

# THE ANNUNCIATION

## (Luke 1:26-38)

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### **The Annunciation**

The Gospel writer Luke prepares us to hear the story of the annunciation of Jesus' birth by placing it immediately after the account of the annunciation of John the Baptist, child of Elizabeth and Zechariah. The extraordinary element in that story was that John would be born to elderly parents. In the story of Mary we see something more wondrous, the action of the Holy Spirit in the birth of Jesus to a virgin – a young girl already betrothed but as yet unmarried.

The figure of Gabriel links the two stories. The archangel is a messenger of God's Good News. Gabriel shows us where to look for God's presence: in a virgin, in an obscure and lowly town called Nazareth. Mary becomes the symbol of the lowly and the poor who figure significantly in Luke's Gospel. In this text a key interaction is between Mary and Gabriel. This encounter reveals to us the action of the Holy Spirit. Mary's initial reaction to the news the angel brings is one of surprise and questioning. Through Mary's questioning she receives reassurance "nothing is impossible to God" (v.37). Mary's "yes" is no passive submission. It is a free response to God's initiative which prepares the way for the Incarnation: the birth of Jesus, Son of God.

Mary's relationship with God is one of mutual faithfulness. For Luke, Mary personifies those who "hear the Word of God and put it into practice" (Luke 8:20–21), those who co-operate with God's activity in their lives and who rejoice in it, those who ponder the ways of God (Luke 2:20,50), those who are faithful in times of trouble and who triumph over them (Luke 2:34–35).

Mary is a model for our own call to discipleship. Through her co-operation with the will of God she is in unity with the life, death and resurrection of her Son and she shows us the way to unite our lives with this pascal mystery.

In Mary we see that discipleship is a call to activity. The action takes on many forms but each springs from a deep relationship with God. In her lowliness, Mary is a source of hope for all people. Mary is a disciple filled with strength and wisdom, a woman of Spirit and great love who now shares in the glory of her Son, pointing towards the future for the whole Church. (cf. Lumen Gentium, 65). (KWL, Teaching Companion, 3a, p114)

#### **YOU WILL NEED:**

- Beige felt underlay
- Brown felt road
- 3 D Figures: Mary and Angel Gabriel (could be from a Nativity set or peg figures)
- Bible

*Children are seated in a semi-circle ready to listen to the story. When the children are ready carry the materials carefully from the story shelf to the story area and place beside you and say*

*Place class Bible, open at Luke, in front of you with your hand on it.*

**This story comes from the Gospel according to Luke, which is in the New Testament section of the Bible.**

*Place Bible beside you.*

*Lay underlay and then the road. Place Mary on the underlay to the side of the road. Hold the angel in your hand as you say:*

**Angels are special messengers sent by God.**

**One day God sent the angel, whose name was Gabriel, to the town of Nazareth. The angel had a message for a young woman, named Mary, who lived in that town.**

*Place the angel Gabriel near Mary and turn the angel towards Mary as you say:*

**Gabriel spoke to Mary saying, "Greetings, O favoured one. The Lord is with you."**

*Move Mary a little way away from the angel and say:*

**What sort of greeting was this! Mary was perplexed and wondered what it meant!**

*Place your hand behind the angel as you say:*

**The angel reassured Mary saying, "Do not be afraid, Mary. I am here to tell you that God is very pleased with you. You are going to have a son, and you will name him Jesus."**

*Move the angel to be closer to Mary and say:*

**Your child will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.**

*Place your hand behind Mary and say:*

**Mary was even more perplexed, and said to Gabriel, "How can this be?"**

*Place your hand over Mary, as though blessing her, and say:*

**Again the angel Gabriel reassured Mary saying, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you, therefore your son will be holy and he will be called the Son of God.**

**Gabriel continued with another message, "Mary, even though your cousin, Elizabeth is very old, she also is going to have a baby boy... You see *nothing* is impossible to God."**

*Move Mary to face away from and a little way from the angel, and say:*

**Mary wondered what all this meant; how could these things possibly happen?**

*Move Mary back to the angel, and say:*

**Even though she didn't fully understand, Mary trusted in God and said, "Here I am, the servant of God, let these things happen just as you have said."**

*Remove the angel, and say:*

**After hearing Mary's response, the angel, Gabriel left her.**

*Pause for a while before wondering with the students.*

I wonder...

I wonder what you find amazing, or puzzling, in this story.

I wonder how hard it was for Mary to trust God.

I wonder what the angel Gabriel's words, "Nothing is impossible to God" mean.

I wonder why there were two messages, or two promises from God.