

Blameless and Holy Hearts Hold God Sacred

First Sunday in Advent- Series C

Based on: Jeremiah 33:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; and Luke 21:25-36

Bible Story: Mary, Chosen of God- Luke 1:26-38

FIRST and MOST IMPORTANTLY: There are many options that make this lesson adaptable to any SS and every leader. Read the lesson and copy and paste what you would like to use into a new document. Print this document as your guide.

The Objective of this Lesson is to:

Share that blameless and holy hearts hold God and His gift of life sacred and help others do the same.

What You Will Need For This Lesson:

FG Helper's Guide: - Reproduce one or two copies of this Guide for each family group. **This is not a Teacher's Guide.** It is designed to help family groups teach each other. Include a copy of the craft instructions for this Lesson in this Guide.

Participant's Guide:

- Reproduce one copy of the Participant's Guide for every participant *except infants*.

Activities To Keep Everyone Busy as They Learn:

- Check out the UIM SS Series Introduction for additional activity ideas from the internet.
- See suggestions for keeping all ages involved, especially preschoolers and any distracted, uninvolved, or disruptive members, given in the *Supplemental Leader Instructions*.
- Always have colors and/or markers and paper to draw and color with on hand.

Active Litany: - To reproduce one set of wings found at the end of this lesson for each family group member. *See lesson for further instructions.*

Interactive Bible Story: - To reproduce one copy of the Bible Story Angel Body found at the end of this lesson for each family group member. *See lesson for further instructions.*

Teachable Craft: - See materials listed for the Craft in this Lesson. Reproduce copies of the craft instructions for FG Helpers. **NOTE:** Please look ahead at all of the materials needed for each Craft in each Lesson. A few items in some of the last Crafts or Lessons will need to be collected by you and/or your congregation or if you desire, ordered from the internet or picked up locally as directed for each item.

Take Home Activity: - One copy of the Take Home Activity for every family represented.

WELCOME

Greet everyone warmly and by name.

See the *Supplemental Leader Instructions* for additional instructions on welcoming generations, caring for each other, breaking groups up into mixed-aged family, preschool, or adult groups, adapting UIM SS to every Sunday School, and more.

NOTE: If you need help preparing any activity for this lesson, be sure to ask members of your congregation or UIM SS to help you ahead of time. It's a great way to get more generations involved in UIM SS!

OPENING SONG

"Righteous, Blameless, Help Us Stay"

(2 minutes)

Sung to the tune of: "Savior of the Nations Come" LSB 332/ TLH 95/ LW 13 *Tune: Public Domain*
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See *Supplemental Leader Instructions* for additional help leading this song for preschoolers and/or to use it as an introduction to this lesson.

1. Righteous, blameless, he-lp us stay Through forgiveness ev'ry day
Hold You sacred and li-fe too Through all that we s-ay and do.
2. Help us live a ho-ly life Through the strength You give in Christ
To bring more people to- You So they hold You sac-red too.

OPENING ACTIVITY or ICE BREAKER

"To Blame or Blameless?"

(10 minutes)

For Every Section of this Lesson: follow one of the two directives below.

1. **If you are leading one family group of 10 or less members**, follow all of the instructions given for FG helpers IN SMALL FAMILY GROUPS and for the large group leader IN A LARGE GROUP.
2. **If you have two or more family groups**, follow all instructions IN A LARGE GROUP, but make sure each group has a family group helper and verbally give all helpers the instructions printed under the section entitled IN SMALL FAMILY GROUPS. Also, point them to their Family Group Helper's Guide so they can read these instructions for their own clarity and help you by making them clear to their groups.

IN SMALL FAMILY GROUPS: Instruct helpers to follow the instructions printed below in their Helper's Guides:

For Preschoolers: Remind younger to listen and ask them to repeat answers they hear to keep them involved.

- First, help your members read each situation one by one and decide who is to blame. **For Preschoolers:** Help those who cannot read well or at all to read one situation by reading a few words of the situation at a time so they can repeat them after you.
- After each situation is read, help your group decide who is blameless or "not to blame" and why they think so in each situation. There can be different answers for each situation.

One person in a car hits a person walking.
One person spills milk on another person.

One person breaks a promise to another person.
One person lies to another person.

- Next, help your members think of and share ways people are different until the large group leader tells everyone to stop. If no one else does, share that people can be tall, short, young, old, have different colored eyes or styles of hair, different finger prints, etc.
- Finally, help your group listen to the large group leader to learn more about this activity and lesson.

IN A LARGE GROUP: **Introduce the lesson.** Say: Our Winter UIM SS Series is about holding God and His gift of life sacred and this lesson will help us see how being blameless and holy helps us to do this. The problem, of course, is that while we may all be different on the outside, we are all the same on the inside. We are all sinners and we cannot be blameless and holy - or can we? Our lesson is going to teach us how we can be sinners and saints or blameless and holy at the same time. It sounds impossible, I know. But by the time we leave here, we are all going to have seen how with God all things are possible.

