

Mary Visits Elizabeth

Lesson At-A-Glance

Scripture Reference
Luke 1:39-58

Lectionary Sunday/
Church Season
Advent 4

Lesson Focus
**God works through
us to do awesome
things.**

Bible Memory Verse
**Blessed are you among
women, and blessed is
the fruit of your womb.
Luke 1:42b**



Gather (10 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Arrival Activity Kids compare fingerprints.	Activity Pages 	Pencils, ink pad or washable markers, paper, hand wipes
Opening Conversation Kids think about what makes them special.	Leaflets	Pencils
Opening Prayer Kids give thanks for their uniqueness.	None	None

Open the Bible (20 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Mary Visits Elizabeth Story Kids explore Mary's story.	Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers	Pencils
Hitting the Right Note Kids answer questions about the Magnificat using musical notes.	Leaflets	Pencils
Jesus' Mom Kids think about what Mary felt when she heard the news she was chosen to be mother of Jesus.	Spark Bibles	Pencils

Activate Faith (10 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
The Magnificat Kids learn about words beginning with "mag-" and put Mary's song to music.	Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers, Leaflets	Pencils, musical instruments (optional)
Leaping for Joy Kids demonstrate leaping for joy.	None	Tape measure
From Hannah to Jesus Kids connect Mary and Jesus' story to Hannah's story.	Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers, Leaflets	Pencils

Send (5 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Closing Conversation Kids plan how they might share excitement over accomplishments.	Leaflets	None
Closing Prayer Kids thank God for their gifts.	Family Pages 	None



Visit www.sparksundayschool.org for more Spark content! Watch a short Lesson Prep Video that will prepare you and give you confidence to explore this Bible story with the kids you are leading. You will also find four downloadable resources for this lesson: an Activity Page, a Family Page, and two additional in-class activities.

Gather (10 minutes)

Arrival Activity

If some kids arrive earlier than others and you need a lesson-based activity, make copies of the Activity Page and set them out for kids to try.

Welcome the kids back to class. Check in with them to see how their week went. Then invite them to look at the palms of their hands. Ask them what they see. (*lots of lines, veins, fingerprints*) **Everyone has unique fingerprints. Let's take a closer look.** Invite kids to fingerprint themselves using blank paper and an ink pad or washable markers. Have them compare their fingerprints with three of their classmates'. **What do you notice about your fingerprints? How are yours different from your friends'?** Ask the kids whether they think their fingerprints look like their family's prints, and encourage them to take home their prints so they can compare more fingerprints. They can use wipes to clean their fingers.

Spark Resources

Activity Pages



Supplies

Pencils
Ink pad or washable markers
Paper
Hand wipes

Opening Conversation

Who was able to try a Faith on the Go! activity this past week? Tell us what you did. Allow some time for sharing.

Who can tell me the Bible Memory Verse (BMV) from last week? If kids remember the BMV, invite them to recite it for the group. Guide the kids to help them remember parts they don't.

Distribute pencils and leaflets. Ask for a volunteer to read the Life Question (*Am I special?*) and the Lesson Focus (*God works through us to do awesome things*) from the front page of the leaflet. Ask kids what they think it means to be special or unique, and what they think makes them special. **Is being special a good thing? How about being unique—is that a good thing?** (*Kids might reflect that being "special" is another way of saying someone is not intelligent or is unpopular. They may share that they don't want to stick out or seem different.*) **Being unique can be challenging because kids often tease people who are different, but God made us all different for a reason.**

Invite the kids to look at the statue on the first page of the leaflet. **Who recognizes this famous work of art?** (*Michelangelo's statue of David*) Share that Michelangelo is one of the most famous artists ever and that he created many paintings, sculptures, and other works of art. Many of his well-known pieces were based on biblical figures. **Do you think Michelangelo was ever teased for his artistic skills?** (*Maybe, but not after he created such famous works of art like this statue and the paintings in the Sistine Chapel.*) **God worked through him to create awesome works of art. God can work through our talents to do awesome things, too.**

Spark Resources

Leaflets

Supplies

Pencils

Ask the kids if they've ever experienced feeling bad because of special or unique circumstances. **Lots of people are unique. Their differences can make them great.** Have volunteers read Born Ready from the second page of the leaflet. Ask kids if they saw Michael Phelps's amazing performance at the 2008 Summer Olympics. Then give kids time to fill out the lines in Gifted on the bottom of the second page. Ask them to share their top talents and ways to use them with the rest of the class. **Everybody has things that they're good at, things that only they can do. God made each of us with these unique talents, and God works through us to do awesome things in this world.**

Opening Prayer

Have kids gather in a circle for a squeeze prayer. **This morning we're going to give thanks to God for making us unique. I will begin and then when I squeeze the hand of the person next to me, I want that person to share one thing that makes them special, and then squeeze the next person's hand. You can pray silently if you wish.**

Dear God of all people, though we are all made in your image, you tell us that you made us special and unique for a reason. If everyone were the same, we couldn't do the work you want us to. Our uniqueness makes us better able to be a church and community. Thank you for all of the ways you make us individuals and make us special.

I especially thank you for . . . (Share your own special quality/talent, and then squeeze the hand of the kid next to you. After all have shared, finish up the prayer.) **For all of these things that make us special, and for the many other things we haven't said, we give you thanks! Amen.**

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

None

Open the Bible (20 minutes)

Mary Visits Elizabeth Story

Pass out Spark Bibles. **Today we are going to read a story about Mary, Jesus' mom. We pick up the story just after an angel has told her that she was going to have a baby. The angel said he was going to be the Son of God. Let's read Luke 1:39-58 to see what happens after that.** Have the kids take turns reading the verses on page 1128.

