

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Lesson 1: Jesus' Birth

This includes:

1. Leader Preparation
2. Lesson Guide

1. LEADER PREPARATION

LESSON OVERVIEW

Jesus' birth reveals the unlikely way God became flesh into the world. The lesson will give your students a look into Mary's role in the miraculous birth of the Christ child and how we have the opportunity to respond to God's call in our lives with faith-filled obedience.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. WHAT: God used an unlikely person to bring Jesus the Savior into this world.
2. WHY: Like Mary, God is with your students and they are highly favored with a plan, a purpose, and a mission for life.
3. HOW: Students will celebrate what Jesus' birth means in their lives and will meditate on Mary's song of praise to consider God's amazing love for each of us.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

Luke 1:26-38

SECONDARY SCRIPTURES

Luke 1:39-55; 2:1-20

TEACHING PREP

The short overview below is designed to help you prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your teenagers, you'll definitely want to refer to it as you lead.

Read Luke 1:26-38.

"Favored." "The Lord is with you." "Don't be afraid." Through an angelic messenger, God delivered these words to Mary when he invited her into the great story of redemption and salvation by carrying Jesus in her womb. Mary's response was initially confusion and concern—for very understandable reasons. Still, she listened to the angel and responded in faith by saying, *"I am the Lord's servant."*



LEADER
TIP



Even though she did not understand the full magnitude of what she was saying yes to and even though nothing like this had ever happened before, Mary trusted God. And she believed that all things are possible with God. Mary received the truth the angel spoke about her identity and believed that what was said would come true.

As you prepare to lead your group this week, what words do you need respoken into your identity? Spend a moment before God focusing on your identity and recommitting yourself as his servant as you lead your students.

During your conversation with your group this week, may your faith be emboldened by Mary's example of faith. Receive the truth that God has spoken to you about who you are and what you're called to do in this world. And guide your students toward a similar understanding of purpose for their lives, too.

THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]

Text Message Questions

We've provided a couple of different text message questions to send out to your students prior to your meeting. Feel free to use one or both of the questions below. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.

- What do you believe Jesus thinks about you? Share your answer tonight when the group meets.
- Do you see yourself as "favored" by God? What does that even mean? Share your answer with the group.

Parent Email

We've provided you with an email below that you can send to your parents following the lesson. Our hope is to encourage parents to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.

Dear parents,

Our group has started a quick two-lesson study on Jesus' birth and the early years of his life. Both lessons are focused on finding ways to connect even more to the Christ child as we see how Jesus matured before beginning his earthly ministry.

In this first lesson, we focused on what is revealed about Jesus' miraculous birth in



Luke 1:26-38. Mary was favored by God, trusted that what God said would come true, and was obedient. We have the opportunity to respond to God's call on our lives with a similar level of faith-filled obedience.

This week, here are some specific ways you can encourage your teenager to continue learning and applying what we discussed as a group:

- Remind your child that God loves and believes in them. Share a specific reason (or multiple reasons) how you see God's favor on their life.
- At random times during the week, ask how and where your teenager senses Immanuel—God with them—in his or her life.
- As a family, read Luke 1:46-55 together, and discuss specific reasons in your own lives for giving God praise.

Thanks for allowing us to partner with you as you guide your teenager through this amazing season of life!



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Jesus' Birth

2. LESSON GUIDE

GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]

Before your group meets, gather a wide assortment of items from your home or your meeting area. Be sure to choose some that could easily be used in the conversation below, but also select items that might stretch students' creativity and imagination.

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then ask students to review the assortment you gathered and to each choose an item that reflects how God is working in their life—or how they would like to see God working in their life. Then ASK:

- What item did you each select, and why?
- Where in your life have you experienced God's presence most?
- When have you found it easiest to see God working in your life? When has it been difficult?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *For the next couple of weeks, we are going to look at passages of Scripture that talk about how Jesus' life on Earth began—his birth and his teenage years. This may surprise you, but the more closely we examine these verses from the Bible, the more we can see parallels with our own lives—truths about the way God wants to interact with each of us and reveal his plan, purpose, and mission for our lives.*

TEACHING GUIDE

The goal of the Teaching Points is to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. The main points we have chosen are (1) God used a teenager to birth the Savior of the world, (2) Mary responded with an obedient attitude, and (3) Jesus' birth demonstrated God's power.

