ADAPTABLE TEACHING RESOURCES

THE DVENTURE OF . CHRISTMAS

A journey through advent for churches & families

LESSON 1: MARY'S ADVENTURE

faithmkids

The Adventure of Christmas

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We recommend the International Children's Bible for use with children during the lesson. Our leader's notes use the New International Version.

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'All for the glory of God alone' (1 Corinthians 10:31)

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Mary's Adventure

LUKE 1:26-38



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Big Idea:

The Son of God comes to live with ordinary people like us.



Faith in Kids looks like:

Children who are delighted to be followers of a great and loving King, Jesus.



Prepare your heart first. Pray and read the Bible passage. Read Where are we going? and Look at the Passage to give you a better understanding of the passage and the Big Idea. Spend some time thinking through Win my heart first and Questions for my heart to see how this makes a difference to your life.

Prepare your lesson. Read the lesson plan for the age group you will be teaching. Use sections from a

different age group if they are better suited to your children. Keep the **Big Idea** in your mind to help you teach it clearly in every part of your lesson. Use the blank **Lesson Template** to plan the different sections. Collect/draw/print/make what you need.

Pray for the children in your group to grasp the **Big** Idea and to live it out in their lives. Remember that you have the Holy Spirit's help as you teach God's word!



Where are we going?

The first Christmas was a long anticipated event even before chocolate advent calendars, presents under the tree and turkey dinners existed. For many years, God's people had waited for him to send his promised forever king – finally it was happening! We're going on an adventure to experience that first Christmas with the people who were there.

Our adventure begins with Mary. She was a mostly unknown, rather ordinary small town girl but God knew

her. He knew her life and her plans. And he chose her, stepped into her life and gave her a better plan – to have a baby who was also God's extraordinary son and forever king, Jesus!

As ordinary as we are, this same God steps into our lives and gives us his extraordinary son, too. This Christmas, let's delight in following and obeying our forever king, Jesus!

Look at the Passage

Ordinary Girl v26-29

Imagine the surprise in the angel dispatch room in heaven as main man Gabriel arrived at his destination - the house of a teenage girl from nowhere Nazareth. She must have seemed like an unlikely choice to receive Gabriel's staggering news.

Mary was an ordinary girl with ordinary plans - she'd marry Joseph, a good Jewish bloke from a nice family, have kids, get old and look back on a pleasantly unsurprising life. But God was about to throw all of that up in the air.

She may have been ordinary but being visited by an angel wasn't. Mary was afraid.

Forever King v30-37

Gabriel's message wasn't one of fear but of good news. His description of the baby didn't mention eye colour or nose shape. Instead he described a baby who would be God's own son and a king who would rule forever. This wasn't a new idea, but the fulfillment of God's plans, foretold in advance. God had promised King David that his family line would rule an everlasting kingdom (2 Samuel 7:12-16). Generations of Israelites had lived and died waiting for a king to come who would rule perfectly forever. Now, Mary's child will be the fulfilment of that promise, through a miraculous pregnancy. It may have sounded impossible but 'no word from God will ever fail.'

Obedient Response v38

Mary heard enough to know how she would respond – with faith and obedience. Though it would cost her, though people wouldn't believe her, though it would be tough, she trusted God. She responded in humble acceptance – 'I am the Lord's servant.' She was willing to set aside her plans to say 'yes' to God's extraordinary plan.

Win my heart first

The last few years have certainly tested our ability to respond to change. How has your heart handled that? Even as people who trust God, we can find it very difficult to not be in control. When there's a sudden, unexpected change to our plans, it can throw us into a spin. When that happens, where do you go with your questions and frustrations?

Mary's story reminds us of the incredible truth that God's plans are good and will never be derailed. In her story, we see that God steps into the everyday life of his people. He comes close because he's a God who cares about the details of our lives. He's not a distant dictator but a loving and personal king.

This is what we need to cling to when our plans fall apart around us. Like Mary, we can trust that God's plans far exceed our own. When he sent his son, he sent him to be our king, too. Like Mary, we will be able to say 'I am the Lord's servant' with delight as we give up our plans to follow and obey our extraordinary king, Jesus!



