

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Readings & Background on the Gospel Reading

First Reading: *Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab*

The sign of God's salvation will be a woman clothed with the sun.

Responsorial Psalm: *Psalm 45:10-12, 16*

The queen takes her place next to God.

Second Reading *1 Corinthians 15:20-27*

Christ has redeemed Adam's sin.

Gospel Reading: *Luke 1:39-56*

Mary greets Elizabeth and sings God's praise.

Today's feast celebrates Mary's Assumption into heaven.

(South Africa) January 1 is the feast of Mary, the Mother of God, and December 8 is the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven has long been held as an important Catholic belief. The belief was not defined as dogma, however, until 1950 by Pope Pius XII.

The dogma teaches that Mary, who was without sin, was taken, body and soul, into the glory of heaven.



Jan Frans Beschey, *Assumption of the Virgin*, 1750-1767, oil on copper, Hermitage

The Gospel for this holy day recalls Mary's actions after the announcement of Jesus' birth by the Angel Gabriel.

Mary goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth who is also with child. Elizabeth greets Mary with full recognition of the roles they and their unborn children will play in God's plan for salvation. Mary responds to **Elizabeth's greeting with her song of praise, the Magnificat**. Both women recall and echo God's history of showing favor upon the people of Israel.

Mary's Magnificat, in particular, echoes the song of praise offered by Hannah, the mother of Samuel.

The Gospel for this day reminds us that Mary's Assumption into heaven is best understood with regard for the full spectrum of Catholic beliefs about the person of Christ and the person of Mary. **Only Mary, who was born without stain of original sin—the Immaculate Conception—could give birth to Christ, who is fully God and fully human.** This is called the Immaculate Conception. Because of Mary's role in God's plan of salvation, **she does not suffer from the effects of sin, which are death and decay.**

Mary is the first to receive the fullness of the redemption that her son has won for all of humanity. The Church, therefore, recognizes Mary as the sign of the salvation promised to all.

Today's **Gospel highlights Mary's faith**. Mary's faith enabled her to recognize the work of God in her people's history and in her own life. Her openness to God allowed God to work through her so that salvation might come to all. **Mary is a model and symbol of the Church.** May we be like Mary, open and cooperative in God's plan of salvation.

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Making the Connection (Grades 1, 2, and 3)

Gospel Reading Luke 1:39-56 Mary greets Elizabeth and sings God's praise.

Young children have a special gift for recognizing and celebrating the wonder of God. We can use Mary's example as we invite young people to pray in a spirit of praise and thanksgiving for all the good things that God is doing in the world today.

Materials Needed

- Drawing paper
- Crayons or markers

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. ***We are celebrating a very important holy day in the Church year, which recalls for us how much God loved Mary, the Mother of Jesus.***
Why do you think that Mary is so important to God and to the Church? (Mary was Jesus' mother; Mary cooperated in God's plan of salvation.)
2. ***Today we remember that Mary is in heaven with God. She was so special that God did not allow her body to be buried. He took her, body and soul, to heaven.***
This event is called the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
3. ***In today's Gospel we hear about Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth. Both Mary and Elizabeth are important people. Elizabeth was the mother of John the Baptist, the person who announced Jesus' coming. Mary was chosen by God to be Jesus' mother. Let's listen carefully to what these two women say to each other and what they say about God.***
4. Prayerfully read today's Gospel, Luke 1:39-56.
5. ***What does Elizabeth say when she sees Mary?*** (She says that Mary is blessed and that she is the mother of her Lord; she says that even her baby jumped for joy when Mary greeted her.)
How does Mary reply? (She sings a song of praise to God.)
6. ***One of the many reasons why Mary is so important to God is that she always recognized the ways in which God was working in her life. She saw the good things that God was doing and praised God for these things.***
What are some of the good things that God is doing for us today? (Accept all reasonable answers.)
7. Distribute the drawing paper and coloring materials. Invite each child to draw a picture of the good things that they see God doing in our world.
8. Invite each person to share their picture with the group as part of the closing prayer.

After each person talks about his or her picture, pray together Mary's words, "God has done great things for us."

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Making the Connection (Grades 4, 5, and 6)

Gospel Reading Luke 1:39-56 Mary greets Elizabeth and sings God's praise.

Mary's song of praise reminds us that God is always working for the salvation of the world. We foster a spirit of praise and thanksgiving when we invite young people to recognize that God is still working in their lives today.

Materials Needed

- Copies of Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) for each person in the group

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. **We are celebrating an important holy day in our Church year. On August 15 we celebrate the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On this day we remember that Mary was taken to heaven, body and soul. Our Gospel reading for today is taken from Luke's Gospel, and it tells us why Mary received such a special privilege from God. Let's listen carefully to this Gospel.**
2. Invite one or more volunteers to read aloud Luke 1:39-56.
3. ***Who are the two people spoken about in today's Gospel?*** (Elizabeth and Mary)

What is about to happen to each of them? (Both of them are expecting a baby.)

Remember that Elizabeth is the mother of John the Baptist. She was very old and had not yet had any children. But God chose her and Zechariah to be the parents of John the Baptist, who was to announce Jesus' coming.

How does Mary respond to Elizabeth's greeting? (She sings a song of praise to God.)

4. Distribute a copy of the Magnificat to each person. Ask them to read this prayer carefully.
5. ***What are some of the things for which Mary praises God?*** (Accept all reasonable answers.)
6. ***Mary's faith allowed her to recognize God's work in her life and in her people's history. She is a model for the Church because of her participation in God's plan of salvation.***
7. ***Using Mary's song of praise as a model, let's write a prayer of praise thanking God for the things that God is doing in our lives and in our world today. Work together as a group to prepare your song of praise.***
8. Conclude in prayer together, using the song of praise that your group has written.

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Making the Connection (Grades 7, 8, and 9)

Gospel Reading Luke 1:39-56 Mary greets Elizabeth and sings God's praise.

Making the Connection (Grades 7 and 8)

Young people at this age want to know specifics about what they are being asked to do and why they should do it. The story of Mary's calling to be the Mother of Jesus shows how faith calls us to place our trust in God even when we don't know all of the specifics.

Materials Needed None

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. Ask if any of the young people have seen the Mission Impossible movies (starring Tom Cruise). Explain that as the lead agent of the IMF (Impossible Mission Force), Tom Cruise's character, always received detailed instructions for what he was asked to do.
2. ***Even though his task seemed impossible, he was given a clear idea of what his mission was and how he should accomplish it. In the Gospel for the Feast of the Assumption, we learn that Mary has been given what might seem like an impossible mission. However, she was given very few details.***
3. Tell the young people that, when Mary was a young girl, about the age of 15, the angel Gabriel visited her. Say: Gabriel told Mary that she would give birth to the Son of God. Mary questioned how this could happen. But when Gabriel explained that the Holy Spirit would come upon her, Mary agreed to be Jesus' Mother.
4. ***After being asked to accept such a challenging mission, we might expect Mary to complain to others. Instead, we hear in the Gospel that she reacted quite differently.***
5. Have a volunteer read aloud the Gospel for the Feast of the Assumption, Luke 1:39-56.
6. ***How would you describe Mary's reaction to her mission?*** (great joy, acceptance, humility)
7. Have another volunteer reread Mary's response to Elizabeth, verses 46-55.
8. ***This passage has become one of our most beautiful prayers, the Magnificat.***
9. ***What does Mary tell us about how to live a faith-filled life?*** (Place our trust in God even if we are not sure of where he is leading us.)
10. Conclude by praying a Hail Mary, pointing out that some of the phrases of this prayer come from Elizabeth's greeting ("[B]lessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb.").

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Making the Connection Family Connection

Gospel Reading Luke 1:39-56 Mary greets Elizabeth and sings God's praise.

In today's Gospel, Elizabeth and Mary recognize the work that God is doing through them. With eyes of faith they see the power and salvation of God breaking through into their lives and into the world.

Gather as a family and talk about what you know about Mary and her being a model of faith.

Recall that we are celebrating a holy day, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On this day we remember that God took Mary to heaven, body and soul.

Read together today's Gospel, Luke 1:39-56.

In this reading we hear Mary's song of praise to God, the Magnificat.

Invite each person in the family to write or draw one or more ways in which they see God working in your family life and in our world today.

Use these prayers of thanksgiving to create your family's song of praise to God.

Conclude by praying together this song of praise.