Remember: All throughout these lessons, it's up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use, and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.



LEADER
TIP



LEADER
TIP



Read Luke 1:26-38 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so everyone has a chance to read.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Jesus had the most incredible conception and birth in history. As we discuss this passage together, we'll discover some amazing moments from Jesus' birth and the earliest moments of his life on Earth. Let's see what God reveals to us about Jesus' birth and how it makes a difference in our lives.*

1. God used a teenager to birth the Savior of the world

ASK:

- *When have you been asked to do something that was unexpected—and was beyond what you thought you could handle? What did you learn from the experience?*
- *What does Jesus' unique conception and birth say about who God is?*
- *One of the ways Jesus is described in the Bible is "Immanuel," a Hebrew word that means "God is with us." How have you experienced "God with you" in your life?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Mary was an unexpected choice to carry and birth Jesus. But God wanted to communicate a message about how he sees us as his children. Scripture says Mary was "highly favored" by God, and you are, too! You weren't chosen as one of Jesus' earthly parents, but if you're a follower of Christ, you have the opportunity to share the good news of Jesus to the people around you—and God has a plan, a purpose, and a mission for your life.*

2. Mary responded with an obedient attitude

ASK:

- *What do you find most amazing or surprising or encouraging about Mary's response to the angel's message? Why?*
- *Mary ultimately said she was the Lord's servant. What do you think it means to be God's servant?*
- *When have you experienced the rewards of obedience to God?*
- *Talk about what obedience means for you—how is God calling you to obey in some area of your life?*



SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *One of the greatest miracles in the Bible was the birth of Jesus—but this miracle needed Mary’s obedience. She had faith and trust in what God promised her. She cared more about obedience to God than about her reputation or whether other people would believe what the angel had told her. Our obedient attitude is a way of demonstrating our trust and faith in God’s plan, purpose, and mission for our lives.*

3. Jesus’ birth demonstrated God’s power

ASK:

- *What are specific ways you have seen God’s power demonstrated in your life and in other people’s lives?*
- *The angel Gabriel told Mary, “For nothing is impossible with God”—what does that mean for your life, too?*
- *What else does this passage reveal about God’s power and about who Jesus would be to this world and to us?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *The angel told Mary that she wasn’t the only person to experience the miraculous—her relative Elizabeth was pregnant, even though she was considered too old to have a child. For God, human limitations are no limitations at all.*

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

Ask students to form groups of two or three for these questions.

ASK:

- *Read Luke 1:39-55. Mary’s response to the angel’s message and to Elizabeth’s declaration was worship. Why is worship the proper response in that kind of situation?*
- *When do you find yourself naturally and easily worshipping and thanking God?*
- *What does this passage reveal about God’s character and God’s interaction with humanity?*



PAIR SHARE



Bring everyone back together, and ask for volunteers to share answers to the previous questions, as time permits.

ASK:

- *Read Luke 2:1-20. This is a familiar passage that describes Jesus' incredible birth. As much as possible, imagine that you're hearing these words for the first time. Which detail is the most surprising? amazing? life-altering? encouraging? comforting? Why?*

APPLICATION

ASK:

- *Where do you most want or need to experience God in your life right now? Pray together that you would experience Immanuel right now.*
- *What step of obedience is God asking you to take? How can we encourage one another toward lives of more consistent obedience?*
- *What is a creative, unusual, or different way you can reread the account of the birth of Jesus (Luke 1-2) this week? How can you make this familiar Scripture become fresh and alive and engaging?*

SUMMARY

End your lesson here. Provide your teenagers with a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) the content of this lesson, (2) the dialogue that took place during the lesson, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.



FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the verse below.

But Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often (Luke 2:19).

