

MAIN POINT:

Advent – Joy Let us not mistake happiness for joy. So many things in life bring us happiness, but joy comes from God. Joy is a gift to those who have faith in Jesus. It's tied to our relationship with God and is not temporary. God is the source of joy.

Mary is a wonderful example of someone who experienced this joy. When the angel revealed to Mary that God was at work, the Savior was coming, the salvation of the world was on the way, and SHE would be the mother of the promised Messiah – she responded in an amazing way. She said these powerful words, “I serve the Lord. May it happen to me just as you said it would” (Luke 1:38).

You see, even though Mary was probably wondering how on earth she would be the mother of the Savior of the world, her FOCUS was on God. She had CONFIDENCE in who God is, His promises and the Hope and Peace He said would come to the earth through the promised Messiah.

Mary said that she serves the Lord, which means, she is the Lord's Servant. These powerful words are a sign of humility. She was opening her hands and welcoming God to do His miraculous work in and through her. Because of that, she had a confident joy that could not be shaken.

FAMILY DISCUSSION:

1. **How would you explain what Joy is?** *(Listen and respond to answers. Reminder that joy is the powerful gladness that comes from Jesus.)*
2. **In today's story, we read the song of Mary. What part of Mary's story stands out most to you? Where do you see her joy?** *(Luke 1:26-55) (Listen and respond to answers.)*
3. **Why do you think Mary was able to respond with such faith, peace, and joy? How did Mary's firm identity as a child of God play into her response?** *(Mary had confidence in who God is, His promises, and the Hope and Peace He said would come to the earth through the promised Messiah. She was opening her hands and welcoming God to do His miraculous work in and through her. Because of that, she had a confidence that could not be shaken. She knew she could trust God through everything.)*
4. **Where have you been able to see joy in your own life?** *(Listen and respond to answers.)*
5. **What keeps you from experiencing the full joy God extends to you through Jesus?** *(Listen and respond to answers. Make sure each student is able to participate)*

FAMILY PRAYER:

Ask your child how you can pray for them.

- What is their biggest concern this week?
- Where do they see God working in their life?

Pray with and for your child.

- Pray that the God of hope will fill your family with joy and peace as you trust in Him, even on difficult days.
- Pray that your children will love and serve the Lord and receive His joy and peace throughout their lives.
- Pray this scripture over them: “Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord. Let us shout aloud to the Rock of our Salvation.” Psalm 95:1