What stops you from obeying God? Believing that we know better? Thinking that our plans are easier?

What is it about King Jesus that persuades you to say 'Yes!' to him?

All-Welcome Service

The table below outlines a plan to teach this lesson to the whole church gathering - adults and children, Christians and unbelieving guests together.

It includes short sections of engaging visual drama to tell the story, interactive discussions, songs and prayers. It is designed for use when children will be in for the whole service, rather than leaving for their own Sunday School groups.

There are also highlighted moments where brief 'mini-sermons' can be included if you want to add more. Aim for each of these mini-sermon slots to be 5 minutes or less. Be visually engaging and use short sentences to hold children's attention. Remember to address everyone (adults, children, guests etc.) so that they understand the passage and can see how it makes a difference to their daily lives.

If the children will be leaving for their own activities, you can instead use the script as a **Bible Story Idea** to introduce the Bible passage (either as a Kids Slot in the service or at the start of the Sunday School lesson). To do this, omit the sections highlighted in blue.



Volunteers to act as Mary and the angel.



Costumes for Mary and the angel, rubbish bin and a chair.



Stick a large 'Wedding Plans' label to a ring binder file; on a large sheet of card write 'It's a boy!' and draw a picture of a baby to make a baby announcement poster; print or draw pictures to stick to the poster a name label with 'Jesus' on it, a crown and a clock face; photocopy the worksheet for the congregation or make the following PowerPoint slides - Illustration (see Appendix) and 'Did You Spot It?' questions, 'Work It Out' questions, 'Live It Out' questions.





Start with *either*: The Over 8's 'Get Going' idea and Link

or:

Decorate a Christmas tree at the front, perhaps with the help of children, to talk through what we do to *get ready* for Christmas. Add some presents under the tree, show a box of chocolates, get out your Christmas jumper and put up an advent calendar.

Link: Every family gets ready for Christmas in different ways. Today we're going to see how God got Mary ready for the very first Christmas.



continued —

What to Say	What to Do
This Christmas, we're going on an adventure! We're going to meet the people who were at the very first Christmas.	
Meet Mary! She was just a small town girl, living an ordinary life. She had plans to get married to Joseph, a nice bloke from a good family. I don't want to name drop but he was from the same family as the great King Davidhow exciting!	Mary comes up to the front. She's excited as she holds up her 'wedding file'.
But, Mary heard a news announcement that threw these plans in the bin.	Throw the file in the bin.
It wasn't a politician on the telly or bad test results. It was an angel! An actual angel appeared to Mary with a personal message from God.	
Mary was shocked, she was troubled that's what Luke, the writer of this book in the Bible, says. I imagine it was something like this	Angel appears from behind a chair. Mary screams.
I mean come on, angels in your living room – this is not a normal thing to happen! The angel got to say the thing that he always has to say when he meets a human	
Angel: 'Don't be afraid!'	
Let's hear what news he had for Mary. Angel reads Luke 1:30-33.	Stick up the pictures while the angel reads from the Bible. Put up the baby announcement poster first and stick the rest of the pictures to it. • 'You will become pregnant' – baby announcement poster • 'Name him Jesus' – name label • 'Son of the Most High' – crown
[Alternatively, ask a few children to do the Bible reading whilst the angel sticks the pictures to the poster.]	 'His kingdom will never end' - clock
	continued \longrightarrow





Get the congregation talking to one another using the 'Did You Spot It?' questions:

• Who did the angel say this baby would be?



• What did Mary say to God's plan?

[PowerPoint slide of Illlustration and 'Did You Spot It?' questions or use the worksheet.]

Suggested sermon slot #1: Explain the Big Idea (The Son of God		
comes to live with ordinary people like us).		
Explain that God is keeping a promise he made to King David to		
send us the good, forever king that we need. Talk about the wonder		

of a great king coming to live with ordinary people like us.

