



## iBelieve Session 4. Mary

Creed Reference – I believe in...Jesus Christ... who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, Born of the Virgin Mary



### Song – Ka waiata

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

*Sing now to Mary  
The woman who said  
“Yes, let it be as you say,  
that I become the house of mankind.”*

Hine pūrotu  
Hine ngākau  
Hine rangimārie

*Beautiful woman  
Generous woman  
Peaceful woman*

Ko te whaea  
Ko te whaea  
O te ao.

*The mother,  
The mother,  
of the whole world.*

### Prayer

Hail Mary, the Lord is with you  
Blessed are you among women  
And blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death,  
Amen.

### Scripture – Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee named 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 the 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."

The 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.

## Activity | Mary's 'yes' to God allowed his plan to unfold. It was courageous, faithful and risky. In this session we'll explore, what does it mean to say 'yes'?

Intro: Split your group into pairs or threes, and give everyone the chance to play a round of the 'Yes/No game'. The words 'yes' and 'no' are banned: when answering questions, if they say 'yes' or 'no' they are out. People coming up with questions have to try to get people out, and the person answering has to find alternative answers. Get people to keep a tally of the numbers of questions they managed before they made a mistake.

If people are unfamiliar with the game, it may help for the leaders to demonstrate first, which will also give the group a sense of what kinds of questions are appropriate. The quicker the pace of the game, the more likely it is for people to make a mistake, so encourage the group to use 'quickfire' questions.

Examples of questions and potential evasive answers:

Is your name Sam? *That is correct.*

Is the sky blue? *Sometimes.*

Do you have two sisters? *I do.*

Are you female? *I am.*

Do you like rugby? *I'm not interested in rugby.*

Are you wearing jandals today? *Sure am.*

Ask the group how many times a day they think they say 'yes'. Now get them to include all the other ways they answer something positively ('sure, yeah, of course, ok, yep, etc). Explain that we're going to explore what we really mean by 'yes'.

Give small groups a large piece of paper and pens, and get them to brainstorm all the possible things that are communicated when you say 'yes' to something. Encourage them to think about the deeper message, not just the surface level. Possible answers could include: I agree, I will do it, I think so, I am committed/will commit myself to this, I give my permission. Deeper level answers could include: I believe in this/you, I am prepared for the consequences, I will stand by you, I love you, I am afraid of you, I have no other choices, or I am desperate. Get the groups to feed back, especially highlighting any different or unusual answers.

Ask the group if they can think of any significant 'yeses' from Scripture. They may mention Noah, Moses or Jeremiah from the Old Testament, and the disciples, Joseph and Mary in the New Testament. Say that we're going to focus on Mary's 'yes', which has been described as "the most momentous word in history." (St Alphonsus Ligori, 1696-1787, founder of the Redemptorists, mystic, and Doctor of the Church).

Read the scripture of the Annunciation. Get each group to highlight on their previous brainstorm what they think Mary's 'yes' to God meant. They can also add any other explanations or thoughts, so that as a group, you come to a full understanding of what Mary's 'yes' communicated, figuratively and literally. In the discussion, emphasise that Mary was young, was poor, and was unmarried. She would not have described herself as anything special. Ask the group what they think helped her to say her 'yes', and whether they think she fully understood what she was saying 'yes' to. Ask why they think Mary's response has been described as "the most momentous word in history". Mary's yes enabled God to become human in Jesus, and paved the way for his death and resurrection to be our salvation. What if Mary had said no?

Take it further: Ask everyone to think of a 'yes' that they are struggling with in their life, something that God is asking of them. Get them to think about what the 'yes' symbolises to them, and why they are struggling with it. Use clay, paints, or other artwork materials to give everyone the chance to create something that visually represents their 'yes'. This session should be quiet and reflective, allowing them to think through what their answer should be, and what help they need to them get to that point.

You may want to include these creations in your closing prayer or liturgy.

