

Facing New and Uncertain Situations *Like Mary*



FAITH THEMES

- Mary said yes to God in faith and trust, and she became the mother of Jesus.
- Mary loves and prays for us.

NATURAL TEACHABLE MOMENTS

- On your child's first day of school or with a new club or team
- When your family is about to have an addition, young or old
- Before a May crowning ritual or anytime in May, Mary's month

Scholars tell us that at the time of the Annunciation—when the archangel Gabriel announced to Mary that she had been chosen to bear a son, called Jesus, who would be the Son of God—Mary was probably in her mid-teens. This was the normal age for a girl to be betrothed in marriage. Mary was at the time betrothed to Joseph. She was from an otherwise undistinguished family, living in an occupied country. It is no wonder Mary questioned God's plan for her; nevertheless, she believed God's message and faced the future confident that God would be with her.

We face an unknown future. As we get older and move through life, we discover that things are not as certain as they might have seemed once. We cannot help but wonder about the world in which we are bringing up our children. Mary faced all these issues with faith and hope. Mary loves and prays for us now. Never be afraid to ask for her help.

STARTING THE CONVERSATION

Although your child may be quite young, she or he still has to make decisions. Ask your child about some of the decisions she or he had to make today. After listening to the response, ask how and why your child decided on each particular choice, if she or he hasn't described this already.

Reflect on your child's response, as this is a great opportunity to observe her or his decision-making process. Explain to your child how present decisions often affect the future.

TO HELP YOU PRAY

Prayer gives your child an opportunity to speak with and listen to God. Sometimes we pray together by speaking out loud or singing. Sometimes we pray silently in our hearts and minds, using our own words. Sometimes we pray without using words—either just listening silently to God or simply sharing our presence with God and reflecting upon God’s presence with us. In a world so filled with noise, your child may have little experience with silence. Talk with your child about the value of these prayer-filled moments and encourage her or him to explore times in her or his days when your child could be silent and be with God.

TO SUPPORT YOU

Suggested Bible Reading: Luke 1:26–38 and 46–50

Jesus’ birth is announced to Mary, who in a spirit of humility praises God for choosing her.

Suggested Children’s Resources (available at www.loyolapress.com)

- *Mary, Our Mother Plush Figure*
- *Mary, Mother of Jesus*
- *Hail Mary Accordion Book*

WHAT THE CHURCH SAYS ABOUT THIS TOPIC

Our Catholic faith teaches us that Mary was a virgin her entire life, both before and after the birth of Jesus. Virgins were often looked down on in the Jewish society at that time. The birth of the Savior to a virgin living in an obscure village was a powerful sign of God’s special love for the lowly people of the world.

It is important to understand that when Mary was asked to be the mother of the Savior, she was completely free to accept or reject the offer. Her response, “Let it be done to me,” was a great act of faith. Because she did not understand all of what was happening, she must have known that there would be difficulties ahead.

Because she replied yes to the angel’s announcement and agreed to become the mother of Jesus, the Church has declared Mary to be the Mother of God. Because she was the first to say yes to the Messiah, the Church has declared her to be both a saint and the Mother of the Church.

Mary is very special to Catholics. We feel close to her because of her role in salvation history and because of her closeness to Jesus. Catholics believe Mary loves and prays for us. We do not worship Mary; we venerate her because we know that she intercedes for us to God.

A PRAYER MOMENT WITH YOUR CHILD

Let’s ask Jesus to help us trust God as Mary did:

Jesus, there are many uncertain things about life.

Help me to trust God and say yes to God’s will, as Mary did.

Amen.

This material was excerpted from *52 Simple Ways to Talk with Your Kids about Faith* by Jim Campbell. Learn more about this book at www.loyolapress.com/campbell.