Sing a family friendly song your congregation knows well or try:

• A Long Long Long Time Ago by Awesome Cutlery (Taken from 'This is Awesome Cutlery' album - find the lyric video here)

Wow! That's big news! Mary was going to have a baby. He would be called Jesus. He would be God's son. He would be king forever!	Point to the pictures on the poster.
Mary must have had a million questions for the angel. What will everyone think? What will everyone say? What about her man Joseph, will he believe her?! But, that's not the question she asked. She said Mary: 'How will this be? I am not married, there is no Dad.' Angel: 'That's no problem for God – he can do anything. His Holy Spirit will put the baby in you – it will be a miracle!'	
Mary heard what the angel said was going to happen God's King is coming. God's King is coming to us – stepping into the ordinary, coming down to our level. God's King will rule forever.	Do these actions as you speak: Hands on head to make a crown. Clasp hands together. Roll hands in a circle.
Mary knew this was great news. She trusted that God is good and so is his plan – even though it was very different to her plan. She said Mary: 'I am the servant girl of the Lord. Let this happen to me as you say!'	continued \longrightarrow

What to Say	What to Do
Do you know that God's plan is great news? Let's tell each other with the hand actions God's King is coming. God's King is coming to us. God's King will rule forever.	Get everyone to join in with the actions. Hands on head to make a crown. Clasp hands together. Roll hands in a circle. Angel and Mary sit down.
 Get people talking to one another using the 'Work It Out' questions: What do you think might have scared Mary about having this baby? Why do you think she trusted God's plan and obeyed? 	[Powerpoint slide of 'Work It Out' questions or use the worksheet.]
Mary moved from fear to faith. She let her plan be ripped up because she trusted that God's plan was better. She believed that no word from God would ever fail. Mary was happy to serve this great and forever King with her life.	Slow down a little as you apply this point. Hold up the wedding file in the bin. Hold up the poster.
Do you? Do you believe that God's King has come? Do you believe that Jesus wants to come into your ordinary life to be <i>your</i> king?	
 Do you believe that God's plans are better than your plans? Sing a family friendly song your congregation knows well or try this: King of Me by Rend Collective (SPARKLE. POP. RAMPAGE album - find the lyric video here) For an evangelistic service, a familiar Christmas carol (e.g. O little town of Bethlehem) could be used instead. Suggested sermon slot #2: Apply the Big Idea. We want people to leave delighted to be followers of a great and loving King, Jesus. Explain how welcoming Jesus as our king means obeying him and saying Yes to his plans instead of our plans, like Mary did. Talk about what that looks like, practically, in everyday life. Emphasise how great it is to have Jesus as our king – this is good news! 	
Get people talking to one another using the 'Live It Out' questions: • What stops you following and obeying Jesus as King? • Why do you think Jesus is worth obeying?	[Powerpoint slide of the 'Live It Out' questions or use the worksheet.] continued

What to Say	What to Do
The real 'Adventure of Christmas' is that the Son of God has come to live with ordinary people like us. He is brilliant. He is king forever. It's worth giving up our plans to be part of his plans. Let's remember God's King has come. God's King has come to us. God's King will rule forever.	Get everyone to join in with the actions. Hands on head to make a crown. Clasp hands together. Roll hands in a circle.
Pray to close.	
Pray: Ask a family to lead the prayers.	
Do you know how Mary responded after she said 'yes' to God's plan? She didn't scream – she sang! Luke's Gospel includes her song of thankfulness and praise that God kept his promise to his people and that he cares for ordinary people like us.	
Let's respond together like she did Sing a family friendly song your congregation knows well or try: • Oh Little Town of Bethlehem (Christmas carol) • Joy to the World (Christmas carol)	













Focus the children's attention on the theme of the session using a game or activity. Light, not manic, so that the children can be calm afterwards, with their minds ready.



Teaching ime

Get Going

Teach the key content of the lesson in an engaging way to clearly point to the Big Idea. If you have used the Bible Story Idea already, you may not need to cover the whole story again. If not, you can adapt it to use here with your group or tell the story in another way, perhaps using the suggestions below. Use a suitable Bible translation for your age group - we use the International Children's Bible which can be found online at www.biblegateway.com. However you do this Teaching Time, conclude with a simple explanation of the Big Idea.



A chance to rest the children's minds before Heart and Hands. Get children moving. Finish by linking the activity to the Big Idea so that this time serves the Bible story.





Small group discussion:

The vital chance for the children to reflect on the story, so that its truths impact their hearts. They do most of the talking, not the leader - ask multiple children the same question; give each child an opportunity to respond to what they have heard today. The questions will lead the children to see how their heads (thoughts), hearts (feelings) and hands (actions) are shaped by the Bible story through the work of the Spirit.



Is it You?

You will need: a large sheet or parachute.

Get your group to hold the edges of the sheet/ parachute. Explain that you will lift the sheet/ parachute into the air together. While doing that, the leader calls out something that describes a child in the group, e.g. 'They are wearing a red T-shirt and have curly hair.' That child runs under the sheet/parachute and comes out the other side before they can be trapped under it. Very young children will need help to know you are describing them.

Link: In the game, I described you by the way you look. In today's Bible story, an angel describes Jesus. He doesn't say if he'll have brown hair or a stripy T-shirt - he says something a lot more exciting - that Jesus will be king!



Real Life 'Guess Who'

Explain that you will choose a person in the group but you won't tell anyone who it is. Ask everyone to stand up. People take turns to ask you questions with a 'yes/no' answer to work out who you are thinking about (make sure you have studied the person first so you can answer the questions!). E.g. 'Do they have glasses?' If the answer is 'No' then all those with glasses sit down; 'Do they have brown hair?' If the answer is 'Yes' then all those with brown hair stay standing up. Keep going until the group works out who the person is.

If you are playing this with a small group then use pictures of famous people/characters so there are more people to describe.

Link: You could 'Guess Who' I was thinking of by the way I described them. Today's Bible story gives us a description of Jesus. He would look like an ordinary baby, but he was the Son of God who would be king forever!





Under 7's

You will need: a Bible, items for 'A King's Things' (e.g. a crown, cloak, toy horse, plastic cup and bowl, toy/ pictures of a castle and a house); Illustration (see Appendix), doll,crown, clock/watch.

1. A King's Things

Hold up/spread out the items. Ask the children to separate them into 'ordinary things' or 'king's things'.

Talk about how we expect a king to have expensive things and fancy castles. But the big surprise in today's

story is that God's king, Jesus, would be born as an ordinary baby. He didn't wear a gold crown or live in a castle – he lived an ordinary life, like you and me. Explain that the Adventure of Christmas starts with Jesus' ordinary mum – Mary. Her adventure began when she had an interesting visitor...

2. A King's Messenger

Hold up the illustration and ask the questions:

- Who is in the picture?
- How do you think Mary felt when the angel visited her? Act out how surprised you would all be if an angel visited you.

continued —

Choose a child to be Mary and explain that God chose her to have a baby who would be his king. Read out how Jesus is described in Luke 1:30–33. Pass the props to Mary.

- Doll the baby will be born just like all babies are.
- Crown he will be God's son.
- Clock/watch he will be a king who rules forever.

3. The King's Servant

Mary didn't know how she was going to have a baby - she wasn't married and there was no dad (v34). Explain that the baby would be from God - a miracle. Ask the children if they think Mary will say 'yes' or 'no' to God's plan (take a thumbs up/thumbs down vote) before revealing her answer. Explain that God cares for ordinary people like Mary and us - he sent Jesus to be our king too. Jesus knows us and is with us every day. He asks us to say 'yes' to him. As followers of Jesus we are on an adventure of having him as our king and in our lives! Wow!

Finish by teaching the children the phrases and actions below...

- God's King is coming. Hands on head to make a crown.
- God's King is coming to us. Clasp hands together.
- God's King will rule forever. Roll hands in a circle.



You will need: Bibles or printouts of the passage, coloured pens and large sheets of paper.

Write/draw examples of things you plan or look forward to (e.g. holidays) on a sheet of paper. Rip up the sheet as you explain that sometimes plans get changed or cancelled. Ask the children how they feel when that happens.

Today's Bible story is about Mary's adventure. She had plans for her life but they were going to change in a massive way.

Change of Plan (v26-33)

Draw spider diagrams on 2 sheets of paper – label one as 'Mary's Plan' and 'God's Plan'. Read Luke 1:26– 33 and get the children to write down what they learn about the different plans.

