

Lesson 10: Surprised by God's Plan

Key Takeaway

Because God loves us, we can trust his plan, just like Mary did.

Scriptural Basis

Luke 1:26-38

Bible Verse

"The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!" (Luke 2:11, NLT).

Learning Objectives:

- Children will know that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior God promised.
- Children will learn that Mary trusted God's plan, even when it was surprising.
- Children will see that God can use anyone to be part of his big story—including them.

Materials Needed for Small Group:

- ☐ A Bible
- ☐ Name tags
- ☐ A snack per child

Activity: Draw It With Directions

- ☐ Blank paper (1 per child)\
- ☐ Pencils or crayons
- ☐ One pre-drawn picture that only the leader can see (e.g., a house, a fish, a star, a cross)

Mystery Box Object Lesson: Mary's Trust

- ☐ 1 mystery box or gift bag
- ☐ 3 hidden items (see below)
- ☐ Tissue or cloth to cover items
- ☐ Optional: Bible (Luke 1:26–38)

Activity: Yes to God! Art Banner

- ☐ Large roll of butcher paper
- ☐ Markers or paint
- ☐ Pre-cut stars or hearts
- ☐ Glue sticks

Activity: God Can Use Me Cards

- ☐ Blank index cards or cardstock
- ☐ Markers, crayons, stickers

Materials Needed for Large Group:

- ☐ A Bible
- ☐ A bag (Christmas bag if available)
- ☐ A gift for students (candy canes, Little Debbie Christmas Trees, tiny bells, mini play-doh, etc.)

Materials Needed for Games:

Game: Freeze Dance – The Waiting Challenge

- ☐ A device to play and pause music
- ☐ Open space for kids to move safely

Game: Angel Messenger Relay

- ☐ Small slips of paper with a short message (e.g., "Jesus is coming!" or "Do not be afraid!")

- ☐ A small basket or envelope

Game: Do Not Be Afraid Freeze Game

- ☐ Music or a bell
- ☐ A simple obstacle course or path

Small Group Session 1

15 Minutes

Distribute name tags and snacks. Choose one of the following activities to do together while children eat their snack.

Share and Listen

Option 1

Ask the children to share their highs and lows (the best and worst things that happened to them either today or from the past week).

Option 2

Ask the children to take turns sharing how they are feeling today using the [“How Are You Feeling?” chart](#).

Pray Together

Collect prayer requests from the students. The leader or a student can pray for the entire group, or a leader can pair up students and invite them to pray for one another.

Activity: Draw It With Directions

Objective: To help kids understand that trust means following instructions even when you don't know the full picture—just like trusting God.

Material Needed:

- ☐ Blank paper (1 per child)
- ☐ Pencils or crayons
- ☐ One pre-drawn picture that only the leader can see (e.g., a house, a fish, a star, a cross)

Before the activity, choose or draw a simple picture (keep it hidden from the kids).

“You’re going to draw something, but I’m not going to tell you what it is yet. You just have to trust me and follow my directions one step at a time!”

Slowly give directions like:

- **“Draw a square in the middle of your paper.”**
- **“Add a triangle on top of the square.”**
- **“Draw a small rectangle under the square.”**
- **“Now add a circle above the triangle.”**

(Adjust the directions based on what your picture is.)

When the drawings are done, show the kids your original picture.

Let them compare their drawings to yours.

Celebrate their efforts—no matter how close or different!

Discussion Questions

- ***“Was it hard to follow the directions without knowing what you were drawing?”***
- ***“Did it help to listen carefully and trust the instructions?”***
- ***“How is this like following God?”***

“Sometimes we don’t know what God is doing, but he sees the full picture. When we trust him, things work out the way he wants.

Today we will learn about Mary, who heard some unexpected news that didn’t make sense to her but she chose to trust God and follow his instructions.”

Large Group

10-15 Minutes

Welcome the students to Crossroads and tell them you are glad they came this week.

Optional Starters

Feel free to choose one, two, or even all of these ideas to start Large Group!

“Who is Jesus” call and response

Prayer Prompt: “God, I saw your love today when...”

(Think of a moment today when you felt loved by God or saw someone showing love.)

Opening Song: “Joy to the World” by Go Fish

Opening Prayer

Tell kids that closing their eyes and folding their hands together can help keep them focused and not distract those around them.

Activity: Trust Fall

Objective: To help kids experience what it feels like to trust someone—even when it feels a little scary—and connect that to trusting God, who never lets us fall.

