

Ritual

There is Something About Mary



Preparation

- Prepare the space by creating a centre-piece in the middle of the floor with candles, cloths, flowers and various symbols representing Mary. E.G. a miraculous medal, rosary beads, an icon etc.
- Print a selection of images of Mary in colour and display in a circle in the centre of the liturgical space. (Images attached)
- Play music related to Mary as the students enter the room and invite them to sit on the floor around the centre-piece.

Introduction

Speaker 1: Today we are celebrating the person of Mary and what she means to each of us. The Bible actually tells us very little about Mary. Considering her important role as the mother of Jesus, it is surprising how little she is mentioned. This may be because when the Gospels were being written, their main focus was on the person of Jesus.

Speaker 2: We know very little about Mary's origins. We know that she was Jewish, probably born in Galilee or Nazareth and she was married to a carpenter named Joseph. Most of our knowledge of Mary comes from the Gospel of Luke. He introduces her as a young girl, engaged to be married, who receives a visit from an angel.

Reading

Luke 1: 26 – 34

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to the Galilean village of Nazareth to a virgin engaged to be married to a man descended from King David. His name was Joseph, and the virgin's name, Mary. Upon entering her home, Gabriel greeted her:

"Good morning! You're beautiful with God's beauty, Beautiful inside and out! God be with you".

She was thoroughly shaken, wondering what was behind a greeting like that. But the angel assured her, "Mary, you have nothing to fear. God has a surprise for you: You will become pregnant and give birth to a son and call him Jesus. He will be great, be called 'Son of the Highest.' The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. He will rule Jacob's house forever—no end, ever, to his kingdom."

Mary said to the angel, "But how? I've never slept with a man." The angel answered, the Holy Spirit will come upon you, the power of the Highest hover over you; Therefore, the child you bring to birth will be called Holy, Son of God.

Mary replied, "Yes, I see it all now: I'm the Lord's maid, ready to serve. Let it be with me just as you say".

Then the angel left her.

The word of the Lord.

Hymn: Mary Did You Know?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifCWN5pJGIE>

Reflection (Diarmuid O Murchu)

*I am the Madonna who's black to the core.
And I birth forth a freedom that lasts evermore.*

*You have cast me in stone like a Queen of the Right,
A white European, so humble and trite.
From head to toe veiled, bizarre the décor,
You have robbed my uniqueness in Palestine's lore.*

*If only you knew what my background was like
Out of wedlock conceived – a merciless plight
And all that I suffered – so undignified
Suspecting all through a remarkable child.*

*He was restless and strange from a very young age
And questioned religion with the wit of a sage.
He travelled the world, to places on end
With a freedom in heart I could not comprehend.*

*They say he worked marvels and preached like a lord,
And among the great leaders caused no little discord.
I never could answer when the neighbours did ask
The meaning and purpose of his missionary task.*

*It all turned sour after three years astream.
It seems he reaped havoc on the Temple's regime.
By the time I was called, in a cruel twist of fame
He was dead on a cross; my God, what a shame!*

*For months, I kept out of the public domain,
But the women disciples kept calling my name.
And that woman from Magdala, she never gave up
'Till the vision was grounded in a new Christian Church.*

*I tried to support what the new group brought forth,
New freedom and peace, and some enduring hope.
We laughed and we suffered, yet knew it was right
While I never forgot my bright wayward child.*

*They say I assumed to the heavens above
Once more robbing from me the earth that I love.
How I wish they would cherish my feminine truth
As a woman and mother*

A radiant woman – but dark at my core!

Silence

Leader: Take a few moments now to think about your image of Mary (pause). Do you imagine her as a young girl? As a wife and mother? As an intercessor in heaven, queen of the angels? A statue you find hard to relate to? Who is she in your mind?

When you are ready chose a picture from the centre-piece that best fits your image of her.

Invite students to share in groups of three why they chose an image and what their image of Mary is.

Beginning with the sentence 'I believe Mary was...', invite the students to describe out loud how they understand Mary.

Speaker 3: Mary was central to Marcellin's faith and vision. When Jesus entrusted Mary to his disciple John when he was on the cross, saying, '*This is your mother*', he was in fact assigning her as Mother to the Church.

Speaker 4: For Marcellin, Mary is the mother and model for all Christians. She displays what it means to be a partner with God, and all women and men are called to be led by her example. She was Jesus's first disciple. She personifies motherhood, service, care, leadership, healing and love.

Litany of Mary of Nazareth

Mother of the liberator...

Mother of the homeless

Mother of the dying

Mother of the non-violent

Response: ***Pray for us***

Widowed mother
Unwed mother
Mother of a political prisoner
Mother of the condemned
Mother of the executed criminal

Oppressed woman...
Liberator of the oppressed
Marginalised woman
Comforter of the afflicted
Cause of our joy
Breaker of bondage
Political refugee
Seeker of sanctuary
First disciple
Sharer of Christ's passion
Seeker of God's will
Witness to Christ's resurrection

Response: ***Lead us to life***

Woman of mercy...
Woman of faith
Woman of contemplation
Woman of vision
Woman of wisdom and understanding
Woman of grace and truth
Woman, pregnant with hope
Woman, centred in God

Response: ***Empower us***

Hymn: *You Raise Me Up*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sza4rh1YzsM>