THE FIRST FEW WEEKS, A FEW TIMES DURING, AND AGAIN AT THE END OF EACH SERIES, SAY:
Before we move on, let's take time to look at the UIM theme for this year, as well as the theme for this UIM SS Series and the Bible verses that go with it that can be found in the Supplemental Leader Instructions (page 5) for this Series.

OPTIONS: For preschoolers and members who are distracted, uninvolved, or disruptive.

See the Supplemental Leader Instructions for more information about how to use these options.

- ▶ Ask these questions even over and over again to gain attention and teach by repetition:
 - 1) **What keeps us from being blameless and holy?** Answer: **Sin.**
 - 2) **Through whom are all things possible?** Answer: **God.**
- ▶ Drawing and Coloring: Ask members to draw pictures of stick people and make them all different, different clothing, long hair or short hair, give some glasses, draw them tall or small, etc.
- ▶ If you choose to use pictures members drew to teach the lesson, invite some members to share their pictures and use each picture to remind everyone that while we may all be different on the outside, we are all the same on the inside. We are all sinners and we cannot be blameless and holy - or can we? Our lesson is going to teach us how we can be sinners and saints or blameless and holy at the same time. It sounds impossible, I know. But by the time we leave here, we are all going to have seen how with God all things are possible.

IN EVERY LESSON: Remind everyone that while working to hold God and His gift of life sacred is extremely important because it can help to save lives on earth, nothing we do can save us eternally in heaven. We are saved by God's grace through faith and not through anything we do (Ephesians 2:8-9). ASK: **"How are we and all believers saved eternally?"** Teach everyone to repeat **"By grace through faith."** See the Supplemental Leader Instructions to share how we receive God's grace through faith.

GOD'S WORD FOR US TODAY

(2 minutes)

See the Supplemental Leader Instructions for special instructions to help you teach this passage by repetition UIM style and specifically to Preschoolers.

**So that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father,
at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints. 1 Thessalonians 3:13**

GOD'S WORD APPLICATION ACTIVITY

(3 minutes)

"Holy Living"

IN A SMALL FAMILY GROUP: Instruct helpers to follow the instructions printed below in their Helper's Guides:

For Preschoolers: Remind younger to listen and ask them to repeat answers they hear to keep them involved.

- Help your group describe holy living or what kinds of things people who try to live holy lives will do and say or would not do or say until the large group leader tells everyone to stop.
- Then, help your group listen to the large group leader to learn more about this application activity and lesson.

IN A LARGE GROUP:

- Say: "While can try very hard to be holy, there is only one way we can be holy and blameless, and that is through Christ. The forgiveness He won for us through His suffering, death, and resurrection established our hearts blameless before God just as our God's Word For Us Today passage assures us." Cue everyone to say it: "**So that He may establish your hearts ...**"
- Add: Through Christ's forgiveness, we are both saint and sinner at the same time. Hearts established blameless are holy in God's sight and they not only hold God and His gift of life sacred, but they help others to do the same. And through the sanctification or cleansing of the Holy Spirit, holy hearts are kept holy until the *coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints* on the Last Day.

Please join me in the following litany in which we ask God to send His Spirit to strengthen us to be blameless and holy in all we say and do until Christ comes again.

ACTIVE LITANY

"Holy Spirit, Help Us Be"

(3 minutes)

You Will Need:

- To reproduce one set of wings found at the end of this lesson for each family group member. *Option:* If you fear wings will be damaged, you may have members wave their fingers to symbolize wings.
- Use a paper cutter to quickly cut the wings into squares on the dotted lines. Wings will be cut out in detail during the Craft. *Option:* Cut out a few wings for those who may need help cutting so that their wings will be ready to use for the Craft.

IN A LARGE GROUP:

- Divide the large group into four groups and assign each group one petition to read. Give groups time to practice all of the words and actions as described below.
- Then, each group should read their assigned petition in numerical order.
- After each petition, the large group should say the response and do the actions.

See Supplemental Leader Instructions for additional help for leading this litany with preschoolers.

Response: Holy Spirit, help us be (*Wave wings in the air that represent the wings of a dove, the Holy Spirit*)
Through Christ blameless and holy. (*Point to the cross of Christ on the wing*)

Petition 1: Help us live in ways that show People to the God we know. **Response**

Petition 2: Help us to in every way Hold God sacred every day **Response**

Petition 3: Make all we say and all we do Help others hold God sacred too. **Response**

Petition 4: Until He comes, help us share Christ with people everywhere. **Response**

IMPORTANT: Collect all wings to keep them in good shape because they will be used again for the Craft.

CONCLUSION: Say: People who are holy and blameless through Christ by their faith hold God and His gift of life sacred and by their words and deeds help others to do the same. We may not think about or realize how our "being established blameless and holy" can help to lead others to Christ. We may not think about the fact that we are chosen by God to bring Christ to the world, and neither did the young girl in our Bible Story named Mary. Our Bible Story takes us to the amazing moment she found out God chose her to be the mother of the Messiah, the Son of God and Savior of the world!

