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Sunday School Lesson

TOPIC:

“Gabriel Foretells of Jesus’ Birth”

Luke 1:26-38

VERSE DISCOVERY: Luke 1:26-38 (KJV, Public Domain)

Prepare

- The main characters of this lesson is Gabriel and Mary. Lists some facts that the Bible reveals about the angel Gabriel and the future mother of Christ, Mary. These interesting tidbits you come across will help your students gain a possibly some new insight on this very familiar story.
- Reintroduce the fact that this same angel had not too long before completed his mission to declare to Zacharias that he would be the father of John the Baptist, the one who would go before the Lord Jesus Christ to prepare His way.

Compare the two appearances. Are there any similarities between the two? Are there any differences? Give your students a few moments to point out their observations of both occurrences. Jot those notes on the board for visual comparisons.

Explore – Full Lesson Available on pages 5-11

How hard is it to let go of the normal and comfortable way of life and say yes to a future unknown? For many, that is a very difficult request. But, what we find when we read God’s Word is that it is the ones who are willing to go beyond the normal; it is the ones who are willing to offer humbly their life as His service, say yes to what and where He is calling, that God uses the most.

The “yes” God asks us to offer to Him will not always be easy. And, it definitely won’t be the most popular choice among many. But, when we say yes to His plan for our life, then and only then, God can do something pretty amazing.

In an article previously written titled “Say, Yes!”, we see how Mary responded when through Gabriel, God announced an unusual calling on her life.

“Behold... be it unto me according to thy word,” (Luke 1:38) are the words Mary spoke when she willingly accepted God’s plan for her life. She said yes to a future unknown. She got into agreement with God and allowed His mission to become her mission, and her life was changed forever.

I believe that God wants to move mightily in many lives, but many are not willing to say yes. It's not because they don't want God to do a fantastic thing in them and through them, but when they preview all the ideas that could happen, the balance of all the what ifs seem too much to bear. Yet, it is most often in those extremely unbearable moments where God works the most wonderful of wonders.

Yes, comes with sacrifice. Yes, refutes the idea of the impossible. Yes says, 'I don't know where this journey is leading me, but Lord, I accept the challenge. I choose Your cause and I choose this day to order my life according to that cause.'

Mary's yes could've ended in her death. Surely there must've been shame and ridicule hurled at her. Never once, not even when her eldest Son, Jesus Christ, hung on the cross to redeem man, did we ever hear of her recoiling from that original yes. There had to have been troubling times and days of confusion – yet, her yes remained yes, and to Him, she surrendered all.

Yes, can be glorious and lead one on the wildest journey they could ever experience. But, yes can also be the hardest and most selfless decisive act one can take on. Nevertheless, God's invitation has gone out to many. How will you respond today? Will you recoil in fear, or through faith, say, 'All aboard!' I choose to ride with God through this journey by saying yes today!" (©WordForLifeSays/"Say, Yes!)

I don't know where God is calling you or leading to you to, but we all have the same responsibility and privilege Mary had to say yes to His plan for your life.

Here's a fun thought for younger students, find games that encourage and teach children to be more willing to say yes to God's plan for their life (search the internet for examples), and link it with Mary's response to Gabriel's announcement.

Activities

- In light of every hardship she could face because of her positive response, Mary said yes nonetheless to God's plan for her life. What keeps you from giving God a full and complete "yes" like Mary did? Use the **Adult Journal Page** to write your response and add a personal prayer that will encourage you to respond more positively to God's calling. For the **Kid's Journal Page**, younger students can write different ways to say yes to God (ex. verbally, with their heart, use of positive actions, etc.) Here is a key notation for all, God always knows what's best for each of us. Therefore, no matter what He is calling us to, we don't have to fear for He knows the outcome of it all is far greater than anything we could every imagine. After all, that's how we can now have a relationship with Him through Jesus Christ.

