

THE LILY

Memory verse: Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Luke 1:38

Study Plan: In studying this badge, you will learn that Mary And Joseph were obedient servants to God's will and that God blesses those who follow His command. The lily is a symbol of purity and is used in Christian art to represent both Mary and Joseph. The carpenter's square reminds us of Joseph's work.



Step 1: Mary accepts God's message Leader's Initials: _____

Read the account of the Annunciation, below. The story of the **Annunciation** is found in the Gospel of Luke. The angel Gabriel **announces** to Mary that she will be the mother of God's Son, Jesus. We celebrate the Annunciation on March 25th.

The Annunciation Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy God sent the angel Gabriel to a town in Galilee named Nazareth. He had a message for a young woman promised in marriage to a man named Joseph, who was a descendant of King David. Her name was Mary. The angel came to her and said, "Peace be with you! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you!"

Mary was deeply troubled by the angel's message, and she wondered what his words meant. The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you. You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king, as his ancestor David was. He will be the king of the descendants of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end!"

Mary said to the angel, "I am a virgin. How, then, can this be?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and God's power will rest upon you. For this reason the holy child will be called the Son of God. Remember your relative Elizabeth. It is said that she cannot have children, but she herself is now six months pregnant, even though she is very old. For there is nothing that God cannot do."

"I am the Lord's servant," said Mary; "may it happen to me as you have said." And the angel left her.



What is the angel holding?



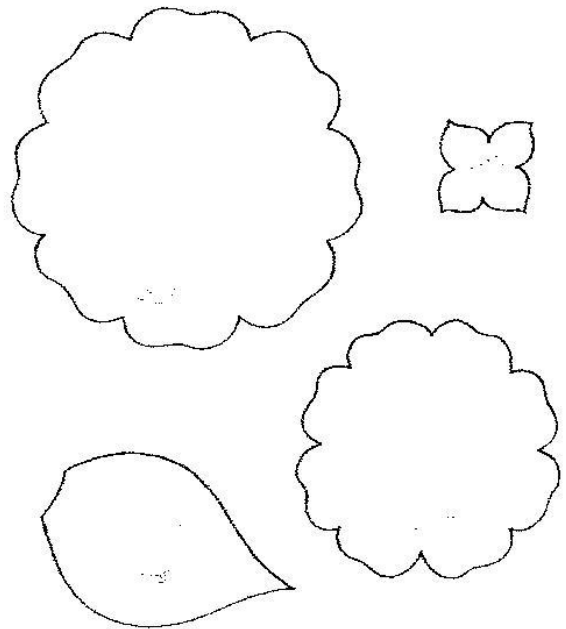
- ❖ What do you think Gabriel looked like?
- ❖ How do you think Mary felt when she heard Gabriel's words?
- ❖ Mary agreed to do what God asked of her. When we are asked to do something for somebody else, do we say yes?



1. Find at least one picture of the Annunciation and bring it to share with your group. You might look at Christmas cards, or in art books, or on the Internet.
2. The Rose of Sharon is another symbol for Mary. Make a bookmark with a rose. Use blue felt as the bookmark (blue is the color for Mary), then cut the flower shapes out of felt and glue on. You can add some words with fabric paint, such as "Mary said Yes!"



The Rose of Sharon – symbol of purity and beauty.





Step 2: Mary Praises God

Leader's Initials _____

After Mary agreed to do what God asked of her, to be the mother of Jesus, she went to visit her relative Elizabeth. When Elizabeth saw Mary, she realized that Mary was carrying the Savior and she told Mary that she had been blessed because she had believed God's word. When Elizabeth praised Mary, Mary responded with a song of praise for God which we now call the Magnificat. The name **Magnificat** comes from the Latin words for the first line of the song, and means "**magnifies**" or "**praises.**"

The Magnificat is on page 91 of The Book of Common Prayer. You can read it here:

The Magnificat

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel,
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
The promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children for ever.



- ❖ Why is Mary praising God?
- ❖ As described in the Magnificat, how does God look upon his servants?
- ❖ When we praise someone, we say something like "Good job!" or "Well done!" Think about how you can praise members of your family or your friends at school. Share your thoughts with your group.
- ❖ Now think about how you can praise God. What would you praise God for? Here is an idea: "Wow, God. You made a sunset tonight and it was beautiful!"



1. Read the Magnificat together several times until you are familiar with it. Then read it for your group or for your family.
2. Make a scroll and write a list of praises for God. Decorate the border of the scroll.

Step 3: God's will for Mary and Joseph differs from written law

Leader's Initials _____



An Angel appears to Joseph in a Dream Matthew 1:18-24

Joseph was engaged to Mary, but before they were married, Mary learned that she was going to have a baby by the Holy Spirit. [In those times, to become pregnant before marriage was a crime, punishable by death.] Joseph was a man who always did what was right, but he did not want to disgrace Mary publicly; so he made plans to break the engagement privately. While he was thinking about this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary to be your wife. For it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived. She will have a son, and you will name him Jesus because he will save his people from their sins."