Material Needed:

- ☐ A soft mat or carpeted area (optional but helpful)
- ☐ 2 strong, attentive leaders (one primary catcher and one backup)
- ☐ *Only trained/adult leaders catch kids—never let kids catch other kids.*

Keep the fall distance very short—arms-crossed, straight-back fall from a standing position (no jumping!).

Have 2 leaders for each fall:

- Leader 1 stands behind the child, ready to catch.
- Leader 2 stands beside to assist or redirect if needed.

Always ask the child if they are comfortable and want to try it—never force participation.

“Have you ever had to trust someone with something important—like your safety? In this activity, you’ll have a chance to try trusting one of our leaders, just like we can learn to trust God!”

You'll fall backwards into the arms of a leader.

You must stand still, keep your arms crossed, and listen closely to instructions."

Have one of the leaders demonstrate falling backward while another leader catches them. Emphasize:

- Calmness
- Trust
- No surprises or sudden movements
- Ask for a volunteer who is ready and willing.

Remind them:

- Keep your feet still.
- Cross your arms over your chest.
- Lean back slowly like a board—not like sitting.
- Leaders catch gently and affirm: "We've got you!"

"Just like our friends trusted the leaders to catch them, we can trust God—even when we don't know what's going to happen. He promises to never leave us and to always be with us!

Sometimes trusting God means following him, even when it feels scary or uncertain—but he never fails."

Ask:

- ***"How do you think that felt?"***
- ***"Was it hard to let go and trust?"***

"That took a lot of trust, didn't it? You had to let go, even when you couldn't see what would happen next. But you knew someone was there to catch you—and that made it a little easier.

In life, we face moments like that too. Things we don't expect... things that feel a little scary or confusing. And in those moments, God invites us to trust Him—just like you trusted someone to catch you.

Now we're going to read about someone in the Bible who had a big trust fall moment. Her name was Mary, and one day, an angel appeared with surprising news. Mary didn't know all the details, but she listened—and she chose to trust God."

The Story: Mary's Trust

Open your Bible to Luke 1:26–38, and say: ***"Let's listen to how Mary responded when God gave her a surprising message and asked her to be part of his big plan."***

Read Luke 1:26-38 out loud.

Ask:

- ***“How do you think Mary felt when the angel appeared to her?”***
(Scared? Confused? Surprised?)
- ***“What was surprising about the message the angel gave Mary?”***
- ***“Did Mary understand everything God was going to do?”***
(No—but she still chose to trust him!)
- ***“What does it mean to trust God, even when we don’t know what will happen?”***
- ***“Is there something in your life that feels uncertain or a little scary—where you need to trust God?”***

Close in Prayer

Thank God for being with us and having a good plan, even when we can’t see it.

Ask God to help you trust him more, especially when life feels uncertain or hard.

Small Group Session 2

20-25 Minutes

Share the Key Takeaway: *Because God loves us, we can trust his plan, just like Mary did.*

Mystery Box Object Lesson: Mary's Trust

Objective: *Help kids see that Mary trusted God even when His plan was surprising.*

Material Needed:

- ☐ 1 mystery box or gift bag
- ☐ 3 hidden items (see below)
- ☐ Tissue or cloth to cover items
- ☐ Optional: Bible (Luke 1:26–38)

Mystery Items & Meanings

1. Baby Doll or Pacifier: *Mary trusted God when He said she'd have a baby—Jesus—even though it was unexpected.*
2. Heart: *Mary loved God and said, "I am the Lord's servant." She trusted Him with her whole heart.*
3. Small Crown: *Mary trusted God's promise that her baby would be King and Savior.*

How to Play

Hold up the box and say: ***"There are surprise items inside that help us learn how Mary trusted God. Ask yes-or-no questions to guess what they are!"***

Let kids guess, then reveal each item one at a time.

After each reveal, explain what it teaches about Mary's trust (see above).

Ask:

"Why do you think Mary trusted God?"

"Would you find it hard to believe something like that?"

"What's something you can trust God with this week?"

"Just like we didn't know what we were going to pull out of the bag, Mary didn't know exactly what would happen—but she said "Yes" to God's plan."

Activity: Yes to God! Art Banner

Objective: *To help kids reflect on ways they can trust God with the surprising or hard parts of their lives and express their willingness to say "yes" to His plan—just like Mary did.*

Material Needed:

- ☐ Large roll of butcher paper
- ☐ Markers or paint
- ☐ Pre-cut stars or hearts
- ☐ Glue sticks

How to Do It:

- Draw the words: “I trust God’s plan!” in big letters on the banner.
- Have each child write or draw something surprising or hard in life that they want to trust God with.
- Let them decorate with stars/hearts and sign their name as a reminder that they can be part of God’s big story—just like Mary.