AN INTERACTIVE BIBLE STORY FOR EVERY GENERATION

Mary, Chosen of God

Based on: Luke 1:26-38

(10 minutes)

To Teach Adults Separately: See the *Supplemental Leader Instructions* for teaching Adult Bible Study.

To Teach Preschoolers Separately: It is best for preschoolers to hear this story in the main UIM SS group, but to present it to them separately, make one angel as directed for the Craft and use it as a visual for preschoolers to see. Hold the angel up as you read what the angel says. To keep preschoolers involved, ask each preschooler to help you read some angel parts by reading a few words to them at a time that they can repeat after you and let others hold the angel up as the angel speaks. Conclude with the conclusion at the end of the Bible Story. Don't hesitate to ask preschoolers a few of the questions at the end of the story that review points you have taught from the story. If they do not know the answer, repeat the question and the answer and help them repeat the answer. See instructions below for presenting this story to preschoolers along with the main UIM SS.

To Teach the main UIM SS Group: USE THESE BASIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL GENERATIONS: Remind generations that Bible Stories come from the Bible, which is God's Word. In each story, God, Himself, is speaking to us. God is the most wonderful story teller on earth, and He tells the greatest stories ever told.

You Will Need:

- To reproduce one copy of the Bible Story Angel Body found at the end of this lesson for each family group member. *Option:* If you fear bodies will be damaged, just make one copy and have helpers pass it around for members to read their part from.
- Use a paper cutter to quickly cut out the square around the body on the dotted lines. You will also be using this angel body for the Craft when it will be cut out in more detail. *Option:* Cut out a few angel bodies for those who may need help cutting so that their bodies will be ready to use for the Craft

IN A SMALL FAMILY GROUP: Instruct helpers to follow the instructions printed below in their Helper's Guides:

For Preschoolers: Remind younger to listen and ask them to repeat answers they hear to keep them involved

- Hand out one copy of the Bible Story Angel Body to each member and then assign each member one part to read. If your group has more than ten members, pair up some members to read the same part in unison. Read extra parts yourself or give them to members who can read well.
- Then, help your members use their angels to read their parts in numerical order. **For Preschoolers:** Help those who cannot read by reading a few words of their parts to them at a time so they can repeat them

IMPORTANT: Collect angels to keep them in good shape because they will be used again for the Craft.

- Ask members to share how they think they might feel if an angel came to speak to them until the large group leader tells everyone to stop.
- Then, help members listen to the large group leader to learn more about this story and lesson.

IN A LARGE GROUP: Ask the questions printed only in the Leader's Guide. If no one knows the answer, read the part that holds the answer until the question is answered. Welcome the opportunity to repeat and teach any parts of the story by repetition.

Bible Story Parts *Printed on angel body at end of lesson*

Part 1: In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.

ASK: What was the angel's name? Answer: *Gabriel.*

Part 2: And the angel came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

ASK: Who was greatly troubled by what she heard? Answer: *Mary.*

Part 3: And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus.

ASK: What name did the angel tell Mary to give the son she would have? Answer: *Jesus.*

Part 4: He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David,

ASK: Who would God give the throne of David? Answer: *The Son of the Most High.*

Part 5: And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

ASK: Over whose house would the Son of the Most High reign forever? Answer: *The house of Jacob.*

Part 6: Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

ASK: Who asked “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” Answer: *Mary.*

Part 7: The angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

ASK: Whom did the angel say would come upon Mary? Answer: *The Holy Spirit.*

Part 8: And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.

ASK: Whom did the angel say had also conceived a son? Answer: *Elizabeth.*

Part 9: For nothing will be impossible with God.”

ASK: With whom is nothing impossible? Answer: *God.*

Part 10: Then Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

ASK: Whom did Mary say she was a servant of? Answer: *The Lord.*

Bible Story Conclusion: Say: In this Bible Story, Mary was chosen by God to give birth to Jesus. We have been created, chosen, redeemed, and sanctified through the Holy Spirit to bring Jesus to the world. He offers faith and forgiveness and salvation forever to all people. His forgiveness makes sinners blameless and holy in God’s sight, and blameless and holy people hold God and His gift of life sacred and also help others do the same.

The Bible Story in Luke 1:26-38 is printed below FYI only. For Adult Bible Study, read or ask volunteers to read

these verses directly from the Bible 26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” 29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. 30 And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”34 And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”35 And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. 36 And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God.” 38 And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.”

As time allows, ask the following questions:

See the *Supplemental Leader Instructions* for age specific instructions for asking these questions.