So when Joseph woke up, he married Mary, as the angel of the Lord had told him.



❖ At the time that Joseph lived, to "do what was right" meant that a person always followed the Jewish law. A righteous and religious man would never marry a pregnant woman. According to the law, Joseph could break off his marriage plans with Mary and no one would blame him. However, the angel interceded and instructed Joseph to become Mary's husband anyway, which might have caused people to think Joseph was foolish.

❖ Joseph obeyed God and trusted in God's purpose. Discuss examples of things that you do that are *right*, but there is no law requiring you to do it.

For example: worship on Sundays, pick up trash that you see on the playground, give money to the homeless

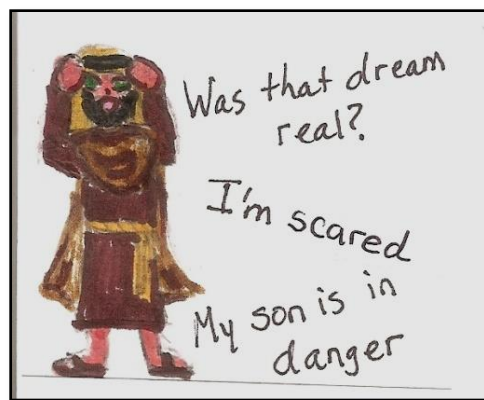
❖ Sometimes doing the right thing can be even more difficult than the examples just discussed. What are about doing the right thing, even when you might have to do something unpopular?

For example: protecting a classmate from a bully or telling your best friend that you won't let her copy your homework.



Do at least one of these activities:

1. Draw a portrait of your vision of Joseph. Surround him with ideas and thoughts that might have been running through his head after the angel appeared to him. (See example to right.)
2. Based on the discussion questions in the box above, write a paragraph of your thoughts about doing the "right" thing even when it is difficult or unpopular. How do you find the strength to do it? Who can you go to for support?





Step 4: God's plan unfolds

Leader's Initials _____

The Birth of Jesus Luke, Chapter 2

Although Israel had once been a great kingdom, stronger nations had conquered it again and again. Now Israel was under the power of the mighty empire of Rome, whose armies marched victoriously over much of the world.

A decree went out from Caesar Augustus, the emperor of Rome, that all the world should be taxed. Every man in Israel was required to go to the town of his birth to be counted. So Joseph and Mary set out for the village of Bethlehem, because Joseph was descended from the House of David.

Their journey was long and hard. Joseph comforted and protected Mary. Down from Galilee they traveled, along the valley of the River Jordan, then up the steep hills past the city of Jerusalem, until at last they came to Bethlehem.

Many travelers streamed into Bethlehem that night as Mary and Joseph entered the gates of the town. When they looked for warmth and comfort at the inn, they were told there was no room. Joseph couldn't believe this news. They had traveled for so long and they were so very tired. How could it be that there wasn't a room with a bed for them in all of Bethlehem? Mary needed a place to lie down and rest. They asked everywhere. But the answer was always the same: there was no room.

At last they came to a humble stable where they could take shelter for the night. There was straw to rest upon and warmth from the animals that quietly breathed all around them.

And so it was that Mary gave birth to the child, her son, there in the stable. Then Mary carefully wrapped the child in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger. She named the child Jesus, as the angel Gabriel had told her.



That night there were shepherds in the fields close to Bethlehem, taking turns looking after their flocks. As they sat around their fire, a great light brightened the sky and the angel of the Lord appeared.

The angel said to them: "Fear not! For behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy for all people. For this night in Bethlehem a child is born. He lies wrapped in swaddling clothes in a humble manger. Go to him, for he is your true king and the promised Savior of the world."

And suddenly there was a great gathering of angels in the sky singing: "Glory to God in the highest heaven; Peace on earth to all people of good will."

When the angels left, the night was again

silent. Only the stars shone in the sky. The shepherds look at one another in astonishment. For so many years before them the people had waited for a Savior.

“Did we dream this?” said one. “We’re just poor shepherds. How could it be that the Lord has blessed us with this news?”

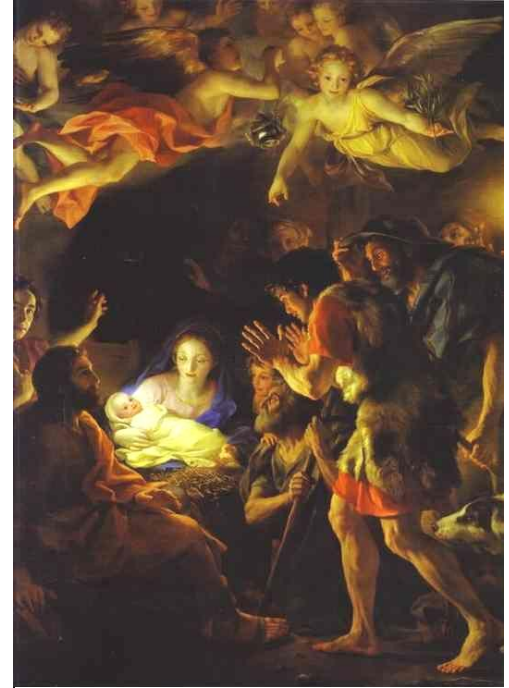
“Let us go to Bethlehem and see the child whose birth the Lord has made known to us,” said another.