After kids read the story, have them use one or more stickers to mark places in the passage. Kids can also sketch what they think the angel looked like in the margin near the story.

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies

Pencils

Hitting the Right Note

Ask a volunteer to read Hitting the Right Note on the third page of the leaflet.
Allow a few minutes for kids to use the musical hint to match the question with the answer.

Answer Key

Who are scattered? C (The proud)

Who is looked upon with favor? A (The servant)

Who is filled with good things? F (The hungry)

Who is brought down? D (The powerful)

Who is lifted up? E (The lowly)

Who are shown mercy? B (Those who fear God)

Who are sent away empty? G (The rich)

Spark Resources

Leaflets

Supplies

Pencils

What is different about the way people are treated in God's kingdom compared to the way people are treated in our world? (*Things are turned upside-down when God is in charge—when Jesus comes.*) **God worked through Mary to do an awesome thing and God continues to work through us to do awesome things like helping those in need.**

Jesus' Mom

When Mary found out that she was going to be Jesus' mom, it was really big news. What kinds of feelings do you think she had? Read Luke 1:26-38 together and ask kids to jot down feelings in the margins. **Do you think Mary was excited at first when she heard the news? Scared? Skeptical? Sometimes it can be challenging, or scary, or frustrating to be unique and to carry out God's plan. But Mary trusted that God would be with her and that she had a special role in God's plan.**

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles

Supplies

Pencils

In these verses, Mary says God "looked with favor" on her. How would you feel if God looked on you with favor? Allow time for discussion. Kids can place a Makes Me Feel sticker in the margin and write how they feel after reading this story.

Activate Faith (10 minutes)

The Magnificat

When Mary realized how blessed she was, she couldn't help but sing to God! We just read one of the most famous songs in the Bible. Mary's song is called The Magnificat. *Magnificat* is an unusual word. What do you think it means?

Invite kids to find Magnificat on the third page of the leaflet and look at the Did You Know? feature on the bottom of page 1128 in their Spark Bibles. Ask pairs of kids to decide which words in the leaflet have the Latin root which means *to magnify*. Challenge them to figure out what each word means.

Answer Key

All the words except Magnolia have the same root

Magnific: Imposingly large, exalted, pompous

Magnify: To make greater in size

Magnitude: Greatness in size, extent, significance, influence

Magnificent: Grand or noble

Magniloquent: Lofty in speech

Magnolia: Evergreen tree or shrub (named after a French botanist)

We don't have the melody or music that Mary sang her song to, but what if we made up our own? Do you think it was fast or slow? Happy or sad? Have the kids work together to create a beat for Mary's song. They can put the song into their own words, use instruments, or whatever else they want to make it their own song. Have a showcase of the songs when they're done.

Mary couldn't help singing because she knew she was special. Our Bible Memory Verse, Luke 1:42, will help us remember just how special Mary was.

Help the kids memorize the verse. When they're done, they can place a sticker near the verse and sketch some music notes.

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers
Leaflets

Supplies

Pencils
Musical instruments
(optional)

Leaping for Joy

What does "leaping for joy" have to do with our story today? (*Elizabeth says that the baby in her womb leapt for joy when she heard Mary's message.*) **What gets you super happy and excited?** Have kids share what they think would make them leap for joy, and then take turns letting everyone demonstrate their best leaps! Use a tape measure to measure the height and length of their leaps.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Tape measure

From Hannah to Jesus

Mary isn't the only one in the Bible who was chosen to be the mother of a special child. Long before Jesus and Mary were even born, God worked through a woman named Hannah to do something amazing! Have the kids read Look it Up! on the third page of the leaflet. Let the kids take turns reading Hannah's song aloud and Mary's song aloud from their Spark Bibles.

What similarities did you notice between the two songs? What differences?

(Mary specifically thanks God for God's favor. Both women sing about how amazing and powerful God is. Both women talk about God turning the tables so that those on top learn what it's like on the bottom and those on the bottom know what it's like to be favored—rich-poor, powerful-weak. Mary recalls God's covenant with God's people. Hannah talks about what God will do to God's enemies.) **Do you think Hannah thought she was special to God?**

How long before Jesus was born did Hannah live and make her song? Let's find out. Turn to From Hannah to Jesus on the back page of the leaflet and do the math. Assume each generation was 30 years. How many years passed between Hannah and Jesus? *(30 generations x 30 years= 900 years)*

Spark Resources
Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers
Leaflets

Supplies
Pencils

Send (5 minutes)

Closing Conversation

In Sunday school and in church, we learn about lots of people who God worked through to do awesome things. God works through us to do awesome things, too. Read through Faith on the Go! on the back page of the leaflet. Ask for examples of awesome things that kids would want to share with others. Point out the ways that they can share their gifts with others.

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
None

Closing Prayer

Invite kids to help you close in prayer. Teach them the response, “You do awesome things,” To be repeated at the end of each line.

God of life, *(you do awesome things)*

You worked through Mary, Jesus' mother. *(repeat)*

You give each of us unique gifts. *(repeat)*

You help us see the gifts in others. *(repeat)*

Thank you for your gift of Jesus. *(repeat)*

In your name we pray. Amen!

Be sure to send the leaflets and a Family Page home with the kids.

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None