Then, ask some of the questions below to work out whose plan was ordinary and whose was extraordinary. Busy hands can help discussion - children can decorate the plan they think is extraordinary.

- Who was the plan for? Who would it help? What would it change?
- When was it happening? How long would it last?
- Which one was easier? Which one sounds better?
- Whose plan has a bigger effect on you?

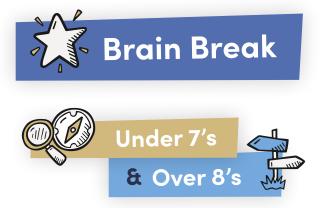
Obedient Response (v34-38)

Draw a circle (to be a head) and a heart on a large sheet of paper. Read v34-37 and explain that Mary's baby would be from the Holy Spirit.

- Draw/write in the circle what Mary may have been thinking - what reasons could she have to say 'yes' or 'no' to God's plan? E.g. people may not believe her baby was from God.
- Draw/write in the heart how she may have felt. E.g. terrified/excited etc.

What does Mary call herself in v38? (Make it clear that the word 'servant' meant that she was willing to serve God because she trusted him completely.) She was willing to obey God and say 'yes' to his plan.

Mary's baby would be her king who she would follow and obey. Wow! Jesus came to be our king too. If we truly believe he is God's son and king then we will want to follow and obey him. Sometimes that will mean our plans change, people may think we are weird or laugh at us for what we believe. But Jesus is worth it because he's the only king who was willing to live an ordinary life like us so he can come close and know us – he really is an extraordinary king!



King - For How Long?

You will need: a dice, a crown, dressing gown/cloak, a bowl of small round sweets (e.g. Maltesers, Skittles). Each child will need their own bowl and something to pick up the sweets with e.g. a pair of chopsticks/2 lolly sticks/plastic knife and fork.

Give each child a bowl and items to pick up the

sweets. Sit in a circle with the bowl of sweets, crown and gown/cloak in the centre. Pass the dice around the group, taking it in turns to roll it. If someone rolls a 6, they run to the middle and dress as the king. Then they use their lolly sticks/chopsticks/cutlery to pick up a sweet and move it to their bowl. They move as many as they can until another person rolls a 6 and takes their place.

Link: It was fun to be a king for a while but it didn't last. The angel told Mary that baby Jesus would be king – not for a short time but forever. That's why he's the best king to follow!





Under 7's

Craft Time - Make a Crown Decoration

You will need: a copy of the craft sheet for each child, scissors, glue, crayons/coloured pens, a hole punch, string and jewel stickers.

Prepare in advance: cut out the squares on the craft sheet for younger children.

Step-by-step craft pictures can be found on page 15. Colour in and cut out the squares. Fold on the dotted lines so the text and pictures are on the outside. Take the 'Jesus' triangle, put glue on the left point and place it inside the 'God's son' triangle so that it makes a strip with 2 points (Fig. 1). Repeat this until the 5 triangles make 1 strip that reads, 'God's son Jesus is our forever king.' (Fig. 2) Join the two ends in the same way to make a crown shape. Punch a hole in one of the triangles and thread through the string for hanging. Children can finish decorating the crown with jewel stickers (Fig. 3). Use this craft time to reinforce the **Big** Idea of the lesson to get them ready for **Think Time**.

Think Time

Look at the Illustration and ask the children to remind you what happened in today's story. Can they remember the phrases and actions you learnt during Teaching Time?

Big Question: What did the angel tell Mary? **A follow up question:** What did the angel say about Jesus?

Prayer

Dear Father God, thank you for sending Jesus to ordinary people like us. Please help us to love and obey King Jesus. He is the best king, we want to say thank you...

Say together: Dear Jesus, thank you for coming to be our king. Amen.

continued \longrightarrow



These questions can mostly be found on the worksheet which has been designed to aid your discussion. If possible, enlarge the page to A3 so you can work on it together. Make sure each child can still answer the personal questions honestly for themselves (e.g. hand out Post-it notes for them to write/draw their answers to these questions).

Did you spot it?

- How did the angel describe the baby?
- How did Mary respond to God's plan?

