

EDUCATING IN CHRIST

The Annunciation to Mary



Guide Booklet

PreK and Kindergarten

Ages 3 to 6

PRESENTER'S MEDITATION

In the first chapter of Luke's Gospel, the archangel Gabriel is sent to Zechariah, the husband of Elizabeth, with an extraordinary announcement: Zechariah's wife is to have a son who is to be named John. This message was almost unbelievable because Elizabeth had been unable to have children and was now very old. Note the angel's greeting to Zechariah: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard..." (Luke 1:13) Instead of believing and rejoicing, Zechariah asked for a sign to prove that this was so. He got his sign: He was struck dumb. Elizabeth did become pregnant and "[i]n the sixth month [of her pregnancy], the angel Gabriel was sent from God to... Nazareth to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph..." (Luke 1:26-27)

Note the greeting of Gabriel to Mary: "Hail, full of grace." We can think of grace as God's life and action in a soul. To be FULL of grace signifies that God completely abides in Mary's soul, and she is docile to His Presence.

Gabriel's opening words are much more than just a greeting, for this language is often used in the Old Testament with reference to a person chosen by God for a special purpose in salvation history. We could also contrast Zechariah's question, demanding a sign, with Mary's question, trying to understand. Mary's response is one of total trust in God and submission to God's will, even if she did not fully understand what was happening.

SOURCES

Bible (Luke 1:26-38); *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) 490

TEACHER'S AIMS

- To proclaim the story of the Angel Gabriel's annunciation to Mary that God desires her to become the mother of His Son
- To lift up the first part of the "Hail Mary" prayer

MATERIALS

- Diorama of Mary's House
- Figure of Mary
- Figure of the Angel Gabriel
- Holy Bible bookmarked to Luke 1:26-38
- **Scripture Booklet:** Luke 1:26-38 (for very young children, you may shorten the scripture reading to Luke 1:26-32a; 34-35; 37-38); CCC 484-486
- Prayer Card with words, "Hail Mary, full of grace"
- Raised Surface Map or other map of Israel (optional)

Black - Text that can be read or paraphrased

Italic - *Scripture Passage*

(Italic) - *(Expected children's responses)*

Green* - Action and notes

*or gray if printed in black and white

PRESENTATION

If the children have not yet had the presentation of the Raised Map of the Land of Israel and three main towns, do not use the preamble below as it will be too distracting.

Gather the children with the Raised Map of Israel in front of you and have the Annunciation materials nearby.

(Preamble)

Situate the story on the Raised Surface Map by pointing out Nazareth.

We're here with our Raised Map of the Land of Israel. One of the towns on this map is Nazareth. Something amazing happened in Nazareth involving the Holy Spirit. So, we mark it with a flame of fire to remind us of the Holy Spirit.

Show flame symbol.

Where on the map does this symbol go?

Place symbol on map.

Another person who was part of this wonderful event was Mary.

(End of Preamble)

You will hear that Mary is a *virgin*, that is a young woman who is not married.

She is ***betrothed***, which means that one day she will marry and live with Joseph.

The ***angel*** Gabriel is sent by God to Mary to deliver a special message. The angel tells her that she will "***conceive*** a child," meaning she will become pregnant.

How will she conceive? That will be a surprise. **Pause**

The angel tells her that her ***kinswoman***, her relative, Elizabeth, was pregnant although she had been ***barren***, never able to have a child. **Pause**

We will hear Mary say she is the Lord's ***handmaid***, a servant who pays close attention to everything she is asked to do by the Lord.

Solemn Proclamation from the Bible

Help the children prepare their bodies to listen to Scripture.

Suggestion: Let's get our bodies ready to listen from the Holy Bible about this. Let's get our feet ready... get our hands ready and quiet them on our laps... Take a deep breath in... then let it out... Now take another deep breath in... and let it out so quietly that no one can hear but you. Open your ears, open your heart. It is time to listen.

Light the candle while saying, Jesus is the light of the world.

Read Luke 1:26-38 slowly, from the Bible, while you listen to God with the children.

Questions for Understanding and Reflection

If no child answers a particular question, you might quietly do so – or let the question help them listen again when the story is presented with the materials.

What did you hear as you listened to this story? Each of you may have heard something different. Give time for children to respond.

Whom did God send with a message to Mary? Pause

(The angel Gabriel)

Yes, God's angels bring messages from God.

Did you hear the words, 'Hail, highly favored one'? Pause

"Hail Mary, full of grace" means the same thing.

How did Mary feel when the angel greeted her that way? Pause

Did the angel know she felt troubled / perplexed? Use the word that your Bible used.

What did the angel say to her about that? *(Be not afraid)*

Mary wanted to know how she could have a baby. What did the angel tell her? Pause

The Holy Spirit would overshadow her. This baby would be her baby and God's baby.

Did you hear what the angel said the baby's name would be?
(Jesus)

Who else did the angel say was going to have a baby? **Pause**

Yes, her relative, her kinswoman Elizabeth was six months pregnant after years of not being able to have a baby.

Did Mary say "Yes" to God's plan for her? **Pause**

Mary gave a beautiful "Yes." Did you hear her say, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to your word"? **Pause**

Why do you think Mary wanted to be the servant, the handmaid of the Lord? **Pause**

Presenting the Material with Second Reading of Scripture

This time, the reading is done with the materials and using the Scripture booklet instead of the Bible. You may need to change some of the words below if the words in your Scripture booklet are different. For children younger than 1st grade, remember not to speak and move the materials at the same time; move, then speak.

Set up the Annunciation diorama with Mary inside or beside her house and the angel Gabriel out of view – behind the diorama.

Now, we will listen again to the story, this time with materials that will be for you to work with.

This story is called the Annunciation.

This **point to diorama** helps us think of Mary's home in Nazareth.

Mary was a young woman who probably was like the other girls in her town. She helped her parents with chores, studied, and prayed. And yet God chose her among all other women for something incredibly special. **Pause**

The Annunciation to Mary (Luke 1:26-38)

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

Bring the Angel from behind the diorama and have Gabriel come down in front of Mary.

And he came to her and said, "Hail, Full of Grace! The Lord is with you."

But she was troubled by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

Turn Mary to face sideways, and then turn her back again to face the angel.

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Turn Mary to face sideways, and then turn her back again to face the angel.

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.

And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God."

Move Mary a little closer to the Angel and have her bow.

Then Mary said, "Here am I, the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word."

Then the angel departed from her.

Take the Angel away – raise the figure of the Angel, and then return it to behind the diorama.

Slowly, reverently, lower both hands (with thumbs touching, in a gesture of epiclesis) over Mary, to signify the Holy Spirit overshadowing her.

Snuff the candle.

Questions for Wonder and Meditation

Pause before beginning

After the angel left Mary, where was the baby, Jesus? Let a child point to Mary's womb. If the child says in her "stomach," you can say "Yes, in the special place that is called the womb."

I wonder why Mary wanted to be the servant, the handmaid of the Lord.... Pause

I wonder if it was because she knew God loved her so much....

Prayer Response

When we pray, 'Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you,' we are using the same words God told the angel Gabriel to use.

Even now, in Heaven, Jesus and Mary can hear us when we pray with our hearts. Pause

Pray the words quietly: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.

You might pass a prayer card with those words on it, or the Mary figure, and together pray those words as each child holds it.

Then together sing just those words of the angel from "*Hail Mary Gentle Woman*" ("Hail Mary / full of grace / the Lord is with you / Jesus")

Work of the Children

As you choose your work, we can remember that Mary and Jesus are with us. We can keep in mind that they want to help us believe and trust God as Mary did. You may choose to:

- Work with the diorama and ask me to read the Scripture booklet to you
- Draw a picture of the Annunciation
- Copy the prayer card

TRUTHS WE WANT TO REMAIN IN OUR MIND AND HEART

This "Remember Meeting" should take place only after the children have had time to work independently with this material.

Gather the children in the prayer space. Have them bring the Annunciation material.

You have worked with this material of the Annunciation a few times. What do you suppose God wants us to remember about the Annunciation?

What was Mary asked to do? *(Mary was asked to be the mother of the Son of God, Jesus)*

When Mary said yes, what happened? *(Mary became pregnant with Jesus)*

Who overshadowed Mary to make Jesus start growing in her? *(The Holy Spirit; Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary)*

Who is Jesus' Father? *(God; Jesus is the Son of God)*

Who is the mother of Jesus? *(Mary)*

End with a prayer.