

Mary:
God's Masterpiece

Grades 4-6
Catechist Lesson Eight

Catechist Notes



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Lesson Foundations

Mary: God's Masterpiece

Of all women in all of history, God chose Mary to be the mother of His Son! Because God so honored Mary, we too honor her. Mary was a part of creation, as we are, but without the stain of original sin. She was creation as it was meant to be; pure and totally dedicated to God. Mary's life can be seen as a work of art, and we are enriched and inspired as we contemplate the beauty of it. Above all, we are left with a sense of awe toward the Great Artist who could create such a masterpiece.

Mary's entire life prepared her for the moment of God's invitation to become the mother of the Messiah, and her fiat (her "yes" to God) was a gift to the whole world. (See John 3:16.) As we prepare to teach this month's lesson, we look to Mary, the Mother of God, to intercede for us and to teach us to be good models of love, service, and prayer.

"To become the mother of the Savior, Mary 'was enriched by God with gifts appropriate to such a role.'¹³² The angel Gabriel at the moment of the annunciation salutes her as 'full of grace.'"¹³³
Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 490

¹³² LG 56.
¹³³ LK 1:28.

FOCUS:

In this lesson, your students will learn how God prepared Mary for the birth of Jesus by keeping her free from all sin throughout her entire life! They will learn how Mary was willing to answer "yes" to God in all things, and how Jesus gave Mary to each of us to be our mother.

GOAL:

The goal of this lesson is to teach the children about obedience, purity, and holiness and responding to God's call in each of our lives as Mary did.

Prepare

Catechist's Prayer - *Jesus, You prepared Mary to be Your mother. You chose her from the beginning of time, and You made her a holy vessel to conceive and carry You in her womb. She taught You many things in Your life. In a similar way, I want to pass on the Faith to these young people. Help me to be a role model for them like Mary was to You. Teach me to be holy and pure. I place my class in Your hands and ask that You bless us all. I pray this in Your holy Name. Amen.*

Call all of your students to remind them of the classroom meeting date and to bring their Bible, *W.O.G. Log*, and a picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary if they have one.

Preparation - Read through your lesson carefully to become familiar with the lesson content. Cut apart the *Filled With Joy! Cones*. There are two per page.

Classroom preparation - Arrive 20-30 minutes early. Prepare your prayer center with a cloth in the color of the current liturgical season, candles, and a crucifix or picture of Jesus, along with any other items appropriate to this lesson and/or the current liturgical season. A picture of

Thank you for teaching this year!
We hope it has been a blessing for you
and that you will consider teaching again next year.
You may never know the difference you have made
in the lives of your students, but God does.
May He continue to bless you as you grow in
wisdom, knowledge, and love of His Son, Jesus!

MATERIALS NEEDED

PROVIDED

- ◆ supply box
- ◆ holy cards/other reward
- ◆ prayer center items
- ◆ *Liturgical Calendar*
- ◆ *Mary, Full of Grace* booklets
- ◆ *Filled With Joy! Cones*
- ◆ "Yes!" Tokens
- ◆ *Teach Us, Mother Mary* audio
- ◆ straws
- ◆ *Lesson Eight Review Cards*
- ◆ *Memory Verse*

FROM HOME

- ◆ classroom decorations
- ◆ additional prayer center items
- ◆ Bible
- ◆ magnifying glass
- ◆ for "Be a Clear Vessel Demonstration":
 - water
 - 2 clear containers (bowls or drinking glasses)
 - stones
- ◆ pictures of Mary
- ◆ electronic device for audio

Mary:

God's Masterpiece

Catechist Lesson Plan—Lesson 8, Cycle A/B
Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Grades

1 WELCOME

(10 MINUTES)

- ◆ Welcome students as they arrive.
- ◆ Give each a name tag.
- ◆ Listen to each student recite the memory assignment they were asked to memorize. Give those who know their memory assignment a holy card or other small reward.