So the shepherds hurried to the town and found Mary and Joseph and the baby. They looked at him lying in the manger and they knew.

“It is God’s holy child,” said one shepherd.

“The angel appeared to us,” said another shepherd to Joseph. “He told us that this is the Messiah.”

“Yes, it’s true, I saw it myself,” said the third shepherd. “The sky opened up and there was a great, beautiful light, and a host of angels singing his praise. I can tell this child will be our shepherd.”



Adoration of the Shepherds
by Anton Raphael Mengs

Joseph remembered the angel of the Lord who came to him in a dream. “I have seen and heard the most miraculous things,” he thought to himself. Mary also treasured all the things the shepherds said.

Discuss

When the shepherds brought the angel’s message back to Mary and Joseph, they confirmed what Joseph and Mary already knew – that Jesus was God’s son.

- ❖ What do you think it meant to Mary and Joseph when the shepherds came to worship Jesus?

“Mary treasured all the things the shepherds said.”

- ❖ When we treasure something, what are we doing?
- ❖ How do you think Mary felt when she heard the words of the shepherds?
- ❖ What do you think she treasured about their words?

- ❖ What about Joseph? What did he recall when he heard the shepherds’ words?

Do at least one of the following:

Do It!

1. Read the Nativity story out loud. You might want to do this as a play, or with a flannel board, or puppets.
2. Make a nativity scene for your home. Draw a picture, or make figures out of clay or wood.



Step 5: God protects the Holy Family

Leader's Initials _____

The Wise Men visit Herod

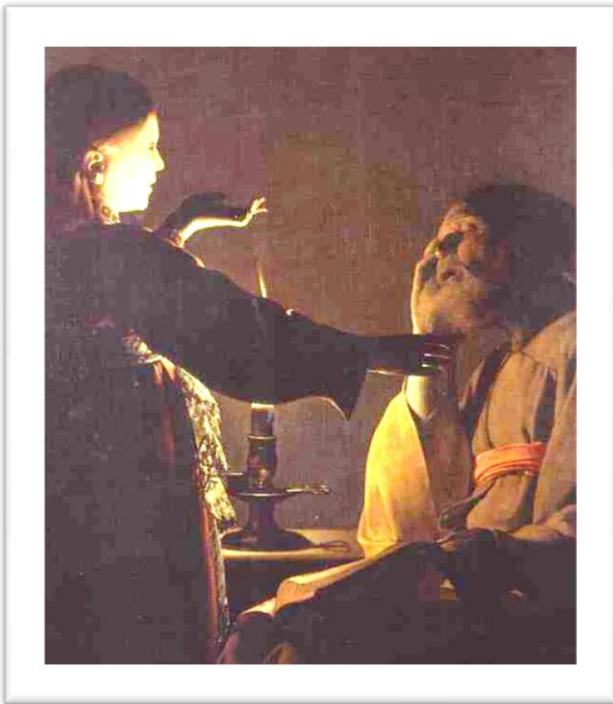
Matthew 2

Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea, during the time when Herod was king. Soon afterward, some men who studied the stars came from the East to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the baby born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star when it came up in the east, and we have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard about this, he was very upset, and so was everyone else in Jerusalem. He called together all the chief priests and the teachers of the Law and asked them, "Where will the Messiah be born?"

"In the town of Bethlehem in Judea," they answered.

So Herod called the visitors from the East to a secret meeting and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem with these instructions: "Go and make a careful search for the child; and when you find him, let me know, so that I too may go and worship him."



The Dream of St. Joseph by Georges de La Tour. It is displayed at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Nantes, France. Notice how the artist chose to depict the angel in this painting.

And so they left, and on their way they saw the same star they had seen in the East. When they saw it they were very happy and full of joy. The star went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They went into the house, and when they saw the child with his mother Mary, they knelt down and worshiped him. They brought out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and presented them to him.

Then they returned to their country by different road, since God had warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod.

The Escape to Egypt

After they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and said, "Herod will be looking for the child in order to kill him. So get up, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you to leave."

Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and left during the night for Egypt, where he stayed until Herod died.



Discuss

Again, Joseph had to trust God's plans for his family! He rose from sleep in the middle of the night to obey God's message. He woke Mary up and they fled with Jesus to Egypt.

- ❖ Imagine your thoughts if you were woken you up in the middle of the night and told it was time to pack up and move!
- ❖ Discuss how God does not abandon Mary and Joseph. They had obeyed His commands. Now he protected their family from Herod's evil plans. Share some ways that God looks with favor and blesses those who serve Him and do His will.



Do It!

Prepare a 3-5 minute skit telling the story of the angel's appearance to Joseph. Incorporate thoughts and feelings you might have had if you had been Joseph and Mary. Share the strong faith and obedience of Mary and Joseph.