- In the **Draw the Scene** section found on site, younger students can add a picture of the angel Gabriel to the picture by drawing it or cutting out pictures and gluing it to the paper. They can also draw and/or add other pictures that may be relevant.
- Bouncing off the idea expressed in the Draw the Scene section, for a simple **Craft Idea** students can cut out different pictures of an angel, a woman, and other items out of old magazines, books, or even different coloring books in an almost collage format to recreate the scene of Gabriel speaking to Mary as in today's lesson.
- Find an angel craft online for younger students to complete and add as a supplement to today's lesson.
- Alternate activity sheets are available on site for those who just want to work with printed materials such as **Word Search, Memory Verse, and more.**

Review

- Commit to memory the base verse from the lesson: ***“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS,” (Luke 1:31).***
- Fill out the review sheet provided (page 12)

Life

Take time throughout this week to reflect on the awesomeness of the task before Mary and what a wonderful privilege it was for her to be able to do this for the Lord. Romans 12:1 reminds us that we are to “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” This is precisely what Mary did. What reasonable service can you offer to God throughout this week? What are some ways that He can use you to better the lives of those around you? Look for opportunities this week to be “used” by God to bless another's life.

TOPIC:

“Gabriel Foretells of Jesus’ Birth”

Luke 1:26-38

VERSE DISCOVERY: Luke 1:26-38 (KJV, Public Domain)

One moment in time that would change history forever; affecting not only the life of one individual but for all mankind that ever was and that will ever be born upon the face of the earth.

Mary, the young Jewish woman from Nazareth, surely knew of the prophecy that was taught to her people down through the generations: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel,” (Is. 7:14). But, never could she have imagined that she would be that one; that she would be that virgin spoken of so many years ago, (see Mt. 1:21-23).

As we enter into the celebration of the Christmas season let us not become so familiar with the story that we pass it by without a second glance. Rather, as the angel Gabriel introduces to Mary the great feat that God is about to do in her life, let us reintroduce ourselves to His great power and plan to bring salvation to all men

LESSON SUMMARY

Luke 1:26 “And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,”

In the verses leading up to our lesson a dramatic event unfolded. Zacharias’ lot was drawn “to burn incense” in the temple of the Lord, (Luke 1:9). Whilst there, “**Gabriel**,” the same angel in today’s lesson, informs Zacharias that he shall have a son that he “shall be great in the sight of the Lord,” (Luke 1:15). Zacharias, though working in the temple of the Lord, doubted what God could do in his life. This caused him to be stricken “dumb, and not able to speak, until the days that these things shall be performed,” (Luke 1:20).

His wife Elisabeth conceived as was told by the angel Gabriel and “hid herself five months,” (Luke 1:24). Today’s lesson picks up “**in the sixth month**” where we see the same Gabriel who spoke to Zacharias in the temple now appearing to Mary in “**Nazareth**.”

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Once, when Jesus would first begin His ministry, Philip, after being approached by Jesus and told to, "Follow me," (John 1:43) went to get Nathanael to come as well. Coming upon Nathanael, Philip said, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth..." (John 1:45). Nathanael's response was, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46). He said that because "**Nazareth**" was a place nobody really paid attention to. It was a little village despised and rejected as not being worth consideration. But it is from this obscure place that Gabriel is sent to announce to a young woman there of her participation in the coming of our Savior into this world.

Luke 1:27 "To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary."

Mary was "**espoused**" or as we like to call it in modern terms "engaged" to a man by the name of "**Joseph.**" Unlike modern times, to be engaged then carried far more weight of commitment than it does today. Those "espoused" were considered husband and wife without partaking in the intimate affairs of the relationship at this time. That would come a year later when she would go to be with him as a wife in every sense of the word. At this point in their relationship, only a divorce could break off their engagement.

Luke 1:28-29 "And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be."

"The angel came in unto her, and said, Hail." In most depictions of this encounter, one gets the sense that this encounter took place outdoors. But here it states that when the angel Gabriel greeted Mary, he "**came in unto her,**" giving us the impression that Mary was indoors during this holy encounter.

He spoke, "**Thou art highly favoured.**" Now, to be real I think in our day we hear so much preaching on the word favor that we have missed the real significance of the word. Too many people associate favor with the plethora of prosperity messages. In the Bible, "**favour**" is associated with "grace," and grace is, after all, God's unmerited favor.

