

YOU ARE THERE

MARY JESUS' MOTHER

Original illustration
(also available in
full-color card sets)



Introduction, through the eyes of someone who was there

You are Mary, probably about fifteen years old and still living at home. You are poor, young and female — not the stuff of heroes or even of interesting stories, and certainly not anyone special in your hometown of Nazareth. But you're living a normal, even happy life. You're engaged to Joseph, the carpenter, and looking forward to marrying him and starting a family of your own.

Until one day you receive a visitor that changes your life forever. Hundreds of years ago God made several prophecies through David, Isaiah, Micah and others. Now God is ready to make good on those promises, and one of the first people He tells is you ...

Basic verses and other related passages

THE BASIC STORY

Luke 1 –2:20 (Matthew 1 – 2) (Mary becomes the mother of Jesus)

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE ...

Luke 2:21-40 (Jesus presented at the Temple)

Luke 2:41-52 (12-year-old Jesus at the Temple)

John 2:1-5 (Marriage Feast; Jesus' first miracle)

John 19:25-27 (Jesus' instructions to Mary and John on the cross)

Acts 1:14 (Mary is with the disciples just after Jesus' ascension)

More depth and detail

Gabriel, a messenger from God, informs Mary of three things:

- (a) she has found favor with God,
- (b) she will become pregnant through the Holy Spirit, and
- (c) this baby will be the Son of God and reign over Israel.

What does this pronouncement mean? Mary is in for a lifetime of wonder and pain. Her hometown, friends and family will think she was unfaithful and gossip about her. Her betrothed will decide to divorce her. Her son will be rejected and finally murdered. But through that son will come the salvation of the world. Mary bows her head and replies, "Behold the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to Your word."

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MARY?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

"Summing up" time
(if needed)

DID YOU KNOW? JUDEAN WOMEN

Related facts about Bible life & times

Israelite society assumes that a woman's place is in the home. Girls are trained from their earliest days to be prepared for when they marry and move into their own homes. If you aren't married, or if you don't have children, you are assumed to be punished by God.

Moses' Law makes less distinction between men and women than most laws of its time, but it does have a few differences. For example, a man who sells himself into slavery must be freed if he is able to redeem himself (Leviticus 25:48-49), but a woman who becomes a slave is bound for the rest of her life unless she is treated unfairly (Exodus 21:7-11).

Girls are considered to be women and ready for marriage by the time their monthly cycles begin — around age thirteen or so. In addition to childcare, women are also responsible for hauling water to the house, for grinding grain and making the daily bread, for making the family clothes, for all cooking and cleaning, and for helping bring in the harvest! In some ways, women appear to be subservient to men. Men eat before women, sit in special areas in the synagogue, and are the final authorities in all decision-making in the household. However, women are highly respected in Israelite society, for they are the ones who bear children, and children are a blessing from the Lord (Psalm 127:3).

Few Israelite women become political leaders or influence history, but there are some exceptions, including Deborah, Jael, Bathsheba, Jezebel and Esther. But all in all, the role of women is to keep the house and family, and this is a role worthy of praise. (Proverbs 31)

1 Why does God choose Mary?

What responsibility does God give her?

Is what God does to Mary fair? Why do you say so?

2 If you were Mary, how would you react to what God does?

If you were Mary's parents, how would you react? (If you were Mary, would your parents believe you?)

If you were Mary's friend, how would you react?

3 If you had the responsibility to raise Jesus, what would your priorities be? Would it change how you lived or how you taught your child?

4 What can you learn from Mary?

A second
"summing up" time

Sidebar for each lesson, on a related theme

JESUS IS IMMANUEL

"The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:13-14; see also Matthew 1:18-23: Immanuel means "God with us.")

Three notes. First, there's no indication that anyone realizes that Isaiah's prophecy has anything to do with Christ until it actually happens. There are prophecies like this, where it's unclear there's a prophecy until we see its fulfillment. Second, Isaiah's prophecy clearly has an immediate fulfillment ... but it is also fulfilled by Christ's birth. Again, there are prophecies like that, which have both a sooner and a later fulfillment. And third, there's no indication that Jesus is ever called "Immanuel" as a boy — His name is Jesus, as the angel tells Mary and Joseph. Which leads us to this: In the case of Jesus, "Immanuel" isn't so much a name as a statement of fact:

God is with us. Two thousand years after God promises a blessing for all the world through Abraham, a thousand years after God promises an eternal king on David's throne, six hundred years after God promises intercession for sinners ... God delivers on His promises — and so God is with us, then and now.

The heart of the lesson:
What can we learn from Mary?
How can we use Mary's experiences to make us better?

Teacher notes with ways to discuss and develop each question are available (at no cost)

Map with notes on the places in the lesson