Work it out

- How do you think Mary felt about this big news?
- What may have scared Mary about having this baby?
- Why do you think she trusted God's plan and obeyed?

Live it out

- What stops you following and obeying Jesus?
- Why do you think Jesus is worth obeying?

Extra Stretch

- Mary's life was about to get turned upside down, and it would be hard. Read v38. Why would she say this? What could she have said instead, if she didn't like the plan? What can we learn from her response?
- What turns your life upside down? God has a

good plan for you, as he did for Mary. He knows how you are feeling. Think of a time that you felt worried, afraid, nervous or confused. How does Jesus' birth help you face that situation?

Prayer

Think about how you answered the Live It Out questions – ask God to help you when it's difficult to obey him. Ask God to help you believe that his plans are so much better than yours! Ask him to help you to be more and more delighted that Jesus is your forever king.

Craft Time

Make a Crown Decoration. Use the craft if you have time available after your discussion.

You will need: printed copies of the craft sheet or 5 Post-it notes for each child, scissors, stapler, hole punch, string, coloured/metallic/glitter pens and jewel stickers.

The crown assembly instructions can be found in the Under 7's Craft Time section. The same crown can be made with Post-it notes instead of the craft sheet squares.

If using Post-it notes, fold them in half diagonally so that the sticky strip is on the outside. The folded edge is the base of the triangle, the left point must be sticky - this acts as the glue. If necessary, reinforce with staples. Before joining the ends to make the crown, get the children to write a sentence on it, either something they learnt about Jesus from the bible passage or 'God's son Jesus is our king forever.' They can also draw pictures or decorate it with the jewel stickers.







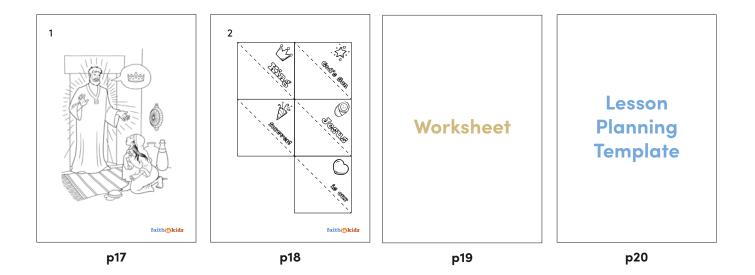
Fig. 2



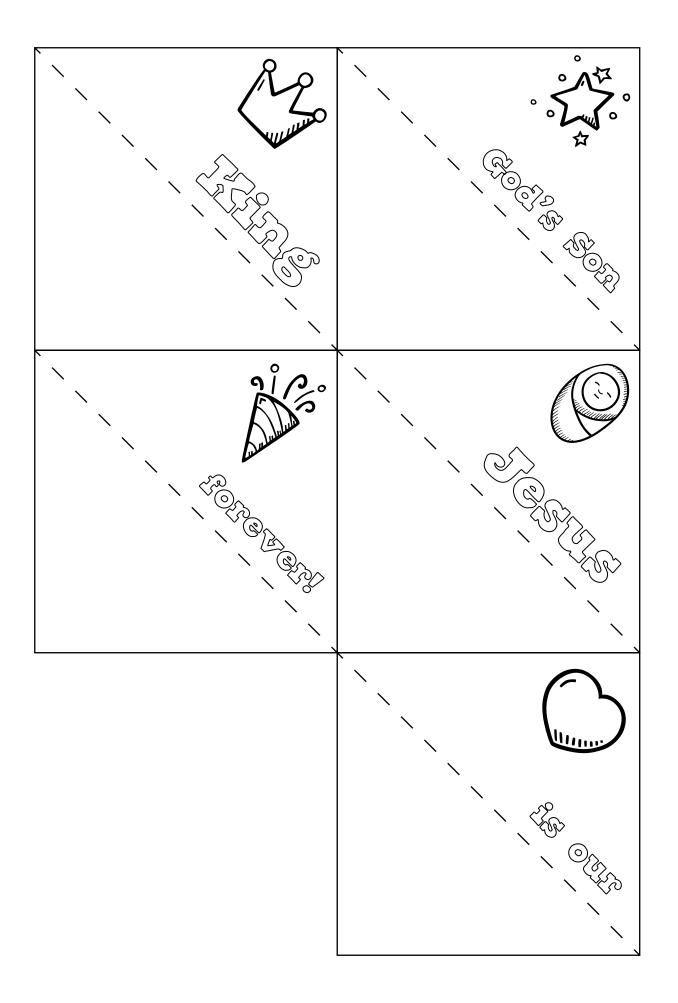
Fig. 3



The following pages can be copied, printed and used to accompany this lesson.









