Mary, the Mother of Jesus

Background


God chose Mary to be the Mother of God when she was a young teenager. Joseph and Mary raised the baby and Mary was present during Jesus’ life and death. Legends beginning about the second century tell us that her mother’s name was Anne and her father’s name was Joachim. Mary’s story parallels the stories of divine intervention in the birth of Isaac to Sarah and Samuel to Hannah (a Hebrew form of Anne).

Material

The basket for Mary, the Mother of Jesus is on one of the New Testament shelves.

It contains:
- blue felt underlay
- angel plaque
- wooden Christ child in manger
- scroll of Isaiah
- crucifix
- tomb
- wooden fire image
- silk forget-me-nots

Movements

Words

Move slowly with deliberation to the shelf where the material waits.

Watch. Watch where I go.

Pick up the basket containing the materials and return to the circle.

Remove the underlay from the basket. Unroll it from your right to left, leaving enough room for the first object to be placed on it.
When Mary was a little girl, she wondered what it would be like when she was all grown up. The years went by and one day something happened that no one could explain.

*Place the angel image on the underlay.*

The angel Gabriel came to her and said, “God has chosen you to be the Mother of God.”

But what did that mean?

She was about to be married to a wonderful man who was a carpenter in Nazareth. His name was Joseph.

*Unroll the underlay a little more and place the baby Jesus in the manger on it.*

Then the angel came to Joseph and said that Mary was going to have a baby, and that the baby was God.

Now Joseph was confused, too.

But Joseph and Mary were married anyway, and the baby was born. They named him Jesus.

Many more things happened that were hard to understand. When Jesus was just eight days old, they took him to the Temple in Jerusalem to present him to God, as was the custom.

Old Simeon was there waiting.

When he saw Jesus, he said something like this, “Now I can die. I have seen the Messiah.”

When Jesus was about twelve, Mary and Joseph lost him in Jerusalem, but found him in the Temple. He said, “Didn’t you know that I would be in my father’s house?” But Joseph’s house was in Nazareth, where the carpenter’s shop was. The boy became more confusing as he grew to be a man.

*Unroll the underlay a little more and place the scroll of Isaiah on it.*

When he began to teach, he returned to his home synagogue and read from the scroll of Isaiah about the coming of the Messiah. He then said that he was the One.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unroll the underlay a little more and place the crucifix on it.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mary must have remembered the angel Gabriel, but the people of Nazareth were angry. They tried to throw him off a cliff.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| At a wedding he changed the water into wine, and another time Mary and his brothers came to see him when he was teaching. He said that those who followed him were his family, not them. Now his brothers were confused, too. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unroll the underlay a little more and place the empty tomb on it.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Then Jesus went to Jerusalem for the last time, and Mary was there. When they put him on the cross, she stood watching, probably standing near John. People have written beautiful and sad music about this. It is called the <em>Stabat Mater</em>, because the Mother was just standing there. What was she thinking?</td>
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</tbody>
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| Then, Jesus lifted his head and spoke to her. “Woman, behold your son!” He then said to a disciple, “Behold your mother!” The disciple, who was probably John, took her into his own home and cared for her in her old age. |

| When they took Jesus down from the cross, Mary was still there. Sometimes you will see a statue or painting of Mary holding Jesus in her lap. It is called *Pieta*, which means pity and a kind devotion. That is how she felt. |

| The next day was very quiet and empty for Mary. Then, on Sunday, the first Easter, she and the other women walked slowly back to the place where Jesus had been put in the tomb. She needed to be close to him. They found that the stone had been rolled away and that somehow Jesus was still with them, as he is with us today. |

| When the disciples returned from Mount Olivet after Jesus ascended, Mary and his brothers were with them. They waited in the upper room with the others. Mary was there a week later when the sound of the mighty wind filled the room and the Holy Spirit came like fire. |
No one knows when Mary died or was buried, but she was truly the Mother of God. When she was all grown up, she kept on growing. People still feel close to her. They name churches after her and make pilgrimages to places where she seems especially close.

*Unroll the underlay a little more and place the forget-me-nots on it.*

This is one of those stories, then, that never ends, so instead of ending we will put down some of Mary’s flowers. They are called forget-me-nots. She will never be forgotten.

*Complete layout of the Story of Mary, The Mother of Jesus*

Sit for a moment to let the story sink in. Then begin the wondering.

- I wonder what part of this story you liked best?
- I wonder what part is most important?
- I wonder what part is about you, or is especially for you?
- I wonder if we can leave out any of the story and still have all that we need?

Name each object and say a brief word about it as you place it back in the basket. For example, “Here is the red flame that reminds us that Mary was there when the Holy Spirit came.” Roll up the underlay carefully and put it in the basket, then return the story to its place on the shelf.

Return to the circle and begin to guide the children as they choose their work.