

# Love is a Promise (2)

**Bible verses:**

Luke 1:26–38, 57–66

The virgin Mary

**Aim:**

To see how Zechariah, Elizabeth and Mary made choices of faith

**Today's fruit:**

Joy



In today's session we see how Mary, Zechariah and Elizabeth each made a choice of faith when God spoke to them.

Gabriel's message gave Mary the chance to say yes to God's plan, even though it was surprising and scary. Zechariah and Elizabeth showed faith by naming their baby John, just as God had said. Their son John would grow up to prepare people for the coming of Jesus. This reminds us that God invites us too to make choices of faith. When we say yes to God, like Mary, Zechariah and Elizabeth, we can share in the joy of being part of his plan.

Mary experienced joy in being part of God's plan, and we can too.

**Each child will need:**

- A paper plate, a smallish circular object to draw round, craft items to decorate, scissors, Christmas wrapping ribbon, sticky tape, glue and pens/pencils – see Action It
- Pens/pencils and paper
- *Explore It ideas* handout

**You will need:**

- A pair of over-ear headphones (not ear buds) that can connect to a playlist, video or CD of familiar Christmas songs – see Start It
- To draw the angel outlines on the paper plates for the children (optional) – see Action It
- Fruit of the Spirit poster: *Joy* – download from **Salvationist**

## Start it

Play a game of *Guess the Christmas Song*. One child wears headphones and listens to a Christmas song. They then hum the tune out loud for the rest of the group to guess. Once the song is guessed, a different child wears the headphones for another song.

This video might help you with the playlist. There are 21 song snippets – though they are very short!

## Listen

*Christmas song quiz* by Love to Sing (4:33)

## Sing it

### Say:

Our song is quieter than usual and tells us a little about the Bible story we are looking at today.

## Song

*'Mary Did You Know?'* by Allstars Kids Club (3:26)

### Say:

The song asks Mary if she knew all the amazing things Jesus would do when he grew up. The truth is, God had promised a Saviour long before Mary was even born. Our memory verse reminds us of that promise, written hundreds of years before Jesus came. See if you can remember the memory verse and let's say it together.

## Memory verse

**'For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.**

**And he will be called  
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'**

(Isaiah 9:6 NIV)





## Share it

**Say:**

Last week we met two important characters who struggled to believe that God could answer their prayer.

**Ask:**

What were their names, and what do you remember about them?

**Say:**

Elizabeth and Zechariah had prayed for a baby for a very long time. When Zechariah was burning incense in the Temple, an angel appeared and told him that Elizabeth would give birth to a son. Zechariah struggled to believe it could ever happen.

**Ask:**

What happened to Zechariah?

**Say:**

Zechariah spent the whole of Elizabeth's pregnancy in silence, as he could not say a word. He had to wait, watch, and learn to trust. Today we will find out what happened when the same angel came to visit a young girl named Mary. Gabriel's message would give her the chance to make a big choice of faith too.

## Video

***Gabriel Visits Mary*** by Superbook (1:08)

**Ask:**

- What was the angel's news for Mary?
- What did we discover about Jesus from the angel Gabriel?

**Say:**

Mary was amazed and even asked, 'How can this happen?' When the angel explained, Mary made the choice to put her faith in God.

**Read:**

**'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 /CB)

**Ask:**

Do you think Mary's choice to follow God's plan was brave? If so, why?

**Say:**

Mary trusted God and said yes. She made a choice to have faith in God and in his plan for her life. As we continue in the story, we see that Elizabeth and Zechariah also had to make their own choice of faith when their baby was born.

**Read:**

**‘When it was time for Elizabeth to give birth, she had a boy. Her neighbours and relatives heard how good the Lord was to her, and they rejoiced.**

**‘When the baby was eight days old, they came to circumcise him. They wanted to name him Zechariah because this was his father’s name. But his mother said, “No! He will be named John.”**

**‘The people said to Elizabeth, “But no one in your family has this name!” Then they made signs to his father, “What would you like to name him?”**

**‘Zechariah asked for something to write on. Then he wrote, “His name is John.” Everyone was surprised. Then Zechariah could talk again. He began to praise God. And all their neighbours became alarmed. In all the mountains of Judea people continued talking about all these things. The people who heard about these things wondered about them. They thought, “What will this child be?” They said this because the Lord was with him.’**

(Luke 1:57-66 ICB)

**Ask:**

At what point was Zechariah able to start talking again?

**Say:**

Elizabeth and Zechariah followed what God had asked them to do and named their baby boy John. Let’s find out more about John and the special role he had in the life of Jesus.

**Video**

***God’s Story: John the Baptist*** by Crossroads Kids’ Club (4:03)

**Ask:**

In what ways did John choose to place his faith in God and follow his plan?

**Say:**

John the Baptist helped people get ready for Jesus. He made a choice of faith to trust and follow God’s plan.

**Action it****Say:**

The angel Gabriel came to visit Zechariah and Mary and gave them messages from God. Each of them had to make a choice of faith, to trust God and say yes to his plan.

## Paper plate angels

Explain to the children that they are going to make a Christmas angel decoration to take home. The angel will remind them that, just like Mary, Zechariah and Elizabeth, we can make choices of faith and trust God's plan for our lives.

## Video

***Paper Plate Angels (quick and easy Christmas tree toppers)*** by Red Ted Art (Maggy Woodley) (1:14)

The children can choose one of these faith-filled phrases to write on their angel or create their own.

- I say YES to God.
- I choose to follow God's plan.

### **Say:**

Every time you see your angel, let it remind you of Mary, Zechariah, Elizabeth and John, who made choices based on their faith in God. Let it also remind you to say yes to God and trust his plan for your life.

Display the *Joy* sign.

Explain that when we make choices of faith, like Mary, Zechariah and Elizabeth, God fills our hearts with joy because we know we are part of his plan. Encourage the children to let their angel decorations remind them not only to choose faith, but also to remember the joy that comes from trusting God.



## Pray it

### **Say:**

In our story today Mary had to make a choice. She could have said no, because the angel's message was big and scary. Instead, she trusted God's plan for her life, and her strong faith in him meant she could say yes to whatever lay ahead.

### **Ask:**

- How do you think Mary felt when she chose to say yes to God?
- Have you ever had to make a brave choice for God? What did it feel like?
- What faith-filled choices can we make for God?

### **Say:**

For our prayer time we're going to listen to a song that tells Mary's story in her own words. As the music plays, you might want to close your eyes and pray these words, 'Yes, God, I choose to follow you.'

## Listen

'Who, Me?' (Mary's song of trust) by Trueway Kids (3:26)

Say:

Dear God, thank you for Mary, Zechariah and Elizabeth, who made choices of faith and trusted you.

Please help us to say yes to you and make choices of faith in our own lives.

Thank you that your plan includes us too. Amen.

## Explore it

Remember to send home the *Explore It ideas* for children and families.



## Love is a Promise (2)

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



### Bible verses:

Luke 1:26-38, 57-66



### Aim:

To see how Zechariah, Elizabeth and Mary made choices of faith



### Today's fruit:

Joy



### Pray

Take home your angel decoration and hang it somewhere you'll see it each day. Each time you look at it, remember the words you wrote and ask God to help you make a choice of faith. You could pray using these words: 'Yes, God, I choose to follow you.'



### Share

In today's session we listened to a beautiful song that tells Mary's story.

Watch the clip with the people at home and discuss this question:

- What does it mean for us to say yes to God today?

**'Who, Me?' (Mary's song of trust)** by Trueway Kids



### Song for the week

**'Mary Did You Know?'** by Allstars Kids Club



### Memory verse

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