**GROWING TOGETHER:** FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Session 1 of 4

# Annunciation

### MEETING AIM

To tell the story of the angel Gabriel visiting Mary and Joseph to let them know that the Messiah would be born to Mary.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:18-21

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in-person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your particular situation.

God’s people have been waiting a long time for him to send the Messiah. More than 400 years previously, God had given lots of messages to his prophets pointing towards a special person who would come and make everything right between God and his people. However, for the last 400 years, God doesn’t seem to have been saying much on the subject and peace seems a long way off in the midst of Roman occupation.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

As you begin the session, invite the children to sit together in a circle and pass round a simple object. When a child has the object, they can share their response to the question. Sometimes it’s helpful to have a sand timer so that you have time for each person to share if they want to. If a child doesn’t want to say anything, they can just pass on the object. Ask the children to share about anyone they know who has had a baby.

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** pictures of famous people and their children

Before the session, find photos of celebrities and their children and print them out. Mix them up and stick them around your room. Challenge the group to guess which children belong to which celebrities. How did they make their decisions?

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** simple costumes and props

Say that God’s people had been waiting a long time for someone special to come and make everything right. A long time ago, God had made promises about this special person coming, but the people had been waiting for hundreds of years and no one had come. Then tell this story:

Today’s story is about a Jewish girl called Mary. *Dress someone up as Mary.* Mary was just an ordinary girl – we think she was still a teenager. One day Mary was just getting on with life when God’s chief messenger, the angel Gabriel, showed up to talk to her! *Say that we always make angels cute, with lots of sparkles, tinsel and fairy wings but actually, in the Bible, angels are powerful and scary! Choose a child to be the angel and challenge them to strike a powerful and imposing pose.*

We know angels are scary because every time they show up in a story, the first thing they say is: “Don’t be afraid!” Gabriel comes to visit Mary and the first thing he says to her isn’t: “Don’t be afraid!” but rather: “God thinks you are really great!” *Depending on the age and confidence of your actors, you can have them repeat the words of the conversation or not.*

Mary was super-confused and she wondered why the angel had come. Gabriel told her that she was going to have a special baby who would be king. His name would be Jesus. Mary was really confused now because she wasn’t even married yet, and in those days you didn’t have a baby before you were married or you would get in a lot of trouble. She told Gabriel that she didn’t think this could be right. But Gabriel told her it absolutely was right and that nothing is impossible with God. So Mary said: “OK, God is in charge and I’ll take part in this story and have the baby.”

Mary wasn’t married yet but she was engaged to a man called Joseph. Choose another volunteer.When Mary told Joseph she was going to have a baby, he was pretty confused too. He didn’t know what to think, so he decided to break off the engagement. He decided to do it quietly so Mary wouldn’t get into trouble. However, before it could do it, he had a crazy dream where an angel showed up and told him that Mary was going to have a very special baby who would save the world. Joseph said he would stay with Mary and be part of the story too.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

* How would you have felt if you were Mary?
* What questions would you have wanted to ask the angel?
* What would everyone else have thought about Mary’s story?
* How would you have felt if you were Joseph?
* What questions would you have wanted to ask if you were Joseph?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** ready-cut card people shapes (you can buy these from craft shops or online); collage materials; scissors; glue sticks

Give the children two person shapes each and encourage them to decorate one shape as Mary and one as the angel. Chat together about what both might look like and then let them loose on the collage materials! Continue your chat about the story and what God might be saying to them as you work.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** Mary and angel figures from ‘Creative time’

Ask the children to hold up their angel figure. Remind the children that the angel brought a special message to Mary, and good news of Jesus! Thank God for the special message of Jesus, and thank God what happened at Christmas.

Ask the children to hold up their Mary figure. Remind them that Mary was asked to be part of God’s plan, and she was brave and said yes! Ask them to think about saying yes to God. What might that look like for them? Thank God that he invites us to be part of his plan, and ask him to help us tell others about Jesus this Christmastime.

**JENNY CHEUNG**

is a mum, church planter and choir-nut! She pioneers The Voice Project Scotland – a missional expression inviting children and their families to find their voices and enter into community to sing.