“Mary said yes to God’s plan. Let’s make a banner showing that we want to say yes to God too—because we trust him!”

Going Deeper

- ***“Can you think of a time when you had to do something that felt scary or surprising? How did you respond?”***
- ***“What do you think made it possible for Mary to say “yes” to God, even when she didn’t understand everything?”***
- ***“What’s something in your life right now that you need to trust God with?”***
- ***Why is it important that Jesus is the Savior God promised?”***
- ***“How does trusting in Jesus change how we live today?”***
- ***“Mary was young and didn’t seem “important,” but God still chose her. What does that tell you about how God sees people?”***
- ***“What are some ways you think God could use you to be part of His big story?”***
- ***“Is there something small you could do this week to say “yes” to God?”***

Ending Together

5-10 Minutes

Activity: God Can Use Me Cards

Material Needed:

- ☐ Blank index cards or cardstock
- ☐ Markers, crayons, stickers

Have each child write or draw a way God can use them (e.g., being kind, helping others, telling someone about Jesus).

Decorate the cards and take them home as reminders.

“God used Mary to be part of his big story—and he wants to use you too!”

Response and Reflection

“What is one way you can trust God this week?”

Print out the memory verse.

Practice the memory verse for this unit (Luke 2:11). Take a look at the [Memory Verse Game Ideas](#).

Pray with the students and dismiss them.

Close in Prayer

Encourage kids to pray when they feel worried or have to wait for something.

Games

25 Minutes

Freeze Dance – The Waiting Challenge

Objective: Kids will dance while music plays and freeze when it stops. The pauses will get longer and longer, reinforcing the idea that waiting can be hard but is worth it in the end.

Materials Needed:

- ☐ A device to play and pause music
- ☐ Open space for kids to move safely

How to Play:

- Start the Music: Play an upbeat song and encourage kids to dance freely.
- Freeze on Pause: Randomly stop the music. When the music stops, everyone must freeze in place.
- Increase the Wait Time: At first, restart the music after a short pause (about 3 seconds).
- Each time you pause the music, increase the wait time—5 seconds, then 7, then 10, etc.
- Encourage Kids: As the pauses get longer, some kids may get impatient or fidget.
- Remind them that waiting can be hard, but it's worth it! Wrap Up the Game:
- After a final long pause, celebrate the kids who stayed frozen the whole time. End with a big dance finale!

Connection to the Lesson: Talk about how waiting can feel tough, just like in the game. But in the Bible, we see that waiting for God's timing is always worth it—what he gives is better than anything we could rush into. Waiting isn't easy, but it leads to something great!

Angel Messenger Relay

Objective: Kids will take turns delivering an important message, just like the angel Gabriel delivered God's message to Mary.

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Small slips of paper with a short message (e.g., "Jesus is coming!" or "Do not be afraid!")
- ☐ A small basket or envelope

How to Play:

- Divide kids into teams. The first player on each team picks a message, runs to a designated spot, and whispers the message to a leader or teammate.
- That player runs back and tags the next person, who repeats the process.
- The first team to successfully deliver all their messages wins!

Connection: Just as the angel Gabriel was sent with an important message to Mary, we can also share the good news of Jesus with others!

Do Not Be Afraid Freeze Game

Objective: Help kids understand the angel's words to Mary: "Do not be afraid!"

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Music or a bell
- ☐ A simple obstacle course or path

How to Play:

- One child is chosen as the "angel" and stands at the front. The rest of the kids move toward the angel as music plays.
- When the music stops, the angel says, "Do not be afraid!" and everyone must freeze. If someone moves, they go back to the start.
- The first one to reach the angel wins!

Connection: The angel told Mary not to be afraid. We might feel nervous when things seem big or unknown, but we can trust God, just like Mary did!

Yes to God! (Simon Says Variation)

Objective: Kids will practice listening and responding, just like Mary chose to say "yes" to God's plan.

Materials Needed: None!

How to Play:

- One person (the leader) calls out actions, like "Jump three times," "Spin around," or "Clap your hands."
- If the leader says, "God's plan is good," everyone must say, "Yes to God!" and do the action.
- If the leader just gives an action without saying "God's plan is good," players should NOT do the action.
- If someone does the action by mistake, they do a fun task like hopping on one foot before joining back in.

Connection: Mary chose to say "yes" to God's plan. We can also listen to God and choose to follow him!