)

LESSON (Luke 1:11-20)

Christmas is a holiday that requires some preparation. We usually prepare our homes by cleaning and decorating them, putting up lights, and setting up a Christmas tree. We prepare special baked goodies and gifts to give to friends and family! Most of the time and effort made at Christmas is because of love! Your parents spend time and money to make Christmas special because they love you.

The same is true about God, our heavenly Father. He loved us so much that He sent Jesus to earth to die for our sins. And sending His special gift that first Christmas took some preparation, too.

GOD PREPARED THE MESSENGER

Back in the Old Testament, God told the prophet Malachi that He would send a messenger before the Saviour. *"I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me."* (Malachi 3:1)

It was a custom of kings in those times to have a messenger go before them and prepare the way for their visit. This messenger's purpose would be to tell the people about the coming Savior and prepare the way for him.

This messenger would be a prophet like the Old Testament prophet Elijah. He would boldly preach God's message of repentance, telling people that God wanted them to turn away from sin and believe in his Son, Jesus, for salvation.

Let's skip ahead about 400 years after Malachi prophesied about this messenger.

Turn to the Gospel of Luke chapter 1. Here Luke introduces an elderly couple from the priestly line of Aaron. Their names were Zechariah and Elizabeth, and they didn't have any children. Elizabeth was a relative of Mary, Jesus' mother.

GOD PREPARED THE MESSENGER'S FATHER

During his time of service as a priest, Zechariah was chosen to enter the temple and burn sweet-smelling incense to the Lord.

The angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah.

Remember that Zechariah and Elizabeth were old and didn't have any children. But they had been praying for a child, and God heard their prayer! They would have a son who would be named John, and he would be filled with the Holy Spirit.

God was telling Zechariah, through the angel Gabriel, that his son would be the promised messenger, the prophet who would prepare the way for the Savior.

This was great news! Except ... Zechariah didn't exactly believe the angel. He knew that normally people who were his and Elizabeth's age couldn't have children. "How shall I know this?" he asked.

"I'm Gabriel," the angel says. "I was sent to speak to you and to bring this good news to you. What I have spoken will come true. But because you didn't believe, you will remain silent, unable to speak until the day when these things happen."

All of this has taken a while. Outside the temple people are wondering why Zechariah is still inside. The prayers and incense have stopped, so why hasn't he come out? Finally, Zechariah emerged speechless. He gestured helplessly, trying to explain that he's seen a vision, been given some extraordinary news. But He would be silent and unable to speak until John was born.

When he returns home to his village, Elizabeth does indeed become pregnant.

[optional] For five months she doesn't tell a soul. Until her cousin Mary—after she has heard from Gabriel— comes for a visit. The baby Elizabeth is carrying leaps in her womb as though to greet the child Mary is carrying. The two of them will change the world. "Why do I have this honour," Elizabeth asks, "that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

GOD FULFILLED HIS PROMISE

Everything happened just as the angel said! Zechariah and Elizabeth had a baby boy. Eight days after the baby was born, all their friends and relatives gathered around. They asked, "What will you name him?"

"How about Zechariah after his father," someone suggested.

But everyone was surprised when Zechariah wrote the words, "His name is John." Immediately, Zechariah was no longer mute. He could speak again, and he praised God! All the people who heard about these strange events surrounding John's birth wondered what kind of person he would grow up to be.

God prepared John's parents by telling them who their son would be and what he would do. John was chosen to be the messenger, later known as John the Baptist, a prophet who would prepare the way for Jesus, the Savior.

Zechariah shared a prophecy about his son. It is called "Zechariah's Song." You will find it in **Luke 1:67-79**. Have the children read Zechariah's prophecy together — the boys reading the odd-numbered verses and the girls the even-numbered verses. Read verse 80 all together.

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PROPHECY OF A MESSENGER

VIDEOS

Faith Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFHOil6Vf0>

Kids Anywhere <https://youtu.be/O5RdVuztFKw?t=363>

ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

MEMORY VERSE

Luke 1:76 *And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,*

RELATED CRAFT



HUDDLE TIME

Share about how we can tell others about Jesus and prepare the way for them to get to know Him.
Pray for each other.