

Unit 2 “God Is with Us” Lesson 8

Mary Visits Elizabeth

Objective: The students will be able to tell the story of Mary visiting her cousin Elizabeth and the story of Elizabeth’s son John.

For the Catechist

The story of Mary visiting Elizabeth is a story of proclaiming the Messiah. The baby in Elizabeth’s womb leapt at the sound of the voice of the Mother of God. John’s role as witness to Jesus as Messiah was thus begun early.

It is also a story of the joy of living according to God’s desires. Mary is still in awe of God’s acting in the world, and even more so when she learns of the story of Elizabeth’s pregnancy. For the young child, this story is one of the joy of spreading the good news of God acting in the world.

Saint John the Baptist. The icon of Saint John the Baptist and the story of his birth are included on the fourth page of this lesson (the Basic Activity). The children have already learned about Saint John as the baptizer of Jesus. His icon and the story of his birth give them a broader knowledge of this key figure in the story of Jesus. His importance is attested to in the fact that his icon appears on every icon screen. It is worth reading Matthew 11:1-19 to appreciate how Jesus viewed John.

Background Reading

(Direct quotations from the sources noted)

Special Veneration of John the Baptist

“*St. John the Baptist*, as the Forerunner of Christ and witness of faith before Herod, is especially venerated. His unique role in regard to Christ was noted in the Gospels. Even before birth, he leapt in the womb of his mother Elizabeth when she heard the voice of Mary, the Mother of God (Lk 1:41). Our Lord witnessed of him, ‘I solemnly assure you, history has not known a man born of woman greater than John the Baptizer’ (Mt 12:11), and he was only the forerunner of the Kingdom of God” (LLII 50).

Lesson Plan Overview

Opening: Sign of the Cross and Veneration of Icon **Need:** Icon of Annunciation

Introduction: Message Game to give details from story of Visitation

Read Text Aloud: Hold text up for students to see as you read each page aloud. After each page, use the questions in the shaded box at the bottom of that page to discuss the lesson with the students.

Activity Tracks:

Choose a basic, group, or craft activity to reinforce the lesson (detailed on the pages that follow).

- **Basic:** “His Name Is John”
- **Group:** “Mary’s Journey” Game
- **Craft:** “Mary Visited Elizabeth” Paste Craft

Closing: Prayer to a saint **Need:** Icon of John the Baptist or Saint Elizabeth

Come Bless the Lord Icon:

- Packet I: The Annunciation to the Mother of God and Saint John the Baptist
- Packet II:

The Icon of Saint John the Baptist

“St. John the Baptist is represented with two large wings because he is the messenger of the Messiah. It is about this man that Scripture says, ‘I send my messenger ahead of you to prepare the way before you’ (Mt. 11:10). In the icon, John makes the gesture of the preacher with his right hand and holds an open scroll in his left hand which proclaims the message of his preaching. ‘Reform your lives! The reign of God is at hand’ (Mt. 3:2). As a man of the desert he is clothed in a camel’s hair garment. The rocks behind the Forerunner represent the wilderness, and the strip of water below his feet represents the Jordan River. We also find some bushes and an axe ‘laid to the root of the tree’ (Mt. 3:10) alluding to the words of his preaching. In the lower left hand corner, a cup with the head of St. John recalls that he would end his life in martyrdom (Mt. 14:3-12). St. John the Baptist stands before us and calls us to repentance before the Lord” (CBL 51).



The Lesson Plan

Opening

Let's gather around the Annunciation icon. Mary said "Yes" to the Angel Gabriel. "Amen" is another way to say "Yes." Let's look at the Annunciation icon and put our hands in prayer position. Let us be very quiet as we look at the icon and think about how Mary said "Yes." Who remembers kissing an icon? [Allow responses.] Let's make the sign of the cross, bow, and kiss the Annunciation icon. Kissing the icon is our way of saying "Yes, Amen" to God. [Let each child make the sign of the cross and say, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," bow, and kiss the icon.]

