

1. Mary's Story (Luke 1:26-38)

The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people." (Luke 2:10)



PLAN

Session Outline

1. Gather

Greeting
Nativity Dress Up: Angels
"Rejoice" Angel Banner
Transition to Explore

2. Explore

Sacred Conversations
Hear and See the Bible Story
Interact with the Bible Story
Say the Bible Verse
Transition to Respond

3. Respond

Loving God,
Loving Neighbor
Surprise Science
Mary and Gabriel
Stained-Glass
Transition to Bless

4. Bless

Inviting
Praising
Blessing
At Home with God

Supplies

Basic Supplies: Tape | Stickers | Yarn | Markers | Crayons | Pencils | Glue | Paper |

Gather: Laundry basket or other large basket | Large white t-shirts or robes | Gold ribbon | Gold wire garland | Costume wings | Other angel dress up items | Wire cutters

Explore: No additional supplies needed

Respond: Battery-operated tea light candles | Tub of water | Ice cubes | Towels | Small bowl of salt | String | Colored tissue paper

Bless: Heart-shaped ink stamp or stickers

Before You Teach

"Don't be afraid." The New Testament contains five accounts of angels saying these words. Were angels terrifying to behold, such that their appearance required reassurance? Or did the appearance of an angel usually signify such an important pronouncement, and possibly a life-altering event, that their presence automatically elicited a response of fear? For Mary, her encounter with the angel Gabriel certainly qualified as a life-changing event. Life as she knew it was about to change dramatically.

Mary was a young girl, probably twelve or thirteen years old, the age at which girls married during Bible times. Mary was not a queen or a princess, but simply a young girl engaged to be married to a carpenter. She lived in a small town, Nazareth in Galilee, which is never mentioned in the Old Testament.

The angel tells Mary that she has found favor with God. Many assume that those who are "blessed by God" will enjoy wealth and good health. Mary's blessing, however, is that she is to have a child out of wedlock. Mary's response of "How can this be?" seems appropriate and believable. The angel not only assures her that it is true, but says the baby is God's Son! God is at work among ordinary people, choosing to send Jesus as a message of God's love, in an unexpected and unconventional way.

During Advent we prepare to once again celebrate God's unconventional message of love. Sometimes in the busyness of the season, it is possible to become overwhelmed. Take a moment to slow down and offer a prayer of thanks to God for the messages of love which are sometimes sent and received in unexpected ways.

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GATHER

Greeting

Before class: Display the Attendance Chart (Class Kit—pp. 15–18) at eye level. Put together the model of the school and the figures of Mr. Maxwell, Rachel, and Armen (Class Kit—p. 9).

- Play, "Come to Us, Emmanuel" (Annual Music CD or Adventure DVD) as you welcome each child.
 - Show the children where to place their offerings, and help each child mark the Attendance Chart with a sticker or permanent marker.
 - Place the Deep Blue Shores Map (Class Kit—p. 11) and the school and the Mr. Maxwell, Rachel, and Armen figures (Class Kit—p. 9) on a table or on the floor for the children to play with and explore. If available, add the Deep Blue Shores Maps, buildings, and figures from previous quarters.
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A—Nativity Dress Up Center: Angels (Dramatic Play)

Before class: Gather large white t-shirts or robes, strands of gold ribbon, costume wings, and other angel dress up materials. Place them in a laundry basket or other large basket. Cut gold wire garland into 2-foot strands, bend each strand into a circle shape and twist the ends together to create halos. Add the halos to the basket. Label the basket, "Angels."

- Place the "Angels" basket in the center of the play space.
- Invite the children to explore and play with the costume pieces, and encourage them to dress up and pretend to be angels.

TIP: *You will add to the Nativity Dress Up Center each week. Return the items to the basket, and save your "Angels" basket to use again next week.*

OR

B—"Rejoice" Angel Banner (Activity Sheets)

Before class: Cut a 24-inch long piece of yarn for each child.

- Give each child a copy of Activity Sheets—Session 1 and a strand of yarn.
- Invite the children to create "Rejoice" Angel Banners according to the instructions.
- Read the word *rejoice* with the children. Share with them that they will hear the word in today's Bible story.

TIP: *You may wish to keep the "Rejoice" Angel Banners at church in a safe place so the children can add next week's "Emmanuel" Angel Banners to them.*

Transition to Explore

- Have the children clean up and then pretend to be flying angels as they move to the Bible story circle.

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EXPLORE

Sacred Conversations

SAY: This month we are going to be hearing the stories of Jesus' family and his birth. I am excited to celebrate and learn with you.

ASK: I wonder:

- How many friends are here with us today? Who is missing?
 - How do you feel today?
 - What's one thing that happened in your community this week that you really liked?
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Hear and See the Bible Story

SAY: Today our Bible story is about Mary, Jesus' mother. She is going to have a very important surprise visitor. Let's see who it will be.