2 PRAYER

(5 MINUTES)

Gather the students into a circle near your prayer center. Begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Dear Jesus, You made each one of us very special. You planned us! There is one person You especially planned: Your dear mother, Mary. You made her pure, holy, and obedient. Help us to know her better as our mother, too. Help us to be obedient like she was. Help us to listen carefully today as our class learns more about her. Pray together: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

3 ATTENDANCE

(5 MINUTES)

Take attendance once students have all arrived.

4 LITURGICAL CYCLE REVIEW

(5 MINUTES)

Show the students the current *Liturgical Calendar*. Locate where we are on the calendar.

- Q ♦ What is the current Church season?
- ♦ With what color will the church be decorated?
- ♦ What color will the priest be wearing?

Consider the upcoming season and point out any feast days or holy days of obligation.

5 LESSON

(40 MINUTES)

- Q “What are some of the special things mothers do for us?” “Who is your favorite woman (or lady)? Why?”

Show your pictures of Mary. Let the children share about the pictures of Mary they have at home or show those they brought to class.

Mary is a special mother. She is Jesus’ mother, and she is our mother too!



ADAM AND EVE AND ORIGINAL SIN

- ♦ Please refer to Genesis 3 and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) 396-412.
- ♦ Read Pages 1-2 of *Mary: Full of Grace*.

- Q What is original sin?

“The sin by which the first human beings disobeyed the commandment of God, choosing to follow their own will rather than God’s will.” CCC Glossary (See also CCC 396-397.)

- Q Who committed it?

Adam and Eve




- Q What are some ways we must suffer because of original sin?

“As a consequence they lost the grace of original holiness, and became subject to the law of death; sin became universally present in the world.” CCC Glossary (See also CCC 407.)

 What is the promise God gave to Adam and Eve?


In Genesis 3:15, God first announces the coming of a Messiah. (See CCC 410.)

 What are some ways we can form ourselves to be able to resist temptation and sin?


Develop holy habits, receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion frequently, ask others to pray for us, etc.

MARY IS BORN


Read Pages 3-4 of *Mary: Full of Grace*.

 What was special about the way God created Mary?

From the time Mary's life first started in her mother, God kept her free from original sin. (See CCC 491-493.)

 What does “immaculate” mean?

absolutely clean without any stain or spot

 Why did Jesus need this special kind of mother?

Because Jesus is God, He could never have any share in sin.

 What holy day of the Church celebrates the fact that Mary was sinless?

The feast of the Immaculate Conception, on December 8. (See CCC 2177.)

 What is a Holy Day of Obligation?

a day when we must attend Mass

NOTE: The Immaculate Conception is often confused with the conception of Jesus. Make it clear that this feast is the celebration of the conception of Mary—the very moment Mary's life began in her mother's womb.

- ◆ Each year the Immaculate Conception is celebrated on December 8.
- ◆ Mary's birthday is celebrated nine months later on September 8.

The Immaculate Conception is a Holy Day of Obligation, when we must all go to Mass to praise God for the special gifts He gave to His mother Mary. This is a day when we can ask our holy mother, Mary, to pray for us and to guide us as we try to live our lives as pure and holy children of God. We ask her to show us ways to make her Son, Jesus, happy. Mary will ask her Son to help us to be good children. (See CCC 490-493.)

MARY IS THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Read Pages 5-6 of *Mary: Full of Grace*.



What is a dogma?

a truth of the Faith, revealed by God, for all Catholics to believe (See CCC 88-90.)



Why is Mary a good model for us as we try to be more holy?

She never sinned and was completely obedient to God all of her life. (See CCC 967.) She always said “yes” to God’s will, and that is the example we should always follow.

Show your magnifying glass to the students.

Explain that a magnifying glass makes us see things more clearly. The objects are bigger, and we can see more detail. That is how it is with Mary. When she says that her soul magnifies the Lord, it means that Mary helps us to see the details in Jesus. She helps us to love Him more, to know Him better, to serve Him more perfectly, and to pray more joyfully. (See CCC 2682.)



How can we be joyful like Mary, even when we are not comfortable, or do not get the things we want?

NOTE: An apparition is “an appearance to people on earth of a heavenly being—Christ, Mary, an angel, or a saint.” CCC Glossary All apparitions are considered by the Church to be private revelation, and as Catholics, we are not obligated to believe in them. The Church examines reported apparitions closely and has approved some of them (such as Fatima, Lourdes, La Salette, Rue du Bac, etc.). Others have been rejected as not worthy of belief. Approval means that the message is in keeping with Church teaching, and there is good evidence that a holy force was at work. Again, devotion to any apparition is not an element of doctrine.

MARY STILL HELPS US TODAY

Read Pages 7-11 of *Mary: Full of Grace*.



Why does Mary sometimes appear to people today?

Jesus sends her to remind us to pray more, to trust God more completely, and to live holier lives.



Do people wear Miraculous Medals as a kind of good luck charm?

NO! It is not just wearing the medal that makes good things happen. Like any sacramental (e.g., holy water, rosaries, incense, crucifixes, etc.), a Miraculous Medal has a character of holiness that can readily be seen in the spiritual realm. Sacramentals make us ready to receive the graces that are present in the sacraments and in prayer, and we can absorb the full graces offered if our soul is prepared to receive them. Wearing the Miraculous Medal reminds wearers to ask Mary's intercession and to look to her as a spiritual mother. It serves as a constant reminder to live a life of prayer and holiness, and is a reminder of the need for the frequent reception of the sacrament of Reconciliation.



How does Mary help us to obtain the graces we need from her Son to become more pleasing to God?

Mary always shows us the way to her Son, Jesus. (See CCC 2674.) *"Because she gives us Jesus, her son, Mary is Mother of God and our mother; we can entrust all our cares and petitions to her: she prays for us as she prayed for herself: 'Let it be to me according to your word.' By entrusting ourselves to her prayer, we abandon ourselves to the will of God together with her: 'Thy will be done.'"* CCC 2677

MARY — MOTHER OF THE CHURCH

Just as God prepared Mary in a special way for the birth of Jesus, He was now preparing her in another special way at the death of Jesus. While Jesus was dying, He gave each of us to Mary as her sons and daughters. He also gave Mary to each of us as our spiritual mother. Because Jesus loved us enough to share His mother with us, we call Mary the "Mother of the Church." (See CCC 963.)



Mary is in heaven with Jesus now. We can always turn to Mary with our problems and needs because she wants to bring us closer to Jesus for His glory. (See CCC 2677.) She will ask Jesus to help us. (See CCC 969.)



The Apostle John took Mary into his care, and she became his mother. How can you treat Mary like she is your mother?

by loving her, asking for her help, obeying her as she leads you to Jesus



STRAW DEMONSTRATION

Give a straw to each student.

- ◆ Look at this straw. It is hollow on the inside and air can move through it easily. Demonstrate by blowing in the straw and having the students do the same. When we are open to God, His life can flow through us freely.
- ◆ When we put a kink in the straw, air is not able to pass through it. Bend the straw and blow in it again. Have your students do the same. In a similar way, when we sin, we block God's life flowing through us.

Let us keep our "pipes" clean and clear so all of God's graces can get through to us.



What are some ways we can get out "pipe" kinks?

receive the sacrament of Reconciliation, pray daily, read Scripture, etc.



What are some ways we can keep our "pipes" clean?

follow the Commandments, listen to and obey our parents, pray, etc.

Mary is a clean vessel or "pipe" of God because she never let sin get between her and God.



"BE A CLEAR VESSEL" DEMONSTRATION

Materials Needed:

- two vessels (clear containers such as glass drinking glasses)
 - some stones (to represent sin—You could write specific sins on the stones.)
 - water (to represent grace)
- ◆ Tell the students that a vessel is a container that holds things.
 - ◆ Put stones into one of the vessels.
 - ◆ Explain that the water represents God's grace, and pour water into both vessels.
 - ◆ First talk about the vessel with stones in it. Explain that each stone represents sin. This vessel can not contain as much of God's grace because of the sin that takes up the space.
 - ◆ Next, turn your attention to the second vessel. See how the clean vessel is able to be filled with grace? Nothing is getting in the way of it being filled with as much water (grace) as possible. This reminds us of the Hail Mary when we say: "Hail Mary, full of grace."
 - ◆ Mary's heart was full of love because there was no sin in her life.

Catholic tradition teaches that the Virgin Mary is the channel (or Mediatrix) of graces. She is the mother of Jesus, and without Jesus we would have no grace. Since Jesus has come to us by being conceived and born of Mary, we can say that all grace now comes through her.

One way of picturing this teaching comes from Saint Bernardine of Siena who said “Every grace granted to man has three degrees in order;

1. for by being God it is possessed by Christ,
2. from Christ it passes to the Virgin, and
3. from the Virgin it descends to us.”



SAY “YES” TO GOD

God wants each of us to say “YES” to Him. He wants us to obey Him and to be pure and holy. The Blessed Virgin Mary was like that. Would you like to say “YES” to God too? We can ask Mary to help us to be holy too. We are going to do this now. Tell the children that you are going to lead them in a prayer about giving their “YES” to Jesus.

Dear Jesus, You have a beautiful mother. Thank You for giving her to us as our mother too. Mary said “YES” to God in many ways. Because she said “YES,” You were born! I want to say “YES” to You, too.

NOTE: Students should respond with “YES!” after each declaration.

I will obey my parents “YES!”

I will obey the Church “YES!”

I will stay pure “YES!”

I will be kind “YES!”

I will pray every day “YES!”

I will learn more about You “YES!”

I will attend Mass every Sunday “YES!”

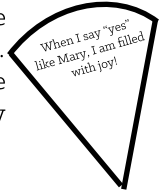
I want Your mother to be my mother too “YES!”

Add more of your own.



FILLED WITH JOY! CONES

Have each student color and cut out a *Filled With Joy! Cone*. Then curl each into a cone shape and tape or glue the side to secure the shape. Give each student a half sheet of “Yes!” Tokens. Instruct students to cut the “Yes!” Tokens apart at home, and whenever they say “Yes!” like Mary did, or tell others about Mary’s yes to God, they can add a token to their cone. Soon they will see how their own commitment to serve God will fill them with JOY!



6 CLOSING PRAYER

(5 MINUTES)

Use the audio, *Teach Us, Mother Mary*, as a meditation for your closing prayer. The words are included here for your reference.

Oh, Mary, Mother Mary, teach us all obedience.

Oh, Mary, Mother Mary, teach us all obedience.

You were chosen among women.

How, oh how did you answer yes?

Blest are you in your love for Him!

Teach us now as we pray.

Oh, Mary, Mother Mary, teach us all obedience.

Oh, Mary, Mother Mary, teach us all obedience.

We look to you for good counsel.

Help us to know when He calls to us.

We bow before your Son, our Lord.

Hear us now as we pray.

Oh, Mary, Mother Mary, teach us all obedience.

Oh, Mary, Mother Mary, teach us all obedience.

7 INSTRUCTIONS and CLEAN-UP

(10 MINUTES)

Remind your students to work on their memory assignment. Tell them they will receive a small reward when they memorize and recite it correctly during the next class time. Encourage them to read God's Word each day. Remind them to keep track on their *W.O.G. Logs* (if that is a part of your parish program).

Please clean up your classroom space. Put your supplies away, and leave your classroom neat and clean. Wait for parents to come to your classroom to pick up their students. No one is to be dismissed until his or her parent arrives.

MATERIALS TO SEND HOME

- ◆ straw
- ◆ *Mary, Full of Grace* Booklet
- ◆ *Filled With Joy!* Cone and "Yes!" Tokens