It's something that is not earned or deserved. But God, when he looked upon Mary saw something special in her to choose her to be the one to partake in this life-changing, world-

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changing, history-changing mission. In God's eyes, she was **"highly favoured."** I like the fact that the Bible does not go into greater detail of why God chose Mary outside of being "highly favoured," lest we think of it as a list of criteria to try to emulate to gain favor when this is all done through grace.

"The Lord is with thee." How many times in her life would she need to reflect back on that promise? When the news got out about her pregnancy; when all the gossips and tongue lashers had their way, how many times would she need to reach back to this promise that God is with her? What about when uncertainty in the turbulent times of the day where people would seek to threaten the life of her child? Or, even moving beyond this story to the scene of Jesus' death, how often would she remind herself of those words of blessed assurance? Is this not one of the greatest promises associated with the birth of the Messiah? He is "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us," (Matthew 1:23).

"Blessed art thou among women." No woman on the face of this earth would ever, and I do mean ever, experience what Mary did. Not only in being chosen for this mission of God but also in every aspect of life this journey would take her through from His conception to death. In that, she is **"blessed."** Women have conceived since the time of Eve, but none has ever been a virgin overshadowed by the Holy Ghost. Women have carried children in their womb, but none else has ever or will ever carry the Son of God. She is **"blessed."**

"She was troubled at his saying... what manner of salutation this should be." One of my favorite verses in the Bible is a humbling verse and it asks, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visited him?" (Psalm 8:4).

This could be imagination on my part, but I believe one of the reasons behind Mary being **"troubled at his saying"** and her questioning of **"what manner of salutation this should be"** is rooted in the same spirit of humility that Psalms 8:4 expresses. "What is man?" - "Who am I?" must have been running through her head that an angel of God would greet her so.

There would also be a healthy dose of godly fear intermingled with her personal response. After all, it isn't every day that God dispatches a messenger from heaven to speak face to face with a person. This was truly an awe-inspiring event. Anytime an angel appeared to speak directly to an individual it was often "troubling" to the receiver (compare to Luke 1:12).

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Luke 1:30-33 “And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

“**Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.**” Gabriel spoke words meant to calm the fright she was experiencing on the inside. “**Fear not**” is one of my favorite sets of words in the Bible. It is spoken over and over again on many occasions to many different people; approximately 365 times, one for every day of the year. My favorite is found in Isaiah 41:10 where these words of assurance are found saying, “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” “**Fear not**” pleads with mankind and is pleading with Mary to trust God wholeheartedly.

Gabriel then reiterated that Mary “**hast found favour with God.**” With the task she is about to receive she would need this double dose of reassurance of God’s favor over her life.

“**Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.**” “**Shalt**” means that it is going to happen. God has a plan for her that begins and ends with “**JESUS.**” She, in the very near future, would carry a child in her “**womb.**” Though her year of being espoused is not yet up and the final marriage preparations have not been done, she is told she will “**bring forth a son and shalt call his name JESUS.**” When the angel spoke to Joseph in Matthew 1:21, he confirmed the name of this special child would be “**JESUS.**” That name, with the meaning of salvation, is where many would find life eternal (see John 20:31).

“**He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest.**” He would be no ordinary child by any means of the word. Jesus will later say of Himself, “I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world,” (Jn. 8:23). He knew His origin was different than any other man that had been born on the earth. Here, Gabriel tells Mary her son will be from the “**Highest,**” (see also John 3:31).

“**And the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father David.**” For centuries the hopes of the Jewish people’s awaited Messiah sprang from the promise that God made to His servant

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David when He said, "And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever," (2 Samuel 7:16, see also 1 Chronicles 17:14).

David desired to build God a physical house, but God desired to build off his legacy a spiritual house that will never fail. The son that Mary would carry in her womb would hold the keys to that spiritual house. He would be the one to occupy the **"throne"** forever.

"He shall reign... and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Earthly kings would come and go down through the course of time. Some would be good kings, and some would be evil. For some they would do what was right in the eyes of God while others would rule as polar opposites. One thing they all had and still have in common is no matter who they are, and no matter the motivation, the location, or the rule – sooner or later their reign will end. Either by death, usurping of the throne, or by some other kingdom-shifting event they would eventually lose their right to rule.