- Tell the children the story, "Gabriel's Message" (*Deep Blue Bible Storybook*—p. 298).
- Watch the Deep Blue Adventure for Session 1 (Adventure DVD) with the children.

ASK: How does our church get ready for Christmas?

Interact with the Bible Story

- Give each child a copy of "Mary's Story" (Bible Story Sheets—Session 1).
 - Read the story with the children, encouraging them to read the words in blue.
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Say the Bible Verse

Before class: Post the Bible Verse Poster—Unit 1 (Class Kit—p. 3) on a wall or bulletin board.

- Point to the Bible Verse Poster. Say the Bible verse for the children, and then repeat it together.
 - Teach the children signs from American Sign Language for some of the words in the Bible verse (Leader Guide—p. 91 and www.deepbluekids.com/This-Sunday).
 - Watch the Unit 1 Bible Verse video (Adventure DVD) with the children.
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Transition to Respond

- Encourage the children to pretend to be flying angels as they move to the next activity.

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RESPOND

Loving God, Loving Neighbor

Before class: Post "All Are Welcome" (Class Kit—p. 2) on a wall or bulletin board. Locate the "Advent Wreath" (Class Kit—p. 27) and one battery operated tea light candle.

- Play, "All Are Welcome" (Annual Music CD or Adventure DVD). Sing along and dance to the music.
- Place the "Advent Wreath" (Class Kit—p. 27) in the center of the circle or on a table.

SAY: Today is the first Sunday of the season of Advent. During Advent we prepare for Jesus to be born on Christmas. Each week we will light a candle on our "Advent Wreath" and say a prayer. This week our prayer is about hope. What is hope? (*Allow some time for the children to answer.*)

- Turn on a battery-operated tea light candle and place it on the purple candle (for Week 1) of the "Advent Wreath," and read the prayer for Week 1: Hope.
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A—Surprise Science (Science)

Before class: Fill a small tub with water. Make ice cubes if needed. Cut string into 12-inch pieces. Fill a small bowl with salt. Have towels nearby to dry up any spills or splashes. Try the activity yourself.

- Place the small tub of water on a table and add ice cubes to the water.
- Give a child a 12-inch strand of string. Ask him or her to try picking up an ice cube with the string.
- Invite the child to place the string on one of the ice cubes and then add a pinch of salt on top of the string. Then encourage the child to wait a minute before attempting to pick up the ice cube using the string. (*How this works: The salt will have caused the ice to melt slightly before refreezing over the string.*)

SAY: You picked up the ice with the string! Are you surprised? What does surprise feel like? Why do you think the salt helped you pick up the string?

- Invite the children to experiment and play with the ice cubes, strings, and salt.
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OR

B—Mary and Gabriel Stained-Glass (Art)

Before class: Make a copy of "Mary and Gabriel Stained-Glass" (p. 12) for each child.

- Place scissors, glue sticks, and colored tissue paper in the middle of the table. Give each child a copy of "Mary and Gabriel Stained-Glass."
 - Invite each child to cut or tear the colored tissue paper into small pieces and glue the pieces onto his or her stained-glass picture. Encourage the children to be creative with their color choices.
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Transition to Bless

- Have the children help you clean up and then pretend to be flying angels as they move to the Bible story circle.

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BLESS

Inviting

Before class: Cut out the mural pieces from the bottom of the Unit 1—Bible Story Mural (Class Kit—p. 19) and place them in an envelope or zip-top bag. Post the Unit 1—Bible Story Mural on a wall or bulletin board.

- Gather the children around the mural. Invite a child to tape the image of Mary to the mural.

ASK: What do you remember about the Bible story we heard today? What do you think we can learn about community from this story?

Praising

Before class: Display "Singing Together" (Class Kit—p. 31) on a wall or bulletin board.

- Sing together, "Don't Be Afraid" (Class Kit—p. 31).

TIP: *If time permits, invite the children to choose more songs to sing.*

Blessing

- Invite the children to sit in a circle with you. Hold the heart-shaped ink stamp or some heart stickers in your hand.
 - Turn to the child on your left and place a heart ink stamp or sticker on his or her hand.
 - Say to the child, "Rejoice! God is with you!"
 - Give the heart ink stamp or stickers to the child, and invite him or her to repeat the blessing to the next child in the circle.
 - Continue around the circle in this way until the last child receives a blessing and gives one to you.
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At Home with God

Before class: Tear off the "Singing Together" songbook from the Bible Story Sheets for each child.

ASK: What's one thing about our time today that you can tell your family?

- Give each child a copy of Bible Story Sheets—Session 1. Look at "Family Faith Activities" together.

ASK: Which of these activities are you most excited to try this week?

- Send home the Bible Story Sheets—Session 1 and Bible Story Sheets—"Singing Together" with each child.

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Mary and Gabriel Stained-Glass