THE ADVENTURE OF CHRISTMAS Lesson 1: Mary's Adventure LUKE 1:26-38



Did you spot it?

How did the angel describe the baby?

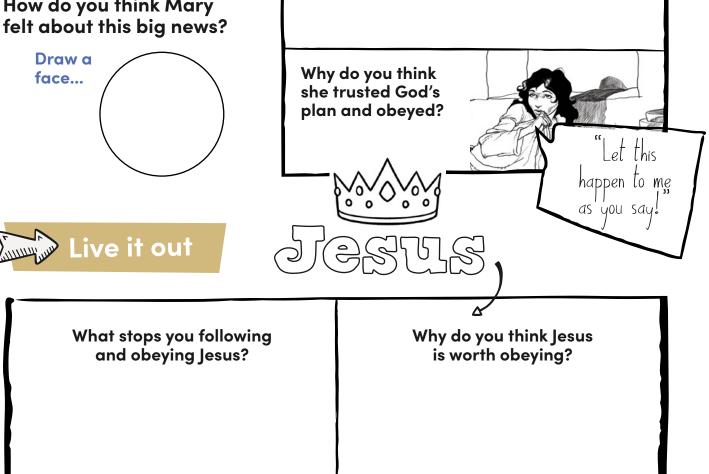
Write or draw in the speech bubble...

Tick the correct box...

Mary said yes no to God's plan.



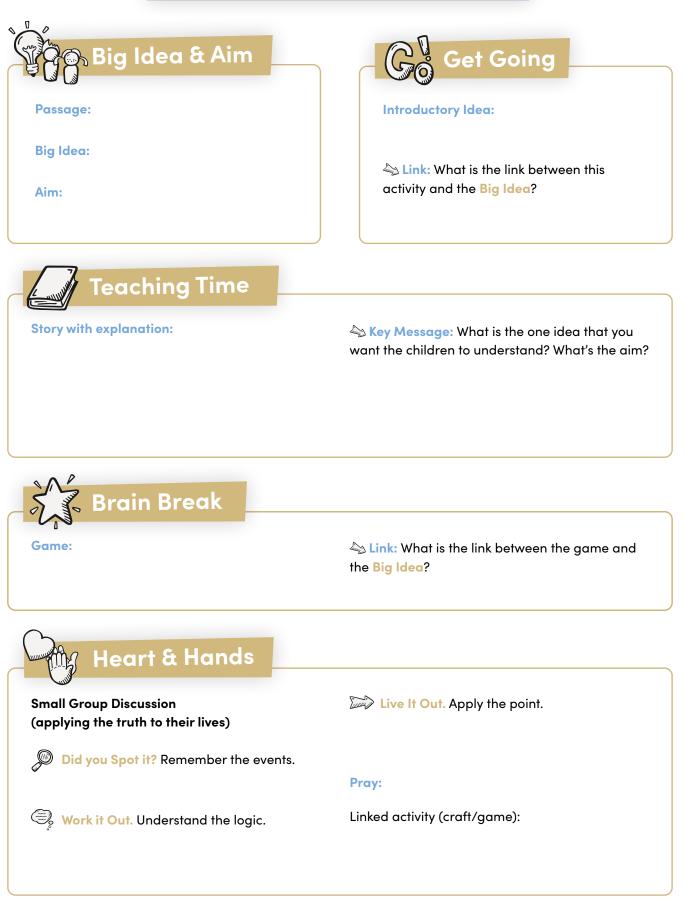
How do you think Mary



What may have scared Mary about having this baby? Write or draw...

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