1. **Who was a descendant of David?** Part 1 and Luke 1:27. Answer: Joseph. The Holy Scriptures declare Jesus to be the Son of David in Matthew 1:1. The people who knew the Scriptures shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David” when Jesus entered Jerusalem (Matthew 21:9). By every law of the land at that time, Jesus was the legal or by law son of Joseph and Joseph was a descendant of David. At first glance and humanly speaking, Jesus being the son of Joseph fulfills the prophecy that Jesus or the Messiah would come from the line of David as God promised in 2 Samuel 7:16 and 1 Chronicles 17. St. Paul testifies to Jesus’ human lineage in Romans 1:3 when he writes: *“concerning his Son, who was descended from David.”* However, note that Luke 1:27 does not record that Joseph was the father of Jesus, only a descendant of David and Matthew 1:16 calls Joseph the husband of Mary, not the father of Jesus. Jesus’s Father was not Joseph, but God. At His Baptism, God says about Jesus, in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, “This is my Son,.....” Some who understand this, look for Mary to be of David’s line. They report that the genealogy of Jesus in Luke 3 is the genealogy of Mary, which would make her a descendant of David, except verse 23 only speaks of Joseph. Others cite that Mary was from the house of David because she was required to go with Joseph to register in Bethlehem. Read Luke 2:3-5. But, it is actually in Luke 1:26 that we discover the truth: *“In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David”* The last clause does not just refer to Joseph, but to the virgin because she is the principal person in the narrative. When Luke 1:32 states God will give His Son the throne of His father David both Mary and Joseph fulfilled that legal requirement for Jesus to be a descendant of David. And Mary and Joseph were both not only chosen by God, but prepared by God, “strengthened by God,” to be the parents of Jesus. God had given them faith to believe what was told to them and to say “yes” to being a part of God’s plan to bring the Savior into the world. Today, God continues to strengthen us in our faith and make us blameless and holy through the Savior who has come just as we learned in our God’s Word For Us Today passage. Cue everyone to say it: **“So that He may establish your hearts ...”** As we come to know God’s Word, God is preparing each one of us to share it to help bring many others to Christ for faith, forgiveness, and salvation. *Discuss how God has strengthened you through Mary’s story to share the Savior promised and sent by God this Christmas and every day of the year.*
2. **Who was greatly troubled at the angel’s words?** Part 2 and Luke 1:29. Answer: Mary. Chances are just seeing an angel would be troubling, but it was not seeing the angel as much as what the angel said that troubled Mary. There is debate about Mary’s age. Some studies state Mary was a teenager because marriage at 13-14 was a Jewish tradition. Others say that such an early age for marriage was a tradition in India, not Israel. The age of accountability for men in Israel was twenty (Exodus 30:14; 38:26), and some surmise that Jewish parents would not want their daughters married before that age. Those who hold to Mary being of a more mature age say God would not place the burden of a pregnancy of this magnitude on a mere teenager. While we do not know Mary’s exact age, we do know that if not mature in years, Mary was mature in her faith, having been thoroughly prepared for this day with faith that would believe everything the angel said to her. But at this point, the angel’s words *“You are highly favored by God”* and *“The Lord is with you”* troubled, confused, and even frightened Mary. *Discuss things God calls, even commands, us to do in His Word that trouble and even frighten us.*
3. **What was Mary to name the son she would give birth to?** Part 3 and Luke 1:31. Answer: Jesus. The name Jesus in Hebrew means *“The Lord is Salvation”* or *“God saves.”* Jesus or its short form, Joshua, was a common name of the time, so Mary would have known what the name meant. While the name Jesus expressed both his identity and the purpose for which He came, it is unlikely that Mary understood all that Jesus would mean to the world. And while the angel’s words *“Don’t be afraid”* were meant to calm Mary, they also told Mary there was something to fear. Even the angel’s words *“The Lord has found favor with you”* could have frightened Mary because they told her God had singled her out, chosen her. But with all of the fear and confusion also came a calm from God, a strength He gave her. Mary did not run away. She stayed and gave birth to God’s Son. *Discuss how the honor of God choosing you to share Christ both frightens and strengthens you to hold God and His gift of life sacred and help others do the same.*

