



Mary:
God's Masterpiece

Grades K-3
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.

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 Mary would be a great addition for this lesson. Be ready to greet the students who arrive early.

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*
- ◆ *Priest Paper Doll* (See "Liturgical Cycle Review.")
- ◆ *Pictures of Mary*
- ◆ *My Coloring Book About Mary*
- ◆ *Teach Us, Mother Mary* audio
- ◆ *Yes! Magnifier*
- ◆ jumbo craft sticks (See "Say 'Yes' to God.")
- ◆ straws (See "Straw Demonstration.")
- ◆ *Lesson Eight Review Cards*
- ◆ *Memory Verse*

FROM HOME

- ◆ classroom decorations
- ◆ Bible
- ◆ additional prayer center items
- ◆ magnifying glass
- ◆ pictures of Mary
- ◆ props for "Act It Out!" (optional)
- ◆ electronic device for audio

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Catechist Lesson Plan—Lesson 8, Cycle A/B
Kindergarten, First, and Third 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.

- ◆ 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.

Dress your *Priest Paper Doll* for the season, and encourage the students to dress their paper doll at home before they go to Sunday Mass each week.

5 LESSON

(40 MINUTES)



“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 students 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!



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. When we sin, we block God’s life flowing through us.
- ◆ Mary is a clean vessel or “pipe” of God because she never let sin get between her and God.



Do you remember what happened in the story of Adam and Eve? Adam and Eve disobeyed God and brought sin into the world. (See CCC 396-397.) This is called ORIGINAL SIN. (See CCC 407.) Because of this sin, our



world needed a savior. A savior is someone who rescues us. Do you know who the Savior of the world is? JESUS! (See CCC 430-31.)

Every person ever created, except Mary and Jesus, has been born with the effects of original sin on his or her soul. Original sin makes us all weaker spiritually and physically. (See CCC 418.) God prepared Mary for the birth of Jesus in a special way. When Mary's life first started in the womb of her mother, Saint Anne, God kept her free from original sin. Even after Mary was born, she never committed any sins because she always said YES to God and did what He asked of her. We know this to be true because when the angel announced to Mary that she would be the mother of Jesus, he addressed her, "*Hail, full of grace.*" *Luke 1:28b (Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition)* If she had sin in her soul, she couldn't be full of grace! He also said, "*Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.*" *Luke 1:30b* The dictionary states that favor means a person is granted special privileges. Mary was favored by God by being saved from original sin, as well as by being chosen to be the mother of His Son, Jesus. (See CCC 490-91.) We call Mary "immaculate" because she was conceived without original sin. (See CCC 411.)

MARY LOVES GOD VERY MUCH!

NOTE: We don't know a lot about Mary's life as a child, but we do know something about the history of the times in which she lived. The following is a story about what it *might* have been like for Mary as she was growing up and God was preparing her to do His will.

Give each of your students *My Coloring Book About Mary*. Have them color Page 1, "Mary Loves God Very Much," as you read or tell them about Mary as a child.

ACT IT OUT!

You could have some of your students act out this story. You will need simple props (e.g., blue cloth to drape over Mary, brown cloth for Joachim, another color for Anne, and a white cloth or sparkly halo for the angel).

Now, let us look at the life of Mary. Mary is a person who loved God very much and was chosen by God to be the mother of His Son.



Who is God's Son? Jesus

A long time ago a very holy man and woman, named Joachim (yoh-A-kheem) and Anne, lived in Jerusalem where many of their friends and relatives also lived. They were good people who loved each other very much. They were very happy together, but they longed for a child. They often prayed that God would

bleed them with a baby. One day God did bless them with a daughter, whom they named Mary. Anne and Joachim presented their baby to God at the temple in Jerusalem where royal incense was used in worship. Mary was very dear and very special to God, because He had planned that she would some day be the mother of Jesus. He made her perfect in every way. She had no original sin. **This is called the Immaculate Conception.** Now Joachim and Anne were happy, and they praised and thanked God for this wonderful gift.

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. (See CCC 2177.) This is a day when we 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 can 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.)



Joachim and Anne raised Mary to be holy. They took good care of her and taught her many things. She obeyed her parents all the time—even in the smallest ways. She was helpful at home and kind to her friends. She liked to play and take care of the animals. She had to do her chores and learn her school lessons. Mary also learned other things that would help her when she was older. She learned to weave cloth, to cook, and to sew. She learned how to get along with others and to respect those who were her teachers. She learned obedience and patience.

Most of all, Mary loved to learn about God. Anne and Joachim saw to it that Mary learned the Scriptures and prayers. She loved God so much that she decided to spend the rest of her life serving Him.



What are some ways you can be like the child Mary?

When Mary was about 14 years old, she returned to Nazareth where her parents hoped to find a husband for her. Mary was ready to stay single (not married), but God had other plans for her. Before long, she was betrothed to Joseph, the carpenter. The wedding day for Mary and Joseph was planned for the following year.

AN ANGEL HAD A MESSAGE FOR MARY

- ◆ Show the picture of the Annunciation.
- ◆ Refer to Page 2 in the coloring book.

Soon after the announcement of the betrothal, an amazing thing happened to Mary! An angel appeared to her and said: "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." *Luke 1:28* Mary was astonished that an angel would appear to her.



What would you say if an angel came and called you a favored son or daughter? What do you think it meant? What did the angel mean when he said "The Lord is with you"?

Mary didn't know what all of this meant, and she was scared. The angel told her to not be frightened, for God had decided to wonderfully bless her! Very soon, she would become pregnant and have a baby boy, who she was to name 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." *Luke 1:32-33*

Mary asked the angel, "But how can I have a baby? I am not married!" The angel replied, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you", *Luke 1:35b* so the baby born to you will "be called holy, the Son of God." *Luke 1:35c*



She thought about what the angel said and wondered why God would choose her to be the mother of His Son, but Mary was in the habit of listening to God and trusting Him so she replied, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." *Luke 1:38a* Then the angel left her. (See CCC 494.)

Mary told Joseph about the angel and the message. Joseph was troubled because he knew he was not the father of this baby. He did not know what to do. He loved Mary, and he wanted what was best for her. That night, in a dream, an angel appeared and told him to marry Mary, because the baby was truly God's child, and Joseph was to be the stepfather. The baby Jesus would be the Savior of the world. (See Matthew 1:18-21.)

MARY LOVES THE HOLY SPIRIT

- ◆ Refer to Page 3 in the coloring book.

Mary has a special friendship with the Holy Spirit. During her whole life, she was prepared by the Holy Spirit to be a perfect mother for God's Son. The Spirit poured graces down on this most humble servant, so when the angel first spoke to her, it was with the words, "*Hail, full of grace.*" *Luke 1:28b (Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition)* (See CCC 721–722.) Mary became the mother of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit, and we remember this at every Mass when we say in the Nicene Creed: "*For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.*" (See CCC 456.) Mary was the first to know Jesus was the Messiah, but she didn't just figure it out on her own. The Holy Spirit was always there to teach and guide her. There were many things Mary did not understand, but she always had the gift of great faith.

- ◆ Show the picture of the Visitation.

The angel who appeared to Mary told her another secret. The messenger told her that her cousin, Elizabeth, who was too old to have a baby, was pregnant too. Mary decided to go to the hill country to visit Elizabeth. When she got there, Elizabeth knew that Mary was pregnant with the Savior of the world. As soon as she heard Mary's voice, the baby in Elizabeth's womb (John the Baptist) leapt for joy!

In Luke 1:41-45, we read that Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, greeted Mary by saying, "*Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.*"

Older students should be able to look this up in their Bibles. Have them continue to read through Mary's Canticle: Luke 1:46-55.



How can we bring Jesus to others when we visit them?

- ◆ 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.

JESUS IS BORN

- ◆ Show the picture of the Nativity—the Birth of Jesus.
- ◆ Refer to Page 4 in the coloring book.

Caesar Augustus wanted to know how many people there were in the Roman Empire, so he required everyone to return to the town where they were born to register. Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem to be counted and to pay his taxes. Mary wanted to go with Joseph, even though she was going to have the baby soon. She packed some baby clothes and blankets and put them on the donkey. Joseph helped her climb up on the donkey, and then they started out on their journey. When Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem, Mary knew it was time for the baby to come. Joseph tried to find a place for them to rest, but so many people were in town that there was no room in the inns. The only place to find shelter was in a stable where the animals lived. Mary did not mind. She was happy because Jesus was born that night.



