

Paperless Christmas 2009

The Adventures of Mary and Joseph – The Road Movie

Episode 1: The Angel Gabriel visits Mary

Introduction

The following lesson outline offers you a way to work through the story in the video with your class group. There are a variety of possible activities. There are also links to other related videos and to further web resources and books available from Barnabas.

Preparation

Download the episode and any associated videos in advance (www.paperlesschristmas.org.uk/downloads) so that these are easily accessible to use on a whiteboard during the session. Print off a copy of the Bible story as well as the discussion starters and activity suggestions to be used with small groups.

Development

1. First Impressions – [The Angel Gabriel visits Mary](#)

Play the first episode to the class. This tells the story of Gabriel bringing Mary the message that she is to be the mother of God. This encounter is traditionally known as 'The Annunciation'.

Ask the class:

- What did you like best about this episode?
- What made you smile?
- What did you find surprising?
- What didn't seem to make sense?
- What would you say was happening in this episode?
- What is it that the postman angel finds puzzling?
- What did Mary find in the parcel?
- Which part of this story made the biggest impression on you?

2. Group work – what are angels?

Hand out the following discussion starters to small groups.

- What's your idea of an angel? Where have your ideas come from?
- Angels seem to be fond of singing. What do you think angel song sounds like? What style of music would best suit an angel?
- 'Oh, you're an angel,' we sometimes say. What do we mean? Who do you know who does an angel's job?
- Are angels always 'good angels' or do you think there are 'bad angels'? How can we tell the difference?
- Many people will say they believe in angels. Have you ever seen an angel? What sort of messages might they bring?
- Do you think it is possible to believe in angels but not to bother with God?

Allow ten minutes for this and then ask one child per group to report back on what they talked about and what ideas they came up with.

Play the video [What is an Angel?](#), which unpacks a bit more of what people think about angels and what the Bible says about these heavenly creatures.

3. The Story in the Bible

Read the Bible story for episode 1. You will find this below in the Contemporary English Version (CEV). There is also an easy-to-read retelling of this story in [The Barnabas Schools' Bible](#), story 242.

Luke 1:26-38

An angel tells about the birth of Jesus

One month later God sent the angel Gabriel to the town of Nazareth in Galilee with a message for a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to Joseph from the family of King David. The angel greeted Mary and said, 'You are truly blessed! The Lord is with you.'

Mary was confused by the angel's words and wondered what they meant. Then the angel told Mary, 'Don't be afraid! God is pleased with you, and you will have a son. His name will be Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of God Most High. The Lord God will make him king, as his ancestor David was. He will rule the people of Israel forever, and his kingdom will never end.'

Mary asked the angel, 'How can this happen? I am not married!'

The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come down to you, and God's power will come over you. So your child will be called the holy Son of God. Your relative Elizabeth is also going to have a son, even though she is old. No one thought she could ever have a baby, but in three months she will have a son. Nothing is impossible for God!'

Mary said, 'I am the Lord's servant! Let it happen as you have said.' And the angel left her.

Here is a [word search](#) based on this reading.

Talk about the Bible story:

- What is in the Bible story that is not in the video? What is in the video that is not in the Bible story? Does the video help you understand the Bible story better? Which parts of the Bible story do you find puzzling?
- I wonder what it felt like to be Mary? I wonder what it felt like for Gabriel to bring such an important message? I wonder who was the most frightened?

4. A Carousel of Group Activities

- Find out about different sorts of angels, using a dictionary, reference book or the web. Look up: Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Nephalim, Cherubim, Seraphim and Archangels.
- Angels seem to defy description. Read how the prophet Ezekiel, in chapter 1 of his prophecy, describes them.

The prophet Isaiah, when he meets God in the Temple, also sees angels. Read about it in Isaiah 6:1-3.

- Find out what 'cherubs' are. Many people think angels are like these creatures.

Type 'angels' into an image search and look through some artwork on the web for different ideas about angels. Which images do you find helpful and which ones, in your opinion, don't do angels justice?

- In Hebrews 13:2 the writer suggests that angels might sometimes look like you and me! How might other people be angels to you, or you to them? Make a list of the sorts of things such angels might do to help us in our day-to-day life.

- Have a go at drawing your own idea of what an angel looks like. Try to make it look both majestic and mysterious, friendly and fearsome, powerful and approachable. Let your imagination run riot!
- Angels appear in many stories throughout the whole of the Bible, stopping the mouths of lions, bringing important news, climbing up and down ladders, leading the way into battle or out of danger and even scaring a donkey into making a speech! Decide on your favourite Bible story about angels. Here are the Bible references to some of these stories:

Angels for lunch - Genesis 18:1-15

Angels on stairs - Genesis 28:10-17

A wrestling angel - Genesis 32:22 - 33:4

A road block angel - Numbers 22:1-35

First aid angels - 1 Kings 19:1-9

Lion-taming angels - Daniel 6:1-28

Can you put one of these stories into your own words in order to tell other people about it?

5. **Classroom Drama Ideas**

Play the video [Space Travellers](#). This is an imaginary conversation between the archangels Gabriel and Michael (as spacemen) before Gabriel sets out to visit Planet Earth. Use this unusual introduction to prompt some drama exercises:

- Put Gabriel in the [hot seat](#) - ask him what he is expecting to find on his visit to earth and what sort of person he imagines has been chosen to become the mother of God's Son.
- Make a list of interview questions that Michael will ask Gabriel when he returns, to be used in Michael's chat show broadcast on the heavenly sky TV channel for the other angels to watch.

6. **Final reflection questions looking back on the session**

- How would you have gone about telling someone that they were about to become the mother of God?! If you were Gabriel, how would you have attracted Mary's attention without scaring her out of her skin?
- 'Fear not!' – this seems to be the standard opening line for angels when they appear, which suggests that they do look quite scary! Do you think that we may have too tame an idea of these fiery creatures?
- What do you think was so special about Mary? Why did God chose her to be the mother of Jesus?
- What might there be around you that you can't see?
- How could you be an angel to others today?

7. **Further web links and useful Barnabas books**

- [RE lesson outline for Key Stage 1: Angels, angels everywhere](#)
- [RE Lesson outline for Foundation: The Angel visits Mary](#)
- [Mary meets an angel – early years \(for churches\)](#)
- [RE Lesson outline for Foundation: The Shepherds see Jesus](#)
- [Annunciation Assembly](#)

Useful Barnabas books

[Bethlehem Carols Unpacked](#)

[Easy Ways to Christmas Plays Volume 2](#)

[Getting Ready for Christmas](#)

[Make & Do Christmas Puppets](#)

[Make & Do Christmas Cards & Crib](#)

[Christmas Make & Do](#)

[Have you seen Christmas?](#)

[The Road to Christmas Day](#)

[The Christmas Journey](#)

8. **Play Episode 1 again to finish off the lesson and as a taster to the next session**