

Jesus' birth



Bible verses:

Luke 1:31-33,35-38,46-56
Mary praises God



Aim:

To learn how Elizabeth and Mary experienced joy



Today's fruit:

Joy



Today's session is full of joy as we share with Mary and Elizabeth their exciting news.

It may seem a little early to be thinking about Christmas, but we're going to look at the moment the angel Gabriel told Mary that she would give birth to Jesus. Mary's heart was full of joy, and she expressed her happiness in a song. Today we encourage the children to get creative and express joy in their own way.

Mary and Elizabeth find joy in knowing that God can be trusted.

Each child will need:

- Memory verse wristband
- Pens/pencils and paper
- A range of resources to respond creatively, eg paper, pens, art materials – see Action it
- *Explore It ideas* handout

You will need:

- Today's fruit sign: *Joy*
- A flip chart and pens
- Memory verse poster



Start it

Ask:

When you think about Christmas, what do you most look forward to?



Give each child a piece of paper and pens/pencils.

Say:

We're only in October, but take a moment to think ahead to Christmas. Imagine what a joy-filled Christmas looks like and draw it on your sheet of paper.

Ask the children to imagine a Christmas filled with joy. What would that look like? What would they be doing? When the children have completed their pictures, share them and discuss what joy looks like at Christmas.



Sing it

Display the *Joy* sign.

Say:

Our Bible story for today is filled with joy as Mary and Elizabeth waited for the first ever Christmas. This song would have been perfect for Mary and Elizabeth to sing as they waited for their babies to be born. We will learn more about their story in a little while, but for now, let's sing a song full of joy.

Song

'I've got Joy' by Orange Kids Music uploaded by Parent Cue (2:49)



Tell it

Ask:

Have you seen any Christmas decorations or gifts in the shops yet? If so, what did you see?

Say:

It seems very early to be thinking about Christmas, but there are probably lots of shops already getting their decorations and gifts ready to sell. In our Bible story today, a different kind of joyful preparation took place, and it involved news of the most precious gift of all. A special visitor came from Heaven to bring Mary the joyful news.

Read:

'Listen! You will become pregnant. You will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and people will call him the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of King David, his ancestor. He will rule over the people of Jacob forever. His kingdom will never end.'

(Luke 1:31-33 ICB)

Ask:

How do you think Mary felt when she heard the news?

Say:

Mary was confused about how she would become pregnant and asked the angel how it would happen.

Read:

‘The angel said to Mary, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you. The baby will be holy. He will be called the Son of God. Now listen! Elizabeth, your relative, is very old. But she is also pregnant with a son. Everyone thought she could not have a baby, but she has been pregnant for six months. God can do everything!”

‘Mary said, “I am the servant girl of the Lord. Let this happen to me as you say!” Then the angel went away.’

(Luke 1:35–38 *ICB*)

Ask:

How did Mary react to the news?

Say:

Mary said, ‘Let this happen to me as you say!’ She was ready to do whatever God asked her to do.

Ask:

How would you feel if, like Mary, you felt as if God was prompting you to do something?

Say:

We might have expected Mary to be afraid or worried about what the future would hold, but instead she was full of joy. She chose to see the amazing opportunity God had given her to serve: to be the mother to Jesus, the Son of God.

Ask:

What other amazing news did the angel tell Mary about?

Say:

Mary’s cousin Elizabeth had wanted children for a very long time, but thought it was too late as she was very old. The angel told Mary that Elizabeth was also pregnant. The angel said, ‘God can do everything!’

Ask:

In what way does it fill you with joy that ‘God can do everything’?

Say:

In response to all she heard from the angel, Mary sang a song full of joy. The song is found in Luke 1:44–55 – but here’s an animated version that shows the joy that Mary and Elizabeth experienced.

Video

'I will Magnify' (from *The Promise: The Birth of the Messiah*) by Glorious Films (4:07)

Action it

Discuss with the children what brings them joy. Collect as many ideas as you can and list them on a flip chart. Then ask the children to create something that represents what brings them joy. They can draw on their strengths: creating a picture, poem, new words to a well-known song, or anything that expresses what brings them joy.

As an idea to get them started, the children could create a simple poem with two words on each line, eg:

Friends laughing,
Penguins waddling
Mum cuddling,
Ducks quacking,
Star twinkling.

Give the children the opportunity to create their joyful poem, song or picture and share them together.

Point out to the children that October is Black History Month, and it is World Teachers' Day on 5 October. The activities on the *Explore It Ideas* handout link to these two special events.

Pray it

Say:

We will be using our memory verse for this month in each of our prayer times together. It reminds us that whatever emotions we are feeling, we can bring them to God.

Display the memory verse and read it through together. Encourage the children to create actions to go with the memory verse.

Memory verse

'I call to you, God,
and you answer me.

Listen to me now.

Hear what I say.'

(Psalm 17:6 ICB)



Say:

Mary called out to God with a song of joy and praise, and we're going to join her by sharing prayers of joy.

Remind the children of the discussion early in the session where they shared what brought them joy. Ask them to verbally fill in the blank in this prayer sentence.

'Thank you for _____ which fills me with joy.'

After each child has shared their joy prayer, you could finish the session by singing our song from today.

Song

'I've got Joy' by Orange Kids Music uploaded by Parent Cue (2:49)

Explore it

Remember to send home the *Explore It ideas* for children and families.



Jesus' birth

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:

Luke 1:31-33,35-38,46-56



Aim:

To learn how Elizabeth and Mary experienced joy



Today's fruit:

Joy



Pray

World Teachers' Day was on 5 October.

Every day this week, take time to pray for your teachers and teaching assistants.

They do an amazing job looking after children and teaching them about the world. Give thanks for the people who help you at school.



Discover

October is Black History Month.

Watch the clip with the people at home to discover more about Mary Seacole. She looked after injured soldiers in the Crimean war and brought joy to their lives when they were suffering.

Mary Seacole in 'Vile Victorians' by Horrible Histories

Mary Seacole in 'Our Black History Heroes' on BBC iPlayer

What other inspirational black people could you discover more about?



Song for the week

'I've got Joy' by Orange Kids Music
uploaded by Parent Cue



Memory verse

'I call to you, God,
and you answer me.
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(Psalm 17:6 ICB)

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OUT FAITH**

Kids Alive! Online – salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive

Kids Alive! The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!



Children
& Youth

Jesus' birth



Bible verses:

Luke 1:31-33,35-38,46-56



Aim:

To know the joy of Mary



Today's fruit:

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Memory verse

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Sing It

'If I were a butterfly' (lyrics and music)

'The butterfly song' by Brian Howard,
uploaded by Unreached Corners (3:09)

'Wonderful Lord' (official video) by Doug
Horley (3:13)



Start it

Today we are going to hear a story about
Mary, and it's the very first story about her
in the Bible.

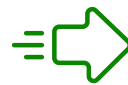


Tell it

Share a child-friendly version of Luke 1:31-
33,35-38,46-56.

Sit in a circle and ask the group to share
together:

- What do we know about Mary?
- I wonder what the angel Gabriel looked like?
- What do you do when you feel happy?
- What things bring you joy? (a pet, a joke, a friend?)
- When do you like to sing?



Action it

Games and activities to reinforce the Bible
passage:

- Pretend that you are an angel – how would you move; what would you sound like; what would you say to Mary?
- Without using words or sounds, show others what makes you happy – perhaps it is when you open a gift or see somebody you know.
- Sing together at the top of your voices; then at a signal (perhaps from a volunteer) be as still and silent as you possibly can.