

Scene 2: Mary's kitchen

Bible

Luke 1:26–38 and Matthew 1:18-25

Aim

To help the children to understand that Jesus was a very special baby and that Mary was an ordinary girl who was obedient to God.

Setting the scene

Mary was a young girl who lived in Nazareth. She was engaged to Joseph, a carpenter, and presumably lived the life of an ordinary Jewish girl. Her life was turned upside down when she was visited by the angel Gabriel, who told her that she was going to be the mother of God's own Son. The Jewish people had been waiting a long time for God to send someone to rescue them—a special person who would come to restore God's kingdom on earth—and Mary would be aware of the Scriptures concerning this. She must have had a tremendous faith to be willing to take on a role that was going to cause embarrassment and shame to both her family and to Joseph. However, her belief in God was able to override her fears and she was prepared to trust him to look after her. Joseph was also visited by an angel and he too must have had great faith in order to accept Mary as his wife and Jesus as his child. Here we see a simple young girl accepting God's promises with obedience and joy against all the odds.

Characters

Mary

The angel Gabriel

Costume

Traditional eastern dress for Mary, white tunic-type garment for Gabriel over light trousers and a T-shirt.

Scenery

Not strictly necessary, but, if possible, the inside of a kitchen showing a painted stone wall with a shelf and dark cloths or screens to two sides of the gazebo.

Props

A small table, a tablecloth, an old-fashioned ceramic mixing bowl, some bread dough, a wooden platter, dome bread (cut into cubes), a bread making machine (hidden behind the scenes).

The children are led from the previous scene into the first gazebo. Behind the scenes, a bread making machine has been set up earlier to provide the smell of baking bread. The scenery is simple: a painted wall with shelf of the style of the times. A table holds a mixing bowl with dough for Mary to knead. There is a tablecloth on the table and a wooden platter containing the cubed bread. The leader encourages the group to sit on the floor and Mary greets them. She tells them she is making bread and explains that she is kneading the dough to make bread for her family. She asks the children if they know how bread is made and talks of the flour, yeast and water. She explains that she has to leave the dough in a warm place to rise before she can bake it in the oven. She

offers the children a taste of the prepared bread. Leaders help to pass the platter round.

NB: should be aware that some children may not want to taste the bread, or indeed some may be allergic to flour or yeast. Teachers who accompany the group should be warned beforehand, although often the children will know themselves what they are allowed to eat. You may find that white bread without 'bits' is often the most popular, even if not authentic!

When the bread is distributed, using a prearranged signal from a leader such as, 'Isn't this bread good?', Mary is then surprised by the entrance of the angel Gabriel. Using a simple script, she is told she is going to have a baby and that he will be God's Son. She responds to the angel with surprise and obedience. The angel leaves, followed shortly by Mary who tells the children she is going to tell her family and Joseph.

Leaders spend a little time exploring Mary's response to the angel (asking the children how they think she felt) and then explain to the children that they are moving forward some months and travelling to Bethlehem where the baby is to be born.

There is no script for the first part of the scene although one could be developed, such as the one below, if the actor playing Mary is not happy to ad lib. A simple impromptu script would include: a welcome to the children, Mary telling the children her name and a little about what she is doing (how the bread is made, why you need to knead dough and so on). All of these things could be written down, but spontaneity is important so that Mary is genuinely surprised by the entrance of the angel Gabriel. The leader and actor could use some pre-arranged words to show that Mary is ready to be disturbed once all the children have had a chance to taste the bread.

Script: Mary's kitchen

Mary is kneading dough. She welcomes the children into her kitchen and tells them what she is doing, helping to bake bread for her mother. She offers the children a piece of bread. The helpers pass the bread to the children and explain that, if they wish, they can take a piece to try it.

Once the children have tasted bread, the angel enters (on a given cue) unseen by Mary.

Angel: Mary, Mary

Mary: *(To the audience)* Someone's calling me. *(She turns)* Who are you? What do you want?

Angel: I am the angel Gabriel sent by God to give you a message.

Mary: What? For me? A message for me from God?

Angel: Yes, Mary. God is going to send his Son into the world, and he's chosen you to be the baby's mother.

Mary: But how is that going to happen? I'm not even married yet!

Angel: The Holy Spirit will come to you, and when the baby is born he will be called Jesus.

Mary: I can hardly believe this is happening to me! I'm so pleased God has chosen me!

Angel: Nothing is impossible with God!

Gabriel departs to the next scene where he waits behind a screen for his next entrance

Mary: I must go quickly and tell Joseph and my family. Goodbye everyone.

Mary exits in the same direction as Gabriel.