The child that Mary would carry would always **"reign."** Even when it looked like death may have won for a short space of time – He was just revving up to rule forever.

Luke 1:34 "Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"

When all was said and done and her stomach would begin to grow with child, most people would never believe Mary's statement: **"I know not a man."** People judge by what they see with their natural eyes. But, for Mary her statement would forever stand as truth in the eyes of all who believe that this virgin would conceive the Son of God.

Mary knew the means in which one would normally conceive a child. She also knew that though she was espoused, she has remained untouched in this manner. The Bible confirms that "before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost," (Matthew 1:18). Her questioning was more of a "How in the world will this happen?" statement rather than of doubt. She knew her pure state. How was God going to accomplish such a thing in her? Her body would produce a miracle – but, how?

Luke 1:35 "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

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“The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee... shall be called the Son of God.” Gabriel answered Mary’s question. In His own way, a way that only God Himself can explain or understand, **“The Holy Ghost”** will come upon her and **“the power of the Highest shall overshadow”** her. Though the Holy Ghost had previously and temporarily empowered people to do something for God, here He was playing a key role in the incarnation of Christ in whom “dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” (Col. 2:9). John 1 recognized Jesus as the only begotten Son of God, (VSS. 14, 18).

Luke 1:36-37 “And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible.”

“Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age.” Mary never asked for a sign but what a sweet reminder of the grace of God at work. How many times had God blessed a barren womb in the Bible? Elisabeth’s son would fulfill a prophecy of his own (see Isaiah 40:3) and would forever be remembered for his greatness in going before the Lord. Even Jesus spoke of John and said, “For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist,” (Luke 7:28).

“For with God nothing shall be impossible.” Oh, how often have we quoted this and yet underestimate His power at work in it? God, the Creator of all heaven and earth, was still fashioning things into existence in a miraculous way. **“Nothing”** is outside of the scope of the power of God! There isn’t **“no-thing”** that He can’t do! “God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God,” (Psalm 62:11). Revelation 19:1 declares, “Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto thee Lord our God.” With God, it will happen!

Luke 1:38 “And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.”

Mission accomplished. The angel delivered his message and departed after she accepted the mission at hand. Let us not downplay Mary’s acceptance of this calling. The situation could have ended her life. The situation would bring shame and ridicule to her and her family. It is hard to accept some of the things that God asks of His people. At one point in His own ministry, Jesus’ teachings would invoke this response: “This is an hard saying; who can hear it?” (John 6:60) questioned some who followed Him.

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For Mary, the task she was accepting was in fact very hard, but she acquiesced to the hand of God and His will over her life. Jesus later would accept the harder calling of God, and said, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done," (Matthew 26:42). Following God's way will not always be easy, but it will always be right.

These little details that surround the greatest story ever told can get lost in the bustle of the celebration. But, if we take the time to sit and listen as Mary did with the angel, we too can find assurance in the plans that God has for us in our lives.

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“Gabriel Foretells of Jesus’ Birth”

Luke 1:26-38

Please Answer the Review Questions Below

1. What month was it when Gabriel visited Mary? (Luke 1:26)
A. Second B. Seventh C. Sixth D. Third
2. Mary was engaged to a man named _____. (Luke 1:27)
A. Jacob B. Joseph C. Jehoshaphat D. Daniel
3. The angel told Mary she was _____ among all women. (Luke 1:28)
A. Blessed B. Jealous C. Higher D. Prettier
4. What two words did the angel speak to calm Mary’s troubled heart? (Luke 1:30)
A. It’s Okay B. Settle Down C. Hold On D. Fear Not
5. “Thou shalt conceive... and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name _____.” (Luke 1:31)
A. JESUS B. Michael C. Joseph D. Peter
6. “He shall be called the Son of the _____.” (Luke 1:32)
A. God B. Highest C. Great D. All
7. “The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father _____.” (Luke 1:32)
A. Abraham B. Isaac C. Jacob D. David
8. “For with God nothing shall be _____.” (Luke 1:37)
A. Impossible B. Hidden C. Greater D. Before