4. **Who said Jesus would be great and that He would be called Son of the Most High?** Part 4 and Luke 1:32. Answer: The angel. The Most High was a name people used for the True God. It separated the True God from every other god of that time, and there were many false gods like Zeus, Neptune, Apollo, etc. Mary knew the “Most High” God well. He was her God who promised to save by sending the Messiah. Picture Mary’s mind putting all the clues together and slowly coming to a vague understanding that this angel was talking about the Messiah. She no doubt wondered what she could possibly have to do with the coming of the Messiah or the salvation of the world. *Discuss what we as Christians who hold God sacred have to do with the salvation of the world.*
5. **Whose kingdom did the angel say would never end?** Part 5 and Luke 1:33. Answer: Jesus’ kingdom. The house of Jacob Jesus will reign over forever refers to believers in every generation, God’s people on earth, and “*having no end*” refers to eternity. In this verse, we can see God’s purpose for sending Christ as two-fold: (1) to be with us on earth and (2) to save us in heaven. It validates all of the other verses in Scripture that assure us God is with us and will always be with us on earth to the end of the age like Matthew 28:20 says and forever in heaven. He will never, ever not be with those who believe in Him. The kingdom that will never end refers to the eternal salvation of all believers in heaven. *Discuss how knowing Jesus is reigning in our lives on earth and waiting for us in heaven helps strengthen us in faith to be holy and blameless and hold God and His gift of life sacred and help others to do the same.*
6. **Why did Mary say she could not give birth?** Part 6 and Luke 1:34. Answer: She was a virgin. In this age of in vitro fertilization, virgins can have babies. But in Mary’s time, that kind of birth or conception was impossible. What was about to happen to the virgin Mary would be a miracle and nothing less. All those who lament today that saving the lives of the unborn or stopping the death caused by crime and depression in the world will take a miracle need to be reminded that a miracle performed by God to save the world already happened. All that is necessary today to turn the world back to holding God and His gift of life sacred is to believe in this miracle, to believe in the Savior who has come and will continue to offer salvation forever. He is the God we need to hold sacred and because He offers the gift of life we need to help others hold Him sacred too. *Discuss why our holding God sacred and helping others do the same is a critical life and death matter for us and all people.*
7. **What would the holy one to be born of Mary be called?** Part 7 and Luke 1:35. Answer: The Son of God. Just in case Mary missed the name “Most High” and it’s connection with the True God and promised Messiah, the angel or God through the angel made it perfectly clear who the Baby born to Mary would be. And as in every portion of God’s Word, this revelation was not just said to one person or in this case only to Mary, God was telling the world for generations or every living soul who reads or hears this story, who the Baby born to Mary would be: He would be the Son of God. At this point, Mary was no longer wondering what God wanted with her or even what was going to happen to her. She knew she would give birth to the Son of God. The greatest part of this miracle is that it is ongoing. Mary believed and every living human being from that moment on who believes that God came to earth in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ, will be saved. *Discuss how believing that Jesus is the Son of God changes what people say and do and even think.*
8. **Which relative of Mary was going to have a child in her old age?** Part 8 and Luke 1:36. Answer: Elizabeth. There was more than one miracle going on at this time. Because Elizabeth had never had a child, it was generally thought that she could not have children, making what the angel was saying would happen even more unbelievable. But that is exactly the point. Mary believed everything the angel told her. Later, Mary would visit Elizabeth and see she was with child, but Mary believed this without seeing. And if God could have Elizabeth conceive a child in her old age and when she was thought to be barren, Mary knew God would conceive a child in her. God also caused Mary to believe all the angel said and so much more as Jesus grew, ministered, suffered, died, and rose again for the salvation of all people. *Discuss how our sharing all of the miracles of Jesus’ birth, life, and resurrection can introduce and draw people to Him.*

9. **What is impossible for God?** Part 9 and Luke 1:37. Answer: Nothing. The angel's words "*For nothing will be impossible with God*" are similar to words in Matthew 19:26: "*But with God all things are possible.*" Yet these words are also very different in what they actually mean. Nothing is impossible for God means God can do the impossible. With God all things are possible means God can do all things. Together, they offer believers the complete protection of God who does the impossible and all things. Each time we fear anything, we need to read and remember these words from Luke, Matthew, and also in Mark 10:27. God repeats these words often to make sure we remember and believe that there is nothing, absolutely nothing, big or small, unbelievable or impossible, that our God cannot do because He can do all things! *Discuss how the angel's words to Mary can encourage us when we face the seemingly impossible.*
10. **Whose servant did Mary call herself?** Part 10 and Luke 1:38. Answer: The Lord's. Jesus came to serve; how appropriate that His mother would use the word servant to express her desire to let God do to her all that He had said and what He willed. Mary had become the holy, blameless person God had created and prepared her to be, the one He had chosen to give birth to the Messiah. And while what Mary was able to do with God's help was magnificent, she was human just like we are. We do not know if Mary questioned God's will, but that does not matter because God had given her a deep desire to do His will, to hold Him and His gift of life, Jesus. sacred. This is important to remember when God commands us to obey Him and serve Him and we fear doing so or even fail to do so. We are forgiven just as Mary was forgiven if she ever had doubts because all sinners in every generation who believe are made blameless and holy through the forgiveness of Jesus, not because we are sinless but because He is sinless and our Savior forever. And just as surely as He forgives us, He will thoroughly equip us to do His will and bring Jesus to a world in desperate need and not be afraid. *Discuss how Mary being forgiven and blameless and holy can calm our fears of being chosen by God to share His Gift of Life, Christ.*

BIBLE STORY Review/Application

"Holding God and His Gift of Life Sacred"

(3 minutes)

IN SMALL FAMILY GROUPS: Instruct helpers to follow the instructions printed below in their Helper's Guides:

For Preschoolers: Remind younger to listen and ask them to repeat answers they hear to keep them involved

- Help your members share what they learned in this lesson. If no one else does, share that this lesson teaches us that people can be saints and sinners through the forgiveness of Christ and that blameless and holy people hold God and His gift of life sacred and help others to do the same.
- Next, help your members think of ways living blameless and holy lives that hold God and His gift of life sacred can help to save lives until the large group leader tells everyone to stop. If no one else does, share that we will not do anything to harm lives and we will do everything to protect life, but above all we will share Christ.
- Finally, help your members listen to the large group leader to learn more about this review/application.

