

Immaculate Conception, Intermediate

Submitted by lectionaryadmin on Sun, 06/05/2016 - 20:00

Intermediate Session

Genesis 3:9-15, 20

Luke 1:26-38

Opening Prayer

Let us Pray.

Lord God, our creator,

You filled Mary with grace so that she might be your instrument. With the help of the Holy Spirit, she brought Jesus, your son, into the world so that we might be free from our sins. She obeyed you right away. She said “yes” when you needed her. Like Mary, help us be strong and say “yes” when you ask us to love and serve you.

Opening Life Reflection

Create a special prayer card for your own mother or someone who has modeled “Mother” for you. Try to show similar qualities of this person and Mary. Thank your mother (or the person receiving the card) for their role in bringing Jesus into your life just as Mary brought Jesus into the world.

- How are mothers like Mary in their obedience to God?
- What kinds of important jobs do mothers have to do? (Some jobs might be easier than others.)
- Are you ever tempted to say “no” to God? What do you do to change the answer to “yes”?

Children may help one another with ideas for these prayers. Allow them an opportunity to share their ideas about Mary and obedience.

Listening to the Word of God

Listen to the words that describe the sins of our first parents.

Read Genesis 3:9-15, 20

Allow for silence

Scripture Discussion Starters

- Why did Adam and Eve want to hide from God?
- How does the story of Adam and Eve help show the differences between Mary and all other people?
- Why do you suppose Eve is called the “mother of the living”?

We see in this reading that Mary obeys God even if things are not completely clear to her.

Read Luke 1:26-38

Allow for silence.

- What does God ask of Mary in this gospel?
- What does the angel tell Mary about the future of her son?
- What choices did Mary make the day Gabriel appeared to her?

Scripture Background

Provide 2-3 minutes of background information on the readings using the Catechist Background section.

The original fall of human beings occurred with Adam and Eve. This story in Genesis, while not literally true, was developed to help God's people understand how they were born with sin. Because of our first parents, Adam and Eve, evil is in our lives. For Adam and Eve, the serpent was the tempter. For us, we call the tempter Satan or Devil. God planned for Adam and Eve to live happily in the garden. Because they willingly disobeyed God, their lives became much harder.

At first Mary was afraid when God's angel, Gabriel, came to her. The angel must have calmed her enough for her to hear the news that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, she would give birth to God's son. Mary doesn't understand this news exactly, but she recognizes it as the will and work of God. Therefore, she simply agrees to obey God. The angel gives Mary even more astonishing news when he informs her that her cousin, Elizabeth, and older woman well beyond child-bearing years, is also expecting a baby.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- Who are some people you know or know about who are chosen to do a difficult job? How are these people like Mary?
- What can we know about Mary's devotion to God from this reading? How is your faith like Mary's?
- Are there things God asks you to do that you would rather not? How do you have the strength to do them anyway?

[If you are not going to continue with the doctrinal discussion, proceed to the Gospel in Life.]

Doctrinal Discussion Starters

The Immaculate Conception of Mary

We as Catholics believe that Mary was free from sin from the moment of her conception in her mother, Anne's, womb. She was set apart from all other human beings. God favored her and blessed her. While people always believed that Mary was free from sin, it took many years for the Church to firmly declare that she was free from sin at the time of her own conception. In 1854, Pope Pius IX officially said in a document called *Ineffabilis Deus*, that Mary, by special grace from God, was conceived by her own mother without sin.

- How does it help us today to have Mary as a model?
- What are some of the ways we receive grace from God?
- What have you seen other people do when they say "yes" to God?

Sacrament Connection

Priests and deacons receive the sacrament of Holy Orders. Much like Mary, these men say "yes" to a special way of life so that they can show Jesus to others. Through our baptism, we too, are all called to priests. We bring Jesus to many people when they hear our words and witness God's love through us.

The Gospel in Life

I know that God is calling me to something. I will be like Mary and say "yes" to God by answering the call.



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