



On your marks

This is a session outline taking the theme of Mary's acceptance of her mission as given to her by Gabriel. Are we prepared to do difficult jobs for God?

Get set

You'll need:

- a Mission HQ sign
- a copy of the letters below for each member of the group, placed in separate sealed envelopes with their name on the front of each
- pictures of James Bond, Mother Teresa, Bob Geldof, your minister, Mary
- a CD player and some quiet instrumental music
- possibly play dough
- a copy of [The Gospels Unplugged](#) (BRF, 2011)
- paper and pens
- a cross.

Go!

1 Set up a sign saying: Mission HQ. Have the group sitting on chairs at tables as if you are at a briefing for MI6. Try to get some drama into your tone as you say: 'Welcome, agents. You have been chosen to fulfil a secret mission. You have the choice to accept this mission or to refuse it. Here are your mission instructions. Agent Blenkinsop? Agent Bloggs?'

Hand out a named envelope with the mission inside (see below) to each member of the group. Give them a chance to read it, then ask if anyone is prepared to undertake their mission.

- Why won't they accept it? It means leaving home, being out at night in the dark, costs money, is dangerous, is smelly and unpleasant
- Why would they accept it? It's exciting, it's dangerous, it's different, it means someone thinks you're good enough to do it.

Say that they'll be pleased to know that no one wants them to go swimming in the sewage works, but here are some people who did have missions.

2 Hand out pictures of James Bond, Mother Teresa, Bob Geldof, your minister, Mary. Pointing to the pictures in turn, ask :

- Who is this? What do you know about him/her?
- Is s/he a fictional character or a real person?
- What was his/her mission?



- How did s/he get his/her instructions? (From 'M', from praying to God, from getting an idea when watching TV, from (you'll have to ask your minister to get a personalised reply) and from an angel.)

3 I wonder what it was like to be given the mission of having God's baby. Here's what it might have felt like.

Lie down or sit comfortably (or if this is impossible for your group, give them doodle sheets to scribble on, or play dough to fiddle with while you talk). Imagine Mary as a modern-day teenager, perhaps the same age as a sister/friend at secondary school. She's just coming in from school, as she does every day...

Put on a CD of atmospheric instrumental music to help everyone to concentrate and when they're reasonably settled, read the annunciation story from [The Gospels Unplugged](#) (pp. 13-14). Or better still, invite a teenage girl to come and read it for you. Read the abridged version of the annunciation from Luke as on page 12 of [The Gospels Unplugged](#).

4 Wonder about the following:

- I wonder what Mary felt like.
- I wonder what she was most excited by.
- I wonder what she was most scared of.
- I wonder what you would say if God gave you a difficult, life-changing, embarrassing job to do.

5 Hand out another named envelope with the second mission inside (see below) and give the group time to read it. Talk about which bits are hardest and which are easier. What special skills do you all have to help you carry out this difficult mission?

6 Make a display board of Mission HQ with framed pictures of the special agents and descriptions of special skills they have as agents, all done by the agents themselves. You could include Mary on the board too, with a description of what sort of a person she was. Stick up a copy of mission letter 2.

7 A prayer: If you would like to tell God how willing you are to be one of his agents, would you like to sign the letter with your name. Then as I play the quiet music, come and put your mission letter by the cross, and remember the price Jesus had to pay when he accepted his mission from God. If you don't want to accept the mission yet, just place the letter by the cross without signing it. Jesus knows when you'll be ready.

Mission letter 1

Agent! Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is as follows:

- Buy yourself a scuba diving kit - you will have to buy this out of your own money.
- Leave home at 20.45 with only the scuba diving kit, a small radio and the bus fare.
- Proceed to the bus stop and catch the number 143 bus at 20.59 to Sledgeworth.



- When you arrive there, find the sewage works.
- Dive into waste tank 3 (untreated human waste) and search for the filter.
- Insert the radio into the filter and leave.
- You must be very careful not to be discovered by the savage guard dogs or armed security patrol.
- The last bus is at 23.30. If you miss it, you will have to walk the sixteen miles home.

It's tough. Are you ready to give it a try?

I accept this mission.

Signed:

Mission letter 2

Agent! Your mission as a Christian, should you choose to accept it, is as follows:

- To try to be like Jesus in everything you do.
- You should listen to him and talk to him.
- You should read a bit of the Bible regularly.
- You should treat everyone around you just as Jesus would treat them, even when they're horrible to you.
- You should always be ready to help other people get to know Jesus too.
- Your mission is to stand up for what is right and have nothing to do with things you know are wrong.

It's tough. Are you ready to give it a try?

I accept this mission.

Signed: