

Praying with Scripture: A Guided Meditation

Invite the students to quiet themselves, take some deep breaths, and recall that they are in the holy presence of God. You may wish to create a prayerful environment by softening the lighting or playing gentle instrumental music to accompany this meditation.

Leader: Please sit comfortably and quiet your mind as we begin this meditation on the scriptural account of the Annunciation from Luke, chapter 1, verses 26 through 38.

Lector: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke: “In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin’s name was Mary.”

Commentator: Just imagine. The all-powerful God, Creator of the universe, sent his most important emissary, Gabriel, from God’s heavenly court to a small country in a tiny little town that few people had ever heard of to a completely unknown young woman who had no social status, because she was an unmarried virgin. Why would God make such a choice? Then, I think to myself, “I’m not all that important. . . . Could God choose me too?” *(pause)*

Lector: “And coming to her, [Gabriel] said, ‘Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you!’ But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.”

Commentator: How does God speak to me? Does he speak through a friend? Does he speak through my own reflections and concerns about the many problems in the world? *(pause)* Does he speak through a class that gets me thinking about what kind of talents I have to offer? *(pause)* Does he speak to me through a meditation, such as this? *(pause)* Mary pondered in her heart what this greeting from the angel might mean. Do I actively listen for God’s voice in my life? *(pause)* Do I allow myself to ponder the deep questions that are welling up within me? *(pause)*

Lector: “Then the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.’”

Commentator: What fears cause me to hesitate? Am I afraid to look at myself or others with honesty and humility? Do I feel unworthy to be “favored” by God? How open am I to the world around me? Is it possible for me to be open to God in the way Mary was open?

Lector: “Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

Commentator: When I look at the stars of the sky, I am filled with wonder and awe. I ponder my own place in this vast and complex universe. If I continue to open my heart to God, who knows what wonders I may one day become a part of. Perhaps I will help discover ways to solve some of humanity’s biggest problems, or perhaps I will support people in need. God invited Mary to give birth to Jesus, the Savior, because she opened her heart to the wonder of God’s creation. Lord, help me to be open. Fill me with wonder and awe. *(pause)*



Lector: “But Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?’ And the angel said to her in reply, ‘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. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God.’”

Commentator: Nothing is impossible for God. . . . Nothing is impossible for God. . . . Nothing? How can this be? Then, why is it so difficult to believe that God can accomplish great things through me? What do I dream of accomplishing to make the world a better place? Why *me*? . . . Why *not* me?

Lector: “Mary said, ‘Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.’”

Commentator: God’s Word lives in me. God’s Word lives in all of us. What is God saying to each of us today? Let it be done to me according to your word! (*pause*)

Leader: With wonder and awe, like Mary, we believe that nothing is impossible for God. Let us bring our needs and petitions before God, our Savior. Please respond to each prayer: “Lord, hear our prayer.” For the gift of openness to all the wonder of God’s creation, and to God who created all, we pray to the Lord:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For the grace to respond to God’s voice with the generosity with which Mary responded, we pray to the Lord:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Now, please offer your own prayers.

All: (*to each petition*) Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Let us conclude our meditation in gratitude to God by saying together Mary’s *Magnificat*, which is found on your other handout. These are the words Mary offered in praise for all that God had done for her.

