

Luke 1 and Mark 1 – Mary, Elizabeth and Zechariah

The Characters: Town Crier, Angel Gabriel, Mary, Elizabeth, Zechariah, family and friends, John (grown-up), a crowd at the river

The Props: pillows to suggest “being great with child”, a small writing slate (or mini whiteboard), chalk (or dry erase markers), a doll wrapped in a blanket, a simple tunic and leather belt, a blue tarp to suggest the Jordan River.

Town Crier:

Hear ye, Hear ye, our Sunday School skit this morning is called “Mary, Elizabeth and Zechariah.” It is based on the first chapter of the Gospel according to Luke and the first chapter of the Gospel according to Mark.

Mary was a young women who lived in Nazareth of Galilee. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Her relative Elizabeth lived in the hill country of Judea with her husband Zechariah. Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God’s eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord’s commandments. They had no children, and they were now very old. One day when Zechariah was serving God in the Temple, the angel Gabriel appeared to him. *

(Zechariah is on his knees praying in the Temple. When the Angel Gabriel appears before him, he begins shaking in fear.)

Gabriel: Don’t be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you will name him John. You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth, and he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. *

Zechariah: How can I be sure this will happen? I’m an old man now, and my wife is also well along in years. *

Gabriel: I am Gabriel! I stand in the very presence of God. It was he who sent me to bring you this good news! But now, since you didn’t believe what I said, you will be silent and unable to speak until the child is born. For my words will certainly be fulfilled at the proper time. *

Town Crier: When Zechariah came out of the Temple, he couldn't speak to the people waiting outside. All he could do was make hand gestures. When Zechariah's week of service in the Temple was over, he returned home. Soon afterward, his wife Elizabeth became pregnant.

Elizabeth: How kind the Lord is! He has taken away my disgrace of having no children. *

Town Crier: In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth with a message for Elizabeth's relative Mary.

Gabriel: Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you! *

(Mary raises her hands to her face and appears startled.)

Gabriel: Don't be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his kingdom will never end! *

Mary: But how can this happen? I am not yet married.

Gabriel: The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age!

For nothing is impossible with God. *

Mary: I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true. *

Town Crier: Then the angel left Mary. A few days later, Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the town where Zechariah and Elizabeth lived. *

(Elizabeth and Zechariah are on stage. Elizabeth is "great with child." Zechariah is still unable to speak. Mary enters.)

Mary: Good day to you, Elizabeth and Zechariah!

Elizabeth (filled with the Holy Spirit): God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed. Why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should visit me? When I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what he said. *

(Zechariah is nodding, looking regretful and motioning to his mouth where no words are able to be produced.)

Mary: Oh, how my soul praises the Lord. How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior! He took notice of his lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed. For the Mighty One is holy, and he has done great things for me... He has helped his servant Israel and remembered to be merciful. He made this promise to our ancestors, to Abraham and his children forever. *

Town Crier: Mary stayed with Elizabeth and Zechariah about three months and then went back to her own home. (Mary departs.)

(Elizabeth is holding the doll; Zechariah, family members and friends are with her.)

When it was time for Elizabeth's baby to be born, she gave birth to a son. All of their friends and family came to visit and rejoice with them. They wanted Elizabeth and Zechariah to name the baby "Zechariah" after his father, but Elizabeth said....

Elizabeth: No! His name is John! *

Crowd of friends and family: What? * What are you saying?

There's no one in all your family by that name. *

No, that's not right for a first born son.

Town Crier: Zechariah motioned for a writing tablet and to everyone's surprise he wrote, "His name is John." Instantly Zechariah could speak again, and he began praising God. *

Zechariah: Praise God for his mercy and forgiveness! Thank you for this beautiful boy – may he serve you faithfully all the days of his life. Thank you, dear Lord, for giving my voice back to me that I may tell of your goodness.

Crowd of friends and family: You have been healed!

It's a miracle!

God has done great things for this family!

What will this child turn out to be? *

Town Crier: Then Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and gave this prophecy.

Zechariah: Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has visited and redeemed his people. He has sent us a mighty Savior from the royal line of his servant David, just as he promised through his holy prophets long ago... And you, my little son, will be called the prophet of the Most High, because you will prepare the way for the Lord. You will tell his people how to find salvation through forgiveness of their sins. Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace. *

(As Zechariah is finishing, a grown-up John slowly enters and makes his way toward the river. Zechariah exits the scene.)

Town Crier: John grew up and became strong in spirit. He lived in the wilderness. His clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey. All of Judea, including all the people of Jerusalem, went out to see and hear John. And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River. *

(The people come down to the river and are baptized by John.)

John (to all the people): Someone is coming soon who is greater than I am – so much greater that I'm not even worthy to stoop down like a servant and untie the straps of his sandals. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit! *

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* These lines are taken directly from the Bible. The remaining dialogue is either paraphrased or imagined.