

**Nativity 1 / Make a nativity scene 1**

**Mary's angle – Leaders version**

**For a one hour study, just do the starred \* questions**

I used Nativity scenes 1,2,3,4, from [www.activityvillage.co.uk/nativity-scene-printables](http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/nativity-scene-printables) and prepared the big-sheet (see below) in advance

**Check in** – with the group sitting in a semi circle go round and ask everyone, including leaders, how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

1. **SHOUT OUT** What do you already know about the account of Jesus' birth?

*Download this onto the flip-chart. Try not to use the phrase 'the Christmas story' as it's not a story, it's a historical account.*

**What does the passage say and mean?**

60 minutes

Read Luke 1:26-38

2. What do we learn about Mary from Luke 1:26-28?

*She lived in Nazareth, she was a virgin, she was engaged to Joseph, she was highly favoured by God, God was with her. (Something that we don't learn from the passage is that she was probably about 14 years old).*

3. **SHOUT OUT** What did the angel tell Mary? (v29-33)

*Not to be afraid, that she had found favour with God, she would have a baby, she would call him Jesus (a common name at the time), Jesus would be great and called 'the Son of the Most High', he would be given the throne of King David (his ancestor (i.e. 'father')), he would reign over the house of Jacob (Israel) for ever, and his kingdom would never end.*

4. How do you think Mary felt about that?!

*These are stupendous claims to make about anyone, but particularly an unborn baby! This baby was going to be someone really special. Stunned? Afraid? etc*

5. What do the things that the angel told Mary about her baby tell us about the kind of person Mary's child would be? (v29-33)

*You probably need to help them here, and it might help to list these things on a flip-chart.*

*Many Old Testament prophecies are wrapped up in the angels' message to Mary:*

- *This was to be no ordinary birth and no ordinary child.*
- *Isaiah 7 prophesies the virgin birth of a child called 'Immanuel', (meaning 'God with us') – Mary would have known the significance of a virgin birth.*
- *The name Jesus means 'the Lord saves' – this is a big name to tell Mary to give her child!*
- *The title 'Son of the Most High' refers to the coming Messiah, and the Son of God (Jesus was both).*
- *To be king over the house of Jacob, i.e. the nation of Israel, was another massive prophecy!*
- *And to have an unending kingdom is not possible on earth, so what could the angel mean? = Jesus' kingdom is an eternal kingdom.*
- *People who were told the words of the angel, at the time, would have understood that this was no ordinary child, he was someone very special indeed – he was sent by God and was going to save the people.*

6. Mary asked the angel a very sensible question in v34. What was it, and what was the angel's answer in v35-37?

*Q. How can this happen to a virgin?*

*A. The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High (God the Father) (note the presence of the Trinity) will overshadow you – this conception will be a miracle. Thus the child will be called the Son of God and will be holy. Nothing is impossible with God. We all know that a spontaneous conception in a virgin is not possible, but that's the definition of a miracle – something that is supernatural i.e. outside of natural laws.*

7. **STICKERS** How would you respond if you had been in Mary's situation that day?

8. How did Mary respond to this news from the angel? (v38)

*She said that she was God's servant and she surrendered to God's will for her life. Take the opportunity to think about the concept of obeying God.*

*It may be worth pointing out that it is a very unusual thing for an angel to speak to a person, and is not something that we much of today! Bear in mind that some prisoners may be open to the supernatural in an unhealthy way, or may have mental illness involving hallucinations (seeing things or hearing voices that are not real).*

## **How can I live according to these truths in my life?**

Are you willing to do God's will, whatever it may cost you? How do you find out God's will for your life?

*Try not to get involved in deep discussion about discerning the will of God – try to keep it focussed on finding out from the Bible what God's will is for our behaviour and how to live our lives in a manner that honours him. This is the priority right now for most of your group – not discerning a call to Africa (which would assume that the former was already in place)!*

## **Make a Nativity scene.**

30 minutes

Having studied the Bible, give your group the equipment necessary to make a Nativity scene, if possible with the aim of displaying it in your chapel.

My suggestion is:

- Use 3 pieces of lining-paper / wallpaper about 8 feet long, stuck together to make roughly an 8x4 foot sheet. Paint the top 2/3 black and the bottom 1/3 brown or dark green (if you're making a night scene) or blue and green for a day scene. You might want to do this in advance.
- Either give the group nativity figure cut-out's to colour in (e.g. Nativity scenes 1,2,3,4, from [www.activityvillage.co.uk/nativity-scene-printables](http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/nativity-scene-printables) printed at least double original size) or provide magazines, plain paper, paint, glue etc. for them to get creative.

**Spend this part of Nativity 1 preparing the big sheet, painting the background (if you haven't done this in advance), putting a stable outline on, adding some animals, Mary and Joseph and a star.**

**Check out** – with the group sitting in a semi circle go round and ask everyone, including leaders, how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.



## Nativity 1

### Mary's angle

1. **SHOUT OUT** What do you already know about the account of Jesus' birth?

### What does the passage say and mean?

Read Luke 1:26-38

2. What do we learn about Mary from Luke 1:26-28?

3. **SHOUT OUT** What did the angel tell Mary? (Luke 1:29-33)

4. How do you think Mary felt about that?!

5. What do the things that the angel told Mary about her baby tell us about the kind of person Mary's child would be? (Luke 1:29-33)

6. Mary asked the angel a very sensible question in Luke 1:34. What was it, and what was the angel's answer in v35-37?

7. **STICKERS** How would you respond if you had been in Mary's situation that day?

8. How did Mary respond to this news from the angel? (Luke 1:38)

**How can I live according to these truths in my life?**

Are you willing to do God's will, whatever it may cost you? How do you find out God's will for your life?