## Tool | The Rosary

### **Some background info:**

- *The word Rosary means 'Rose Garden' or 'Garland of Roses', and it is used to refer to the set of beads as well as the method of praying.*
- *It is a traditional and popular Catholic devotion, which is split into five decades. Each decade involves saying the Our Father, ten Hail Marys and then the Glory be... There are also a few things that are normally done before the first decade and after the last.*
- *There are four sets of 'mysteries'. The Mysteries of the Rosary are designed to help focus our prayers on the life, ministry, and Passion of Jesus. When saying the Rosary, we reflect on one of them, and there are suggested mysteries to focus on for each day of the week. Each mystery contains five events in the life of Jesus or Mary. They are called the sorrowful mysteries, the joyful mysteries, the glorious mysteries and the luminous mysteries.*
- *The luminous mysteries were added by Pope John Paul II in 2002. The others have been around for centuries.*
- *The Rosary is both vocal and mental prayer. Vocal prayer is the repetition of the prayers contained in the Rosary. This repetition helps us to focus the mind and centre the body in prayer. Mental prayer is the meditation on the mysteries and the intention for which you are praying each decade.*
- *Nobody is quite sure where the Rosary came from. Some say that Our Lady gave the Rosary to St. Dominic in an apparition in the year 1214. Others think it evolved more gradually. Wherever it came from though, it is clear that it has always been one of the more popular Catholic devotions and is still used by millions of Catholics all over the world.*
- *Pope John Paul II said that the Rosary was "among the finest and most praiseworthy traditions of Christian contemplation." (Rosarium Virginis Mariae 5) and in a message to young people before World Youth Day 2003, said: "Don't be ashamed to recite the rosary alone, while going to school, to university or to work, along the street and on public transportation. Get into the habit of reciting it among yourselves, in your groups, movements and associations; don't hesitate to suggest its recitation at home to your parents and brothers and sisters, because it revives and strengthens the bonds between family members."*

### **Tips:**

- Before you start, make sure you have enough rosaries for everyone. You may also want to print out copies of a How to Pray the Rosary guide, although your group may not want or need one. There are many different guides available to download and [you can find a basic one on this website](#). The site also has directions on how to make your own rosaries from string, which many young people will enjoy and will help them feel more connected to their rosary.
- [Catholicyouthwork.com](#) has posted some YouTube clips that you may want to use as an introduction— one is instructional, and the other is more abstract. You can also search for yourself on the internet to see if you can find something that will suit your group.
- While some of your group may be used to praying the rosary at home with their families, others may never have been taught how to pray it. So, make sure you've got a sense of how familiar or comfortable they are with it before you start, and make a choice as to whether you want to start off with just one decade, or go for praying the entire rosary. You may be able to incorporate it into your regular meetings and build up over time to praying the whole rosary.
- Model how to lead a decade (the leader announces the mystery and says the first part of each prayer), then ask for volunteers to have a go at leading the five decades. If your group is from mixed cultural backgrounds, you could invite the young people to teach everyone the prayers in their own language, or encourage people to pray in their own language, even if it sounds messy or jumbled.
- Many young people do not pray because they don't understand the purpose, or even how to pray, so you may need to start back a step with your group. There is a helpful and accessible chapter on why and how we should pray in the youth catechism 'YouCat', which could be helpful for you as background. If you don't have access to YouCat, you can read the original (i.e. non-youth) version of the [Catechism online](#).

## How to pray the Rosary

Begin on the crucifix by making the sign of the cross, then work your way along the beads, saying one prayer at each bead, starting with:

1. The Apostle's Creed
2. Our Father
3. Three Hail Marys
4. Glory be
5. Meditate on the first mystery. If you're in a group, the leader will guide you through this
6. Our Father, ten Hail Marys and a Glory be
7. Meditate on the next mystery, then repeat steps 7 and 8 until you've completed the fifth mystery
8. End with Hail Holy Queen, or other prayer that is traditional in your parish/group, then finish with the sign of the cross.

### The Joyful Mysteries (Monday, Saturday)

- The Annunciation – Luke 1:26
- The Visitation – Luke 1:39
- The Nativity – Luke 2:1
- The Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple – Luke 2:22
- The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple – Luke 2:41

### The Luminous Mysteries (Thursday)

- The Baptism in the Jordan – Matt 3:17
- The Wedding Feast at Cana – John 2:11
- The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God and Repentance for Sin – Mark 1:15
- The Transfiguration – Matt 17:2
- The Institution of the Holy Eucharist – Matt 26:26

### The Sorrowful Mysteries (Tuesday, Friday)

- The Agony in the Garden – Matt 26:36
- The Scouring at the Pillar – Matt 27:26
- The Crowning with Thorns – Matt: 27:27
- The Carrying of the Cross – Matt 27:32
- The Crucifixion – Matt 27:33

### The Glorious Mysteries (Wednesday, Sunday)

- The Resurrection – John 20:1
- The Ascension – Luke 24:36
- The Descent of the Holy Spirit – Acts 2:1
- The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Revelations 12
- The Crowning of the Blessed Virgin Mary as Queen of Heaven – Revelations 12:1

