

With all my heart I glorify the Lord! In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior. (Luke 1:46-47)

Mary's Joy – Luke 1:26-38, 46-56

Prepare to Wonder

As we continue to journey through the Advent season, we anticipate the coming of the Christ Child. In the Scripture today, we hear Mary's story. An angel appears and tells Mary that she will have a child. Her child will be known as God's Son, and she will name him *Jesus*.

Mary is overwhelmed and confused. She cannot imagine how this could be possible. But she is reassured by the presence of the Holy Spirit and is reminded that God makes all things possible. After her disbelief, Mary finds joy! She agrees to do God's work and accepts her holy and precious role. Mary begins to praise God through a beautiful song and prayer. In her praise, she expresses joy and gratitude. She recognizes all that God is doing and is filled with excitement and anticipation. However, this must have been difficult news to process. You might wonder how Mary could have so much joy in the midst of so much chaos and confusion. In today's video and lesson, the children will hear that sometimes joy is not our first response. It can take time to find joy in difficulty. Yet, Mary is able to accept that, although life is drastically altered, there is joy to be found. Joy does not always have to be big smiles or ecstatic jumping; it can be an attitude of gratefulness. While it is sometimes hard to find joy in the unexpected, our Bible story teaches us to find gratitude even in the most unanticipated moments of life.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

Sometimes we have to practice joy even under stress and anxiety. One thing to try is face stretches. Begin by scrunching up your face as tight as possible. Hold this for five seconds. Then release by loosening every muscle in your face, even sticking out your tongue. Do this several times. Not only does this release tension, it makes you smile and laugh. Small practices, such as this one, can help us pause, relax, and find a little joy.

Welcome to Wonder

Supplies: CEB Bible, Annual Music CD or song download, optional: Digital Class Pack

- Gather together near your Wonder Table.

SAY: Today's faith word is *joy*.

- Show the children the "Joy" poster (Digital Class Pack).

SAY: The definition of *joy* is a feeling of gratitude and happiness. Gratitude is another word for being thankful.

WONDER: How does joy feel?

SING together

- Use your Annual Music CD or download the song, "Joy" (<https://www.cokesbury.com/Celebrate-Wonder-Annual-Music>).
- Play the song, "Joy."
- Sing and celebrate.

Wonder with Me

Supplies: CEB Bible, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, optional: Wonder Cube (Digital Class Pack)

READ the Bible Story

- Read the Bible story: Luke 1:26-38, 46-56.
- Roll the Wonder Cube. Take time to answer a few of the questions.

WATCH the Bible Story

- Visit <https://www.cokesbury.com/Celebrate-Wonder-Video> to download and watch today's Bible story, or watch on www.amplifymedia.com.

WONDER together

- Who felt joy in the Bible story? How did she express her joy?
- What does *joy* mean to you?

CONTINUE to Wonder

- When have you experienced unexpected joy?
- What has God done that brings you joy?

PRAY together

- Dear God, help me be full of joy. Amen.

Experience Wonder—Mary and Angel Puppets (Art)

Supplies: two wooden spoons or craft sticks, yarn, blue and white material scraps, coffee filters, markers, glue

- Have each child draw a face on the round end of each wooden spoon or on one end of the craft sticks: one for Mary, and one for the angel.
- Have the children glue the yarn for hair and the material scraps for clothes (blue material for Mary, white material for the angel) onto the spoons or sticks.
- Have each child glue a coffee filter onto the back of his or her angel for wings.

WONDER: What part of the story did you like best? Can you tell the story using the wooden spoons of Mary and the angel?

Spiritual Practice—Exploring Joy Through Celebration

Supplies: Advent Wreath (Digital Class Pack or real family Advent wreath), candles (real or LED), optional: Celebration Chart (Digital Class Pack) and Celebrate Wonder Family Activity Book

SAY: Today is the second Sunday of Advent. We will light the next candle on our Advent wreath.

- Invite a child to color or help you light one of the purple candles on the wreath.

SAY: Mary shared so much joy in our story today. She sang and praised God.

WONDER: How do you praise God?

- Sing the first line of “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”:
Joyful, joyful, we adore thee,
God of glory, Lord of love.
- If you choose, you may sing the entire hymn (*The United Methodist Hymnal*, 89).
- Encourage the children and their families to use the Celebration Chart (Digital Class Pack) and to read together the *Winter 2020–21 Celebrate Wonder Family Activity Book* (if purchased) at home this week.