

MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ trust God through challenging callings.

SCRIPTURE

LUKE 1:26-38

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

This passage starts with the angel Gabriel delivering his second birth announcement in six months, both of them miraculous. While Gabriel's first announcement was delivered in the temple in Jerusalem, his second would come in Nazareth, a small town in Galilee. One scholar states, "The people in Judah disdained the Jews in Galilee and claimed they were not 'kosher' because of their contacts with the Gentiles there (Matt. 4:15). They especially despised the people from Nazareth (John 1:45-46)."¹ Mary may have been a common girl from a common town, but her response to Gabriel's message was anything but common.

Check out the **Teacher Prep Video** for this lesson: <https://vimeo.com/816580351>

FACILITATOR NOTE: We're giving you a lot of teaching material. Don't feel like you should cover everything here. You know your group better than anyone. Choose the material that will best fit your students and skip over the rest.



OPENING

PRAYER

1-2 minutes

Start your small group by asking the Lord to bless your discussion and time together.

OPTIONAL: Give students an opportunity to lead the prayer.

OPENING QUESTIONS

3-5 minutes

- How was the week? What's the best thing that's happened? Anything major going on?
- What is the most thoughtful gift you have ever received, and why was it special to you?



EXPLORE

EXPLORE GOD'S WORD

3-5 minutes

Mary was given an incredible gift from God, but that gift would come with significant challenges. Gabriel's message of the good news must have raised a considerable number of questions and concerns for the young virgin Mary. Her childlike faith, acceptance, and trust in God's plan are seen in her response to Gabriel and later in her song of praise. This is a wonderful example for us that shows how *disciples of Christ trust God through challenging callings*.

Read Luke 1:26–29 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- **When have you felt insignificant and overlooked?**
Answers will vary but could include not making the team, missing out on an audition, not getting invited to a party, etc.
- **When have you wondered if God has a special plan and gift for your life?**
Answers will vary. Be ready to share a personal story to get the conversation started.

ASK INTENTIONAL
QUESTIONS

Say something like: Mary was a young girl from an insignificant town without much outward evidence to set her apart from others. God saw through poor circumstances to deem Mary as highly favored, and he feels that way about each of us!

Read Luke 1:30–34 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- **How have you overcome doubts in your life and worked through specific fears?**
Answers will vary but being able to point out ways God has been faithful in the past can help us trust he will be faithful now and in the future.
- **Do you think Mary's question to Gabriel in Luke 1:34 was appropriate to ask? Why or why not?**
Zechariah was struck mute by Gabriel for asking how his message would be possible in Luke 1:18–20. Encourage the students to wrestle with how we can question God while at the same time maintaining belief in his power and provision. It all comes down to our attitude and whether we are being demanding of God or asking in trust and humility.
- **What big questions have you asked of God?**
Answers will vary, but it's important that students feel comfortable and safe to wrestle with God and his plan for their lives and to ultimately reach a point of trust and acceptance.

ASK INTENTIONAL
QUESTIONS

Say something like: Mary likely had her share of fear and doubt even though she was hearing great news of a wonderful gift from God. Despite these feelings, she was safe to ask Gabriel what was to come without being gripped and paralyzed with fear. Her trust in the Lord surpassed her concerns.

FACILITATOR NOTE: If you have extra time, go through the next set of questions. If not, skip to the **Connection** section.

Read Luke 1:35–38 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- **In what ways has God proven to be trustworthy in your life?**
Answers will vary. Students might need some prompting here. You can start with the little examples of his daily provisions and work up to larger elements and examples you are aware of in their lives to help them see his provision and involvement.
- **How can you demonstrate your trust in God's plan for your life?**
Answers will vary. It might be useful to point out Mary's song of praise in Luke 1:46–55 as a demonstration of her trust and response.

ASK INTENTIONAL
QUESTIONS

Say something like: We can learn a lot from this young woman who faced many hardships ahead after receiving this gift from the Lord. Instead of demanding the details of God's plan, Mary faithfully accepted what was to come and considered it all a blessing from above. May we learn to trust God in the same way!



CONNECT & APPLY

CONNECTION

5-7 minutes

Show your students how Scripture connects to their lives: Use the example below OR share a personal story of how you've been gripped with fear but turned to acceptance and trust in the Lord's plan for you.



SHARE PERSONAL STORIES

We can look back in history and find several examples of great responsibility being given to very young people. King Tutankhamun (aka King Tut) ruled Egypt in the 14th century BC, and his well-preserved burial site makes him so notable today. King Tut is thought to have inherited the throne at the age of 9 years old! To be entrusted with so much at such a young age would have been a heavy burden. But the young Pharaoh was asked to rule an already established kingdom, and he had luxuries and provisions all around him.² Young Mary was tasked with being the mother of the Son of God, and to live out this calling would take complete reliance on her heavenly Father. She accepted this amazing gift and the task of raising Jesus in a hostile world with meager surroundings. Her faith is what made this all possible.

- How can God's strength and goodness help to reduce your fears and doubts?

Answers will vary. It's encouraging when we understand that God's provisions have always been more than enough to overcome any obstacle we see his people go through in Scripture. Because God never changes (Heb. 13:8; James 1:17), we know God will be with us the way he was for people in the Bible.

MARK OF A DISCIPLE

2-3 minutes

Disciples of Christ trust God through challenging callings.

Use the Mark of a Disciple to reinforce the lesson and challenge students to apply it to their lives.

APPLY IT

5-10 minutes

Identify some concerns you have about your life and hand them over to God. His plan and provision are enough to make any impossible task seem like a wonderful gift. Write the concerns down and share them with a trusted friend, parent, or mentor who can check in with you from time to time about these concerns.



MAKE LIFE APPLICATION

Be specific:

- What are you going to do?
- When are you going to do it?
- Is there someone who can keep you accountable?



HOLD STUDENTS ACCOUNTABLE

FACILITATOR NOTE: Allow students who are comfortable to share their plans for application. This may encourage or spark ideas for other students, plus add a level of accountability.



CLOSING

PRAYER

2–3 minutes

Take a moment to ask for prayer requests. Take time to let your students pray for each other's applications in the upcoming weeks. Spend some time praying that your students lay down their fears and grow in their trust in the Lord.

Write down any prayer requests mentioned and ask your students about them at your next meeting.

MEMORY VERSE

Send the memory verse graphic included in your download to your students later this week to keep the conversation going.

MEMORY VERSE:

"And Mary said, 'Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.'"

Luke 1:38a (ESV)

NOTES

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¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary: New Testament Volume 1* (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor Books, 2001), 171.

² Peter F Dorman, "Tutankhamun," *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., January 25, 2023), <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Tutankhamun>.

