



# Nothing Is Impossible

**Goal:** To rejoice that nothing is impossible with God.

## RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

### . . . In Luke 1:37, 39-40, 46-55

Mary hears the most incredible news of her life. She is going to have a baby; but not only that, it is God's Son. "How can that be?" she questions the angel messenger. "Nothing is impossible with God," the angel replies. Truer words could not be spoken. Nothing is impossible with God. Mary quickly goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth, whom Mary hears is also expecting a baby in her old age. Nothing is impossible. Mary sings. She is exuberant in her praise. Her first words, at least as they have been translated into and from Latin, are "my soul magnifies the Lord!" Other translations have said "glorifies" or "praises," but Mary's heart, soul, and song burst, enlarge, and increase with praise to God. She acknowledges what a blessing it is to be chosen, to be set apart for such a special purpose. Then the song changes. It's no longer about Mary and her blessing, but she becomes prophetic as she sees that nothing is impossible for God, not even turning the world upside down.

### . . . In Your Children's Experiences

Mary's song may not be familiar to many children, but it has so much children can relate to. First there is the great and enthusiastic feeling of joy, unadulterated happiness. Children aren't so good at hiding their feelings yet. They feel big feels—joy and sorrow. Good news is felt in their bodies and voices, much like Mary.

Children, unfortunately, also understand disparity, although they don't yet identify it quite as such. They see that some have while others have not. In some ways, they experience dominance and power merely by the fact that they are children. However, they know what bullying is, when some exert power over others. When Mary sings about God bringing the mighty down and lifting up the oppressed, poor, and hungry, that probably feels right to a child.

### . . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Experience joy with the children. Delight in the season. Talk about those things that make the children wiggle with happiness. Wonder together how God acts in their lives in ways that would make their hearts sing and praise God!

During this Advent season, help the children recognize what is topsy-turvy in our world and how it might be as Mary describes. Wonder together if there are ways we can be God's agents of change to lift up the lowly, embrace the needy, and fill the hungry with good things.

*God of the impossible, thank you for all the things you  
make possible that we think are impossible. Amen.*

## Supplies

**Music & Melodies**  
(MM) 2023–2024

**Stories, Colors & More**  
(SCM) i–iv, 3, 15

basic supplies  
(see p. vii)

blanket or mats

Advent wreath, four  
battery-operated  
candles

snack

## Guided Play

choice 1: copies of **Grace**  
**Notes (GN) 1**

choice 3: rhythm  
instruments; ribbons,  
scarves, and/or  
streamers

## Exploring

choice 1: copies of **GN 2**

choice 2: copies of **GN 3**

choice 4: copies of **GN 4**

## GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

### Before the Children Arrive

Designate a story corner and lay out a blanket or individual mats for the children so their backs will be to the door.

Post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule.” Cut out and glue the arrow marker onto a clothespin. Use the schedule to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

Select the activities that will work best for you and for your children. You do not need to do everything suggested!

For option 2 in “Welcoming and Guided Play,” cut several paper plates and coffee filters in half. Make an example angel for children to see while you are assisting others.

Provide an Advent wreath and four candles to use in “Loving and Serving God” for this and the next session.

### Welcoming and Guided Play

**B** **FM** **MS** **D** **T**

Greet the children by name and with the words “Grace and joy to you.” Prompt the children to respond with the same words.

Introduce yourself to parents/caregivers whom you do not know. Be sure they know who will be caring for their children. Explain to the parents/caregivers that their children will hear a story about Mary’s visit with Elizabeth and the song that Mary sang.

Introduce children to your helper or helpers. Invite them to look at the guided-play activities and encourage them to participate:

- 1. Joy!**—Provide copies of **GN 1** and crayons. Tell the children that the word is “Joy!” Invite them to trace the word on the page and then draw pictures or add colors that make them feel joyful.
- 2. Upside Down**—Invite children to look at things differently by seeing them in a topsy-turvy way, or upside down. Have them place a couple chairs together and lay on them, looking at the room upside down. Ask them what they notice. Tell them that before Jesus was born, his mother, Mary, sang a song about God turning things upside down.
- 3. Playing Music**—Provide rhythm instruments; ribbons, scarves, and/or streamers. Invite children to experiment accompanying the songs “Mary’s Song”—**MM 8**—and “Mary Had a Baby”—**MM 9**. Encourage the children to move to the music and play along with it. Children can wave ribbons, scarves, or streamers.



- T** *Transitions can be difficult for children. Do not force reluctant children to join a group activity. Instead, allow them to observe quietly from their own play area or to listen to a story read to them by an adult helper until they are ready to join the group.*

## Transitioning to Story Time

When you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, singing the refrain of “Mary’s Song”—**MM 8; SCM 15**. Encourage the children to sing along, repeating words and phrases as seems appropriate.

### Come to Story Time



Invite the children to repeat your words and follow your actions.

Come as Mary, riding a donkey. (*pretend to ride a donkey*)  
Come as Mary to story time.

Come as Joseph, walking beside her. (*walk in place*)  
Come as Joseph to story time.

Come as shepherds, herding your sheep. (*use arms to gather sheep*)  
Come as shepherds to story time.

Come as angels, wings all fluttering. (*flutter arms like wings*)  
Come as angels to story time.

### God’s Family



Invite the children to follow the motions as you sing to the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.”

God has a family (*move arms in a wide circle*)  
from Abraham to you and me. (*point out, then at self*)  
All belong to God above. (*point up*)  
All are joined by gracious love. (*hug self*)  
Just like you and just like me, (*point out, then at self*)  
God has a family. (*move arms in a wide circle*)



Today's story can be found in *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), [www.pcusastore.com](http://www.pcusastore.com).

## Hearing the Story

L D M

Open the Bible to Luke 1 so the children know the story comes from the Bible. Tell the children that they are going to hear a story about Mary's visit with Elizabeth and the song that Mary sang.

Read **SCM 3**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, "Amen."

Tell the children that they can help you tell this story again. Suggest that when you say "Mary," they can hold their arms out wide, when you say "baby," they can pretend to rock a baby in their arms, and when you say "Nothing is impossible with God!" they can repeat the phrase while waving their hands in the air. Practice once before you tell the story.

- ▼ Mary—hold arms out wide
- ▼ Baby—pretend to rock a baby
- ▼ Nothing is impossible with God!—repeat and wave hands in the air

Read **SCM 3** again, prompting and pausing for the children to do the motions.

Explain that Mary finishes her song by singing about God. She remembers that, long ago, God kept promises. That's one reason she knows that God's promise that Jesus will be born will come true. Wonder together what you would say to God if you were happy about something.

**C** *For some children, listening and speaking may take longer. Allow time for these children to feel truly a part of the session. Be patient and encourage children to do the same.*

## EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE

### 1. Turn That Frown Upside Down

FM C L

Remind the children that Mary sang about God turning people's sadness into joy, like filling the hungry with good things. Hand out copies of **GN 2** and invite the children to color the picture. Show them that when they hold the picture one way, it shows a sad face, and when they turn it upside down, it shows a happy face. Using the picture, name things that make people feel sad and invite the children to name something that would help the person feel joyful. Have the children turn their pictures to reflect sadness and then joy. Some examples:

- ▼ Missing a birthday party
- ▼ Feeling sick



- ▼ Saying goodbye to a visitor you love
- ▼ Losing at a game
- ▼ When someone won't share
- ▼ Losing a toy you really like, and not being able to find it
- ▼ Hurting a friend's feelings
- ▼ Having to do chores you don't want to do

## 2. Nothing Is Impossible

C FM

When Mary sang her song of joy, she sang about God changing the world. With Jesus, God would make the world less like it had been and more like it should be: the hungry would be fed, those who felt unimportant would be lifted up. Hand out copies of **GN 3**. Help the children name the ways God wants the world to be as seen in the picture. As they name the ways, have the children color that part of the picture. Invite the children to imagine other ways God makes things possible.

## 3. Rejoicing Circle

C A B M MS

Gather the children in a circle. Remind the children how Mary was so joyful because nothing is impossible with God! Invite each child to show their joy with a movement or a word. Go around the circle so that each child can share.

For a challenge, have the children act out what makes them joyful and the group can try guessing what is being acted out.

## 4. Coloring Page

FM C L

Hand out copies of **GN 4**. Engage the children in conversation as they color, using the following wondering questions:

- ▼ I wonder, "What did Elizabeth think when Mary told her the news about having a baby?"
- ▼ I wonder, "What did Mary and Elizabeth talk about when they were together?"
- ▼ I wonder, "What did Elizabeth think about Mary's song?"

**T** *Don't ignore what happens in between activities. Abrupt changes can cause problems with some children. Give the time a focus by engaging the children in a simple activity, such as marching from one place to another, lining up by height, or clapping hands.*

Use "wonder" questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wondering questions help a child think aloud. Answers are neither right nor wrong. They help teach children to speak from their hearts.



## LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Encourage each child to put away one toy or object. Invite the children to sit around a table or on the floor.

Sing “Mary’s Song”—**MM 8; SCM 15**—while you serve the snack.

Wonder if the children remember what this time of the church year is called (*Advent*). Display the Advent wreath with four candles. Count the candles. Ask the children how many Sundays are in Advent (*four*). Turn on the first, second, and third candles. Remind the children that Advent is a time of preparing and waiting for the birthday of Jesus.

Say this litany and ask the children to respond with “Thank you, God”:

Thank you, God, for all the good things that you have given us.

**Thank you, God.**

Thank you, God, for Mary and her song of joy.

**Thank you, God.**

Thank you, God, for letting us be your helpers in this world, turning frowns upside down because nothing is impossible with you!

**Thank you, God.**

Amen.

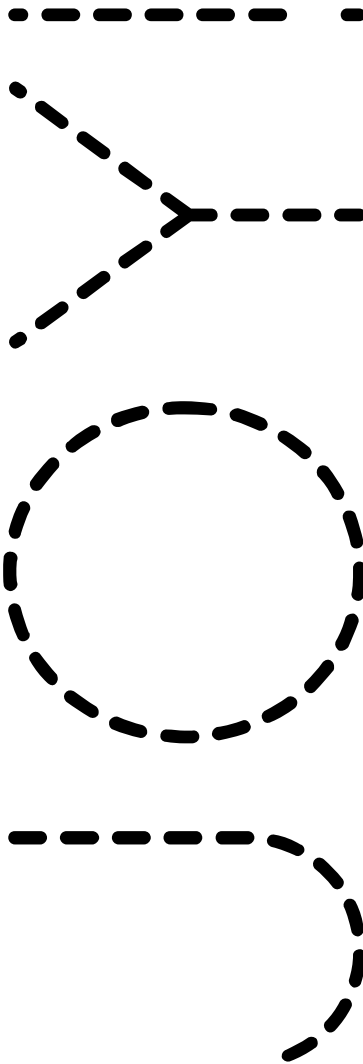
As the children leave, bless each one: “(Name), nothing is impossible with God. Rejoice and be glad.”

Turn off the candles and save the Advent wreath for the next two sessions.



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit [www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads](http://www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads).

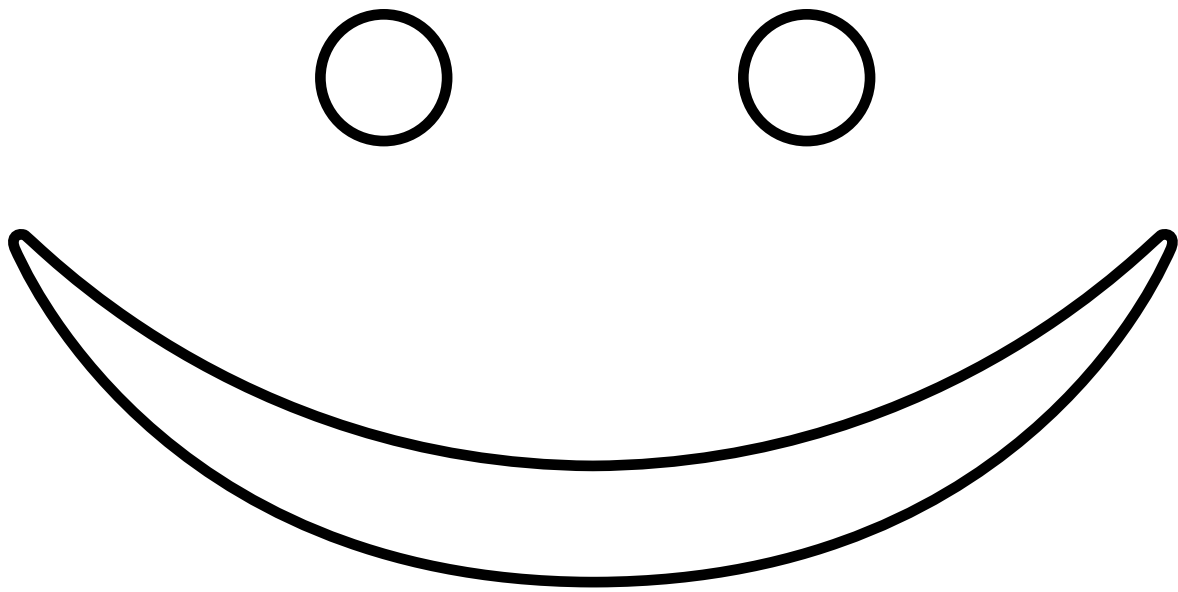
Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).







TURN THAT FROWN



UPSIDE DOWN







# Nothing Is Impossible



Mary sings with joy. Nothing is impossible with God!