IN A LARGE GROUP:

- Say: "As we live holy and blameless lives, we will not harm lives and we will protect life on earth. Above all, we will share Christ. If we do not share Him with words, people will see our faith in our good works and give glory to God in heaven (Matthew 5:16). So our living blameless and holy lives can help protect earthly life and lead people to Christ for eternal life in heaven. However, we can only become blameless and holy through the redeeming work of God's Son and the power of His Holy Spirit. That is why Paul prays in our God's Word For Us Today passage that our hearts may be established blameless." Cue everyone to say it: "**So that He may establish your hearts ...**"

- Add: Because we need God's strength, we need to pray for it every day and partake of God's Word and Sacraments where and when they are offered. As we do, God through the redeeming work of His Son will send His Spirit to cleanse us of all of our sins so that we can live holy and blameless lives before Him and through the strength of faith He gives us, lead many others to Christ.

LESSON CONCLUSION: Say: This is not only a lesson about being blameless and holy through Christ; it is a lesson about being the Lord's completely like Mary. God chose Mary and strengthened her in faith to be the His servant. Yet while what Mary was able to do was magnificent, she was human just like we are. This means we are just as able as Mary was to be God's servants through His strength. We do not need to be afraid because He is with us. He will prepare us lead others to Christ for faith that protects life on earth and saves in heaven because it holds God and His gift of life sacred.

TEACHABLE CRAFT

(15 minutes)

Refer to Craft Instructions at the end of this Lesson.

HAND OUT TAKE HOME ACTIVITY

- Make one copy for every family represented.
- See the *Supplemental Leader Instructions* for information about how to use this Take Home Activity.

CLOSING PRAYER

Pray in a large group.

(2 minutes)

See the *Supplemental Leader Instructions* for additional help to lead this closing prayer.

IN A LARGE GROUP: Repeat the Active Litany with or without the actions.

Take Home Activity

69-SS-02

IMPORTANT: This Take Home Activity is just as important as the lesson. Everything taught in UIM SS, but especially the Bible Story, needs to be talked about again at home so that lessons can take root and be of greater help and strength to the faith and lives of all generations. Please feel free to make copies and share it with others to help them in their faith and lives. In this difficult world, faith is a powerful gift to pass on to help and strengthen others now and for generations.

LESSON TWO

Blameless Hearts Through Christ

This week, if you have not already done so as part of your UIM congregational memory work program, inwardly digest the God's Word For Us Today passage for this Lesson. Read it every day. Read it to those who cannot read. Recite it to each other. Type or print it out, and place it in your purse, wallet, on your desk, kitchen table, refrigerator door, night stand, anywhere and everywhere you will see it and read it constantly. Discuss with family and friends how these words from God strengthen you in faith and help you in your everyday lives.

So that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints. 1 Thessalonians 3:13

Read and discuss the Bible Story for this lesson, personally and with your family, especially the small children. With older family members, study the biblical account of this story in Luke 1:26-38 and read the accompanying study verses Jeremiah 33:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; and Luke 21:25-36. Discuss how these accompanying verses can help to establish blameless hearts and holy lives through Christ.

Practice what this lesson teaches by doing the following:

Think about personally and discuss with family and friends:

- how God has strengthened you through Mary's story to share the Savior promised and sent by God this Christmas and every day of the year.
- things God calls, even commands, us to do in His Word that trouble and even frighten us.
- how the honor of God choosing you to share Christ both frightens and strengthens you to hold God and His gift of life sacred and help others do the same.

This is not only a lesson about being blameless and holy through Christ; it is a lesson about being the Lord's completely like Mary. God chose Mary and strengthened her in faith to be the His servant. Yet while what Mary was able to do was magnificent, she was human just like we are. This means we are just as able as Mary was to be God's servants through His strength. We do not need to be afraid because He is with us. He will prepare us lead others to Christ for faith that protects life on earth and saves in heaven because it holds God and His gift of life sacred

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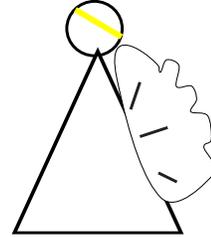
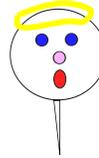
"Bible Story Angel"

LESSON TWO

OBJECTIVE: Remind generations God has chosen us and waits for us to become His servants like Mary and bring Jesus to the world.

Supplies:

- The Spirit wings to use as angel wings from the Litany
- Angel body from the Bible Story.
- Styrofoam angel head and cone shape that fits the angel body
- Gold pipe cleaner for halo
- Toothpicks
- Stick-pins
- Glue
- Scissors for those who can cut well.
- Tiny beads, Christmas cookie decorations, or colored paper to make a face for the angel.

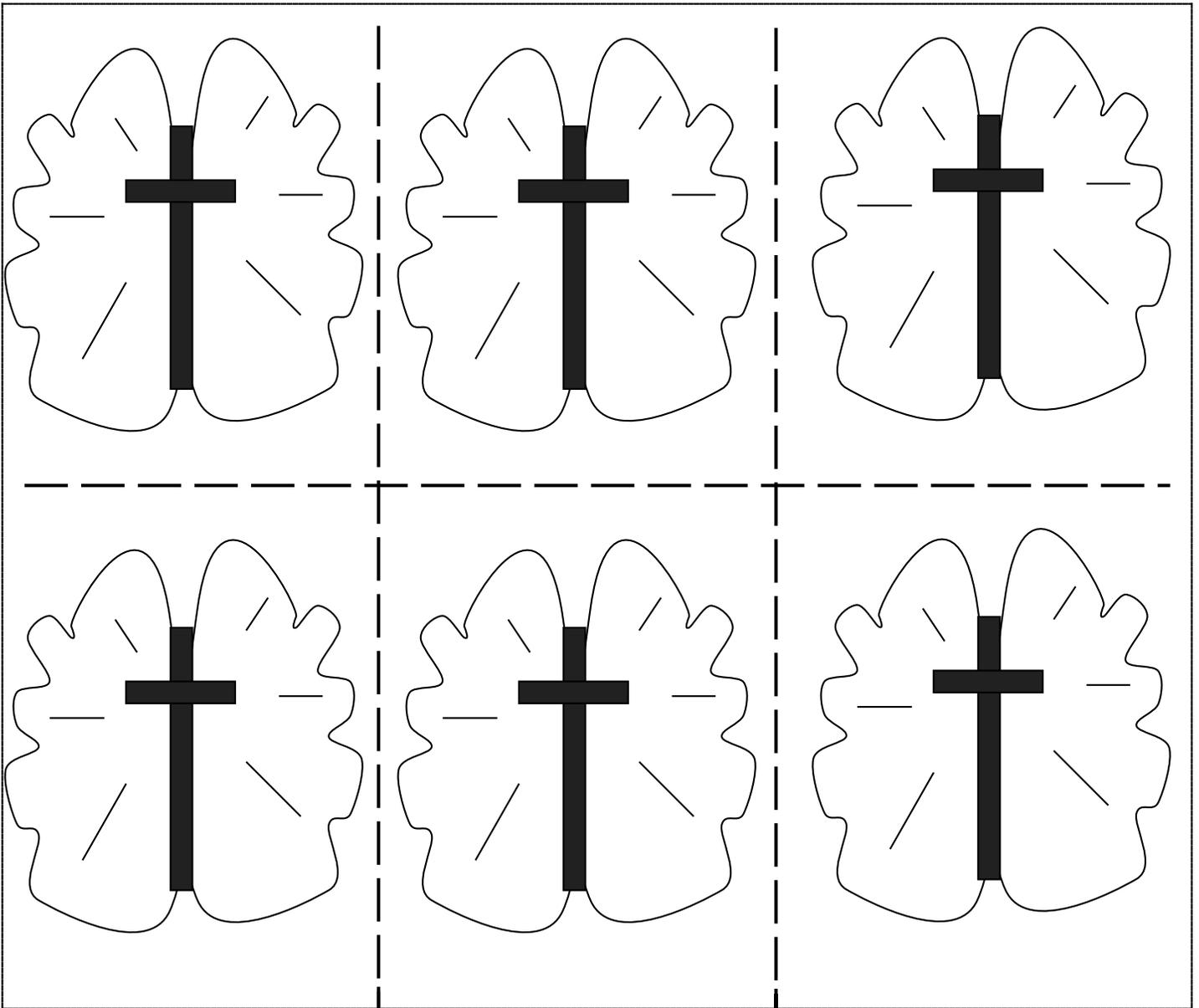


Instructions:

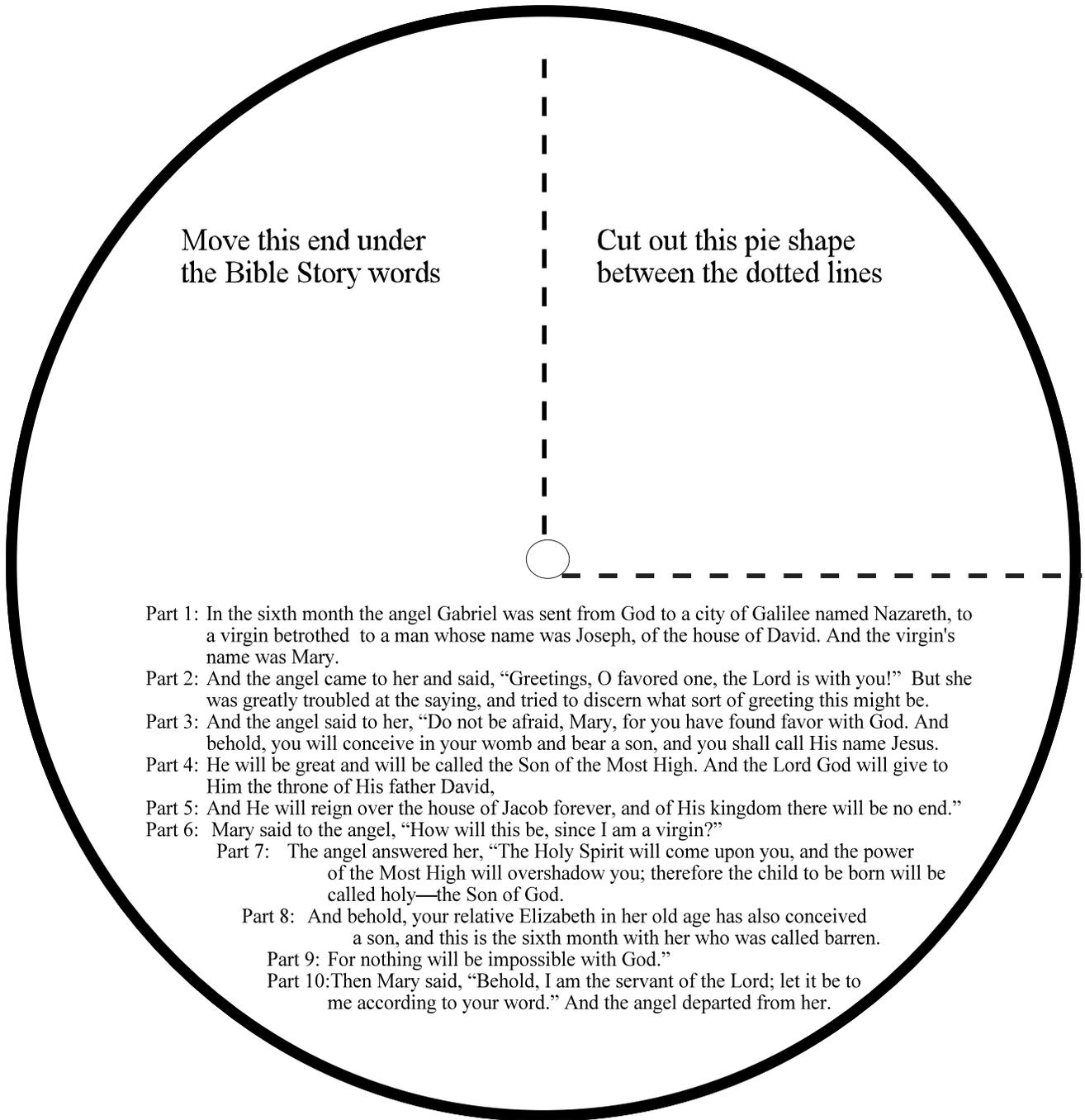
1. Instruct those who can cut safely to cut out the round Bible Story angel body on the thick black line, then cut out the pie shape between the two dotted lines, and finally to cut out the angel wings *for themselves and for any member who may need these items cut out*. Those who cannot cut well can glue yarn to angel head, even some eyes, nose, mouth, etc. to keep them busy as their wings and bodies are being cut out.
2. Form the Bible Story angel body into a round cone by sliding the empty pie shaped part under the Bible Story words and staple where each end meets at the very bottom of the angel. The staples will hold the angel body in a cone shape. Slide the cone-shaped body over the cone-shaped Styrofoam.
3. Fold wings in half, picture of cross faces out, and secure wings to the back of the angel by pushing stick-pins through spine or folded cross and into the angel body. Pins will also secure the body to the cone.
4. Use a toothpick to secure angel head to body by pushing half of a toothpick into the head and the other half into the top of the Styrofoam cone or body of the angel.
5. Form gold pipe cleaner into a circle with a stem and stick into the back/top of the angel's head to make a halo.
6. Glue tiny beads, Christmas cookie decorations, or even round colored papers you cut out to make a face on the angel. Use 2 tiny blue decorations for the eyes, a pink decoration for the nose, and a large round red decoration for the mouth to show the mouth open, telling the Bible Story.

CONCLUSION: Invite generations to place their angel where it will remind them God has chosen them to be His servants like Mary and bring Jesus to those around them this Christmas season and every day. Then, remind generations one more time that this is not only a lesson about being blameless and holy through Christ; it is a lesson about being the Lord's completely like Mary. God chose Mary and strengthened her in faith to be His servant. Yet while what Mary was able to do was magnificent, she was human just like we are. This means we are just as able as Mary was to be God's servants through His strength. We do not need to be afraid because He is with us. He will prepare us lead others to Christ for faith that protects life on earth and saves in heaven because it holds God and His gift of life sacred.

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