

Resources for the Sunday Readings
Advent 4
Picture Reflection (p1), Five Question Bible Study (p2)
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Picture Reflection – prepared by Brenda



God's ridiculous plan
Luke 1: 26-38

Mary has an encounter with a heavenly visitor who brings unsettling news. We are using the picture of 'The Virgin Mary' by Tanner.

- Spend a few minutes looking carefully at the image....
- Notice that Mary is pictured as an ordinary girl in humble surroundings when she receives the visitation from the angel....we see her wrapped in her nightgown.... her feet without shoes...
- Unlike so many similar pictures of this story we do not see the form of the angel - we only see a light against the wall - notice that the shelf behind the light suggests the image of a cross...
- Mary looks troubled and uncertain, but Mary says, "Yes"... she faces the future with courage and faith in God's presence with her through what is ahead...
- Have you ever faced a challenge that seemed completely impossible?
- Who has helped to shape and influence your life?
- What can we learn from Mary's story?

Five Question Bible Study prepared by Vicky

GOSPEL - The Birth of Jesus Foretold **Luke 1:26-38**

Context:

Today we think about one of the most important conversations in the Bible. The conversation between the angel Gabriel, who is sent by God and Mary, the young woman of no wealth or standing who God has chosen to be the mother of the saviour. The young Mary is puzzled by Gabriel's greeting and confused by his words but with courage and faithfulness she gives her consent to this amazing gift that will change the world and cause her great heartache. Through the action of the Holy Spirit she will carry and raise the child who is Emmanuel – God with us.

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² 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. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' ³⁵ 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. ³⁶ 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. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.' ³⁸ 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.

1. *Why do you think God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus? What qualities do you think are important in a mother?*
2. *Have you ever seen an angel? Do you believe in angels or do you see them as biblical allegories?*
3. *Mary is puzzled when Gabriel calls her 'favoured one' in his greeting. In her eyes and in the eyes of the world Mary is not important but that is not how God sees her. How do you think God sees you? Do you find it easy or hard to imagine God calling you 'favoured one'.*
4. *The text mentions several times that Mary is a virgin. Is this important?*
5. *'Nothing is impossible to God'. Can you think of examples of surprising and impossible things that God has done? How have you experienced this in your own life?*

All Age Activity

Paper Plate Angel



Make a reminder of today's story

You will need: one paper plate, scissors, white card, glue, pipe cleaners, sticky tape, coloured pens.

- Cut a triangle out of your paper plate, more than halfway across the plate
- cut a circle (5cm diameter) out of the white card.
- stick the circle onto the point of the triangle to make the angel's head and body.
- then stick the triangle and circle on top of the plate so that the triangle cut-out is above the 'head' of the angel.
- make a halo from a pipe cleaner and stick it to the angel's head.
- Finally, draw some hair and a face and decorate your angel.