

MARY

Session 1: God Surprises Us - Mary at the Annunciation

Prayer

Scripture | Luke 1:26-38

The Angelus (Contemporary Version)

Leader: The angel spoke God's message to Mary,

Response: and she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary...

Leader: I am the lowly servant of the Lord:

Response: let it be done to me according to your word.

Hail Mary...

Leader: And the Word became flesh

Response: and lived among us.

Hail Mary...

Leader: Pray for us, holy Mother of God,

Response: that we may become worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

Lord,

Fill our hearts with your grace;

Once, through the message of an angel you revealed

to us the incarnation of your son;

now, through his suffering and death lead us to the glory of his resurrection.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Faith



Strength

Surprise



Teaching from Pope Francis

The God who surprises was fully experienced by the Virgin Mary. When the angel Gabriel gave her the beautiful message, she does not hide her surprise. Mary experienced the greatest news of all and realised that God chose to become a human person and chose her, a simple maid of Nazareth to bring him into the world. A simple lady who do not live in a palace with power and riches, or one who had done extraordinary things, but simply someone who was open to God and put her trust in him, even without understanding everything: “Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word” (Luke 1:38). That was her answer. God constantly surprises us, He goes out of his way to reveal to us his great and beautiful plans for each one of us. And God tells us: Trust me, do not be afraid, let yourself be surprised, leave yourself behind and follow me!

Based on the Homily of [Pope Francis](#).

Activity | Trust Run and Trust Wave

Tell the group that sometimes it looks like all the doors are closed to us and everything is going against us. Once you trust in God and in the people who care and love you, you’ll be surprised by what can happen and how those barriers just disappear.

Trust Run: This activity will work best in an open space like a sports field. It can also be done inside a hall if there is enough floor space for running.

Get the group to be in pairs. One person will be blindfolded and will have to run towards their partner on the other side of the field or hall. There should only be one runner at a time. The runner will have to listen to the voice of their partner on which direction to go. Ask 2 or 3 people from the group to distract the runner by giving unhelpful instructions. Don’t let everyone give instructions because it might become too difficult.

Get everyone to have a turn at running and giving instructions.

Trust Wave: Divide the group into two groups with equal numbers of participants. Ask one person from each group to stand aside because they will have a different role. Ask the rest of the groups to form two straight lines with each participant standing opposite someone from the other line, facing each other. The lines should be just far enough apart so that when the participant’s arms are fully extended at shoulder height in front of them; their hands reach to approximately the wrist of the person opposite. These two lines are the spotters.

The two participants that were put aside will be designated as runners. The goal is for one runner to start about 8 metres from the group and walk, or slowly jog, between the two lines of people. The players in the lines have their arms raised at shoulder height straight out in front of them, effectively forming a barrier to the approaching runner.

Just before the runner reaches them, the spotters raise their arms up over their heads to allow the runner to pass and lower them as soon as the runner has gone.

Ask the runner not to slow down as he/she approaches the barriers and encourage the whole group to focus in order for the runner to get through the barrier as fast as possible.

After the first runner has gone through, get the other runner to follow suit. Encourage everyone to be a runner at least once.



Concluding discussion

After completing the activities, lead a discussion. Ask participants questions like:

- How did it feel with a blindfold on?
- How was it relying on the instructions of your partner?
- Were you able to block out the distractions from other people?
- How did you feel as a runner/barrier?
- How does it feel to get through the barriers?
- How does it feel to stop being a barrier and let the runner through?
- Were you surprised with the result? Why or why not?

Conclude the discussion by asking the participants about the connection of the activity to the story of the Annunciation. Gather as many ideas as possible from the participants and finish the discussions by reminding them that Mary trusted in God when she said 'yes' to be the mother of Jesus. She didn't let her 'barriers' like being young and unmarried stop her from fulfilling the will of God. It is by trusting God that we can fully appreciate the gifts that God has placed in each and every one of us.

Acknowledgement



This Pompallier Madonna icon is included in this resource with the permission of Msgr Bernard Kiely on behalf of St Patrick's Cathedral and Michael Pervan from the Studio of John the Baptist (where the icon was written).

The Pompallier Madonna was presented to Pius IX in the 1840s by the Benedictine Nuns of Campus Martius. In turn, this Madonna was given to Bishop Pompallier by Pope Pius IX on the occasion of Bishop Pompallier's visit to Rome in April 1847. He brought the Madonna back to Aotearoa New Zealand and had copies distributed widely. This work has now become known in New Zealand as "the Pompallier Madonna".

Song

Ka Waiata

Ka waiata ki a Maria
Hine I whakaae
Whakameatia mai
Te whare tangata

Hine purotu
Hine ngakau
Hine rangimarie

Ko te Whaea
Ko Te Whaea
O te ao

Translation:

Let us sing to Mary
The girl who said "Yes
Let it be as you say, that I become
The house of mankind."

A simply girl
A strong-hearted girl
A quiet girl

The Mother of Jesus
And the mother of the whole world

Video Link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t7OoDouqIZo>

