

Lesson 4**Parent, Prophet, Paragon: Mary****REFLECTION GUIDE****Welcome**

As you watch the lesson, take notes on key themes, ideas, and questions that stand out to you. Pause the video when needed to reflect, jot down insights, or revisit an important section. Stay attentive to how the content connects with both your personal faith journey and issues that matter to your community.

Questions

- We discussed Mary as stepping into a prophetic role. Read her conversation with Gabriel in Luke 1:26-38. Compare it to the following texts. What are the similarities and differences between Mary's story and the other stories? What do these similarities and differences tell us about Mary?
 - Gabriel's conversation with Zechariah (Luke 1:11-20)
 - Moses's prophetic call story (Exodus 3)
 - Isaiah's prophetic call story (Isaiah 6)
- Luke's birth narrative tells us that Mary (and Joseph, of course) were poor. Unlike Matthew's birth story, no foreign dignitaries come bringing gold in Luke's gospel. Not only was room not made for them to have the baby indoors (look up Luke 14:7-9 for an explanation), but Mary had to offer the "poverty sacrifice" when Jesus was presented in the temple (see Leviticus 12:8).
 - What difference does it make that Mary's divine preparation for Jesus's birth had no material provisions?
 - What difference does it make that Jesus was born into and remained in poverty his entire life?
- Elizabeth exclaims to Mary: "Blessed is she who believed that what the LORD said to her would be fulfilled!" (Luke 1:45) Many New Testament scholars think that the word translated "believe" (pisteuo in Greek) is better rendered "trusted."
 - What is the difference between believing and trusting?
 - How might using "trust" help us better understand Mary's faith?
- The candle of joy is a difficult candle for many people to light, particularly around the holidays. When do you find joy difficult to find or cultivate? Notice that Mary does not sing her song of joy and celebration until she goes to see Elizabeth. Who might be someone or what might be a community that helps you cultivate joy?