Introduction

Last week we began a new group of lessons that will teach us about Jesus. Our first lesson was about an angel. Do you remember the name of the angel? (Gabriel) What did Gabriel tell Mary? (That she would be the mother of Jesus) From that day on, Mary was pregnant with Jesus. She wanted to share her good news. Today, our story is about how she shared the news with her cousin. We'll play a little game right now to introduce our lesson. [If you used the group activity last week, remind the students that you played the game at the end of the last lesson.] To review our lesson today, we'll play the message game. When Jesus lived, how did people learn of the news? Did they turn on the radio or TV? No. They would tell one another. Let's review what we learned today by playing the message game. [Arrange children so they can whisper messages one to another.] I'll quietly tell the message to the person next to me, and he (she) will quietly repeat it to the person next to him (her). The last person gets to say it aloud. Let's see if we can pass these messages. [Whisper the following lines, one at a time, to the first child who passes it on. The last child "announces" the message aloud. Say the following sentences one at a time in the game. When the last person says it aloud, repeat it correctly if necessary. Then, repeat all four sentences. The sentences are the following:] 1) Elizabeth is Mary's cousin. 2) Elizabeth is having a baby, too. 3) Mary went to visit her. 4) Elizabeth's baby is John.

Reading of Text

Hold text so that children can see the page as you read it to them. Read slowly and draw their attention to the illustrations. After reading each page, use the questions below (given also on the bottom of the student text) to review what you have read.

Page 1

- What did the Angel Gabriel tell Mary? (She would be the mother of Jesus.)
- What was the name of Mary's cousin? (Elizabeth)

Page 2

- *At the sound of Mary's voice, what did Elizabeth's baby do? (Leaped or jumped) That was a sign for Elizabeth that Mary's baby was very special.*
- *What are Mary and Elizabeth doing in the icon? (Hugging or embracing) Do you ever hug someone when you are happy? [Allow responses.]*

Page 3

- *What was the name of Elizabeth's baby? (John)*
- *When he grew up, what special thing did he do? (He baptized Jesus.)*
- *Look at the icon. John the Baptist lived in the desert. He ate only locusts and honey. He wore clothing from animal skins. All he cared about was talking to people about God. It is easy to recognize his icon because he is not dressed in the usual clothing, and his hair is not combed.*

Activity Tracks

Basic: "His Name Is John"

The basic activity is the fourth page of each student text. It is a dot-to-dot for the name of John, and the story of Zechariah and the naming of John. Read the title and start the story by saying *This story will tell us how John got that name. His father Zechariah named him, according to what the angel told him.* After the story ask the following:

- *What was the name of John's father? (Zechariah)*
- *Why did Zechariah doubt the angel? (He and his wife were too old to have children.)*
- *What happened because Zechariah doubted the angel? (He could not speak until his son was born.)*
- *Who was the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth? (John the Baptist)*
- *You may connect the dots and color the picture.*

Group: "Mary's Journey" Chant Game

Let's have some fun remembering that Mary went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. One person will be Mary. She will walk through the room as we sing and clap to this chant:

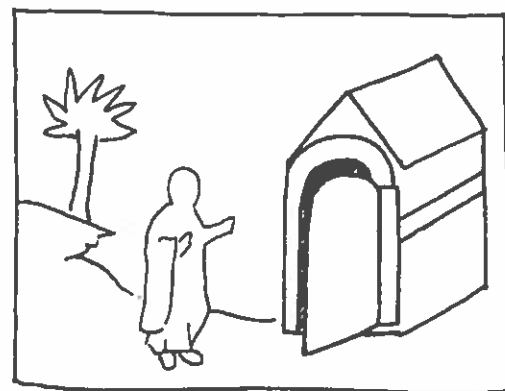
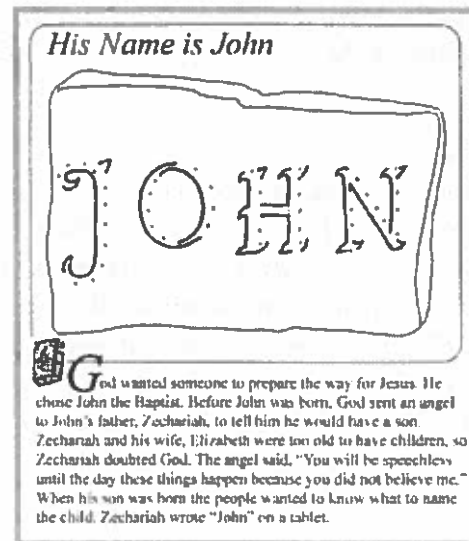
*"Mary went to visit Elizabeth,
Mary went to visit Elizabeth,
Mary went to visit Elizabeth, and this is how she went."*

Mary will then pick the person she is next to to follow her. We'll continue until several people are in line, and then we'll start with a new Mary.

Craft: "Mary Visited Elizabeth" Paste Craft

Materials: "Mary and Door" worksheet, "Elizabeth's House" worksheet, scissors, markers, glue

Here is a project that will help us remember that Mary shared the good news with Elizabeth. [Show example.] Here is Mary coming to visit Elizabeth. Elizabeth is here behind the door. The title is "Mary Visited Elizabeth." To make the project you'll need to color and cut out the pictures of Mary and Elizabeth and paste them onto the house worksheet. Then you can color and cut out the door and paste it on so that it opens and we see Elizabeth waiting to greet Mary. [As the children work, ask



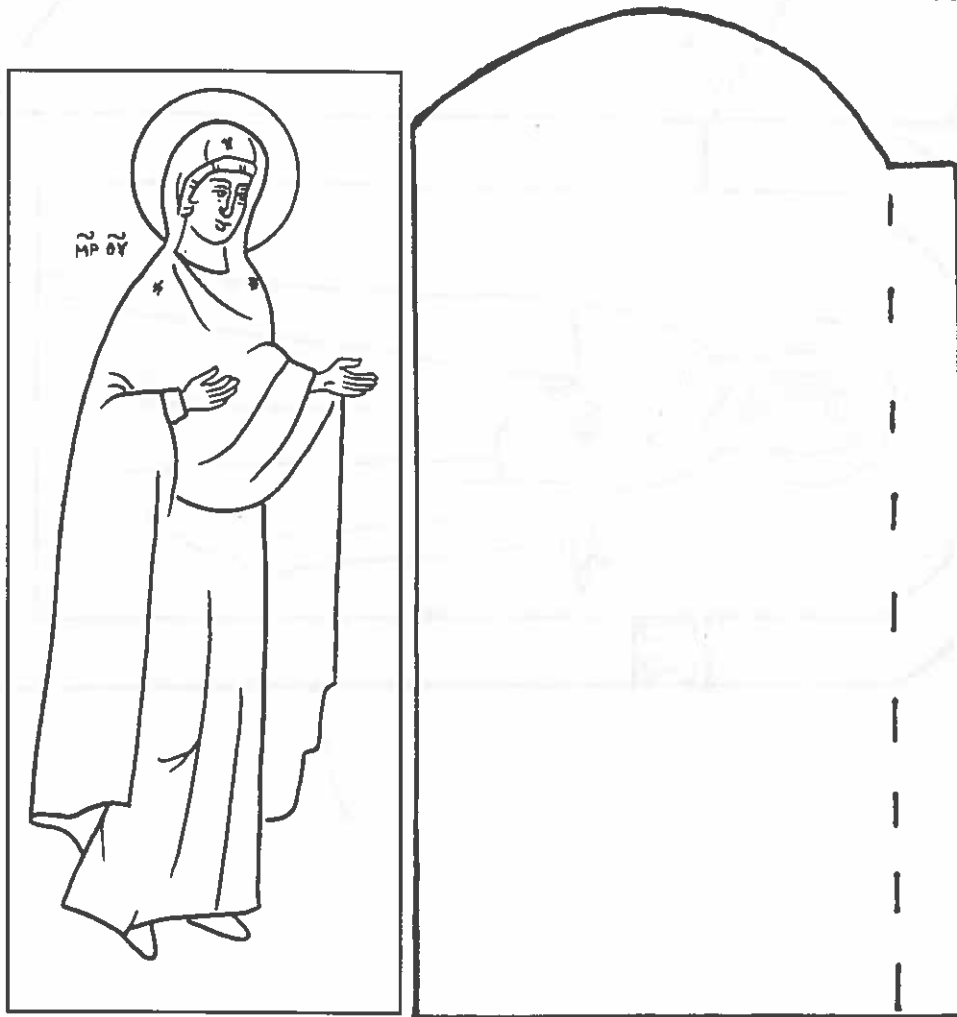
them, "Who is Mary going to visit?" (Elizabeth) "At the sound of Mary's voice, what did Elizabeth's baby do?" (leaped or jumped) Who is Elizabeth's baby?" (John).]

Closing

Let's gather around the icon. Does anyone know who is on this icon? [Allow responses.] He is St. John the Baptist. Saints are holy people. Because they are saints, we can ask them to pray to God for us and to help us. We learned that Elizabeth, the cousin of Mary, and John the Baptist, Elizabeth's son, are holy people. We can ask them to pray to God for us. Let's put our hands in prayer position and ask them to pray for us. [Ask the children to repeat after you] "Saint Elizabeth, pray to God for us. Saint John the Baptist, pray to God for us."

Lesson 8 Craft
"Mary and Door" Worksheet

(Dotted line is the fold line. Tape right edge of door to house so that door opens.)



Mary Visited Elizabeth