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

MARY LOVES TO SERVE

- ◆ Refer to Page 5 in the coloring book.



Mary is always looking for ways to serve. When she was a little girl, she loved to help, and she always obeyed her parents. Serving in little ways every day helped Mary to develop virtues. These holy habits helped her get ready to say “yes” when God asked her to do something really big! (like being the mother of Jesus)

Q How can obeying our parents make us holier?
How do you help others?

MARY HELPS ALL PEOPLE

◆ Refer to Page 6 in the coloring book.



Mary always helps us be closer to her Son, Jesus. One day, she was at a wedding. The bride and groom were very worried because they had run out of wine. Mary wanted to help them, so she asked Jesus to do something about it. She instructed the servants, “*Do whatever he tells you.*” *John 3:5b* The servants obeyed when Jesus told them to fill the six large jugs with water. Jesus performed His first miracle ever when He turned this plain water into the best wine! In everything she does, Mary always reminds us to say “yes” to Jesus. She is always saying, “Do whatever He tells you.”

MARY AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

◆ Refer to Page 7 in the coloring book.

God prepared Mary in a special way for the birth of Jesus, and He also prepared her for the death of Jesus. She often did not understand God’s plan, but she ALWAYS knew she could trust God to do the best thing. When Jesus was suffering and dying, Mary was very, very sad, but even at this terrible time, she knew she could trust in God.

Before He died, Jesus gave each of us to Mary as her sons and daughters. He also gave Mary to each of us as our spiritual mother. (See John 19:26-27.) Because Jesus loves us enough to share His beloved mother with us, we call Mary the “Mother of the Church.” (See CCC 963.)



Mary is not only the mother of Jesus, but she is our mother too! (See CCC 501.)



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.

MARY IS QUEEN OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

◆ Refer to Page 8 in the coloring book.

When the time was right, Mary was assumed into heaven. This means that at the instant her time on earth was ended, Jesus carried his beloved mother, body and soul, to heaven to be with Him forever. Jesus put her on a throne right next to His own, and declared her to be queen of the saints, queen of the angels, queen of heaven, and queen of earth. During her whole life she said “yes” to

God, and she had a part in Jesus' work. She still works to save souls today by asking her Son for the graces we need to be holier.



Stay close to Mary so she can lead you to Jesus. Ask Mother Mary to help you to be good, so that God's graces can flow through you.

WE CAN ASK MARY TO HELP US

- ◆ Refer to Page 9 in the coloring book.

Mary is in heaven with Jesus now, but she is still hard at work. She is always praying for us and asking Jesus to help us.



What qualities do you think a good mother has? loves us, good listener, gives good advice, takes care of us, helps us, etc.

Mary has all these qualities and many, many more. We can always turn to Mary with our problems and needs, and we can trust her to ask Jesus to help us in the best way. (See CCC 2677.)



SAY "YES" TO GOD

In Luke 1:46, Mary says "*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord!*" and in some translations, this reads "*My soul magnifies the Lord!*"



Remember what a magnifying glass does? It makes something look larger and easier to see. So when Mary says that her soul magnifies God, we can understand that everything she does, all her "yesses" to whatever God asked of her, are ways that she helps us to see and understand Him just a little better.

- ◆ She said "yes" to her parents.
- ◆ She said "yes" to the angel.
- ◆ She said "yes" to whatever Jesus asked of her.
- ◆ She still says "yes" whenever we ask for her help today.

God wants each of us to say "YES" to Him. He wants us to obey Him and to be pure and holy.

Have the students color the "Yes" on their *Yes! Magnifier* and glue it to the craft stick. Have them take it home to show their parents and put it someplace as a reminder that Mary is always glad to bring their prayers to her Son, and that their "Yes" to Jesus will help others to see Him better as well!

You have learned all about Mary and her “yes” to Jesus today. We can ask Mary to help us to be holy too. We are going to do this now. Tell the students 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.



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
- ◆ *My Coloring Book About Mary*
- ◆ *Yes! Magnifier*