

UNIT 2: JESUS AND THE NEW COVENANT

THE PROMISED ONE COMES

Lesson 7: A Spirit-filled Meeting

CONTENT:

1. The Holy Spirit gave Elisabeth the power to realise the action of God and to recognise Mary as Mother of God. She praised and honoured Mary and affirmed her faith.
2. Mary also was filled with the Holy Spirit (as foretold by the angel). He led her to
 1. Reach out to her cousin in her need, and
 2. Praise and glorify God.
3. Thus the Holy Spirit:
 - helps us to recognise God's action and his presence;
 - gives us joy
 - helps us praise God
 - helps us see the good in others and affirm them.
4. Honouring Mary is good and pleasing to God, who asked us to honour one another, especially our parents. (Honour your father and mother) We do not 'adore' Mary, as adoration is for God alone. Adoration is the "humble acknowledgement by human-beings that they are creatures of the thrice-holy Creator"



ASSIGNMENT: Find out where Mary's hymn (The Magnificat) came from.
Say it together with your family for 1 week.

REFERENCES: Luke 1:39-56. CCC 495, 971.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Handouts; letter paper.

NB. This lesson could be spread out into 2 periods, as follows:

1. Have a longer time of praise with a hymn or 2 of praise, followed by a spontaneous 'litany of praise': Each student praises God in a short phrase and all respond with 'Praise be to you Lord'
2. Students do an appreciation activity.: Each student gets 5 slips of paper each with the name one classmate. They write a note telling the person what good they see in them. After all have finished, they give the notes to the respective students. You could get some students to help you to cut up the slips and write each students name on 5 slips.

I. STARTER:

- At the last class we saw that Mary, though she was a virgin, was to conceive God's Son. She was puzzled and asked the angel, "How can this happen?"
- What was the angel's reply? [*"The Holy Spirit will come on you"*]
- So we know that Mary was filled with the Holy Spirit. Very soon after this, she met up with another Spirit-filled relative. Let's see what happens when two Spirit-filled people meet!

II. DEVELOPMENT:

1. Before we go into analysing the story, let's see how fast you can do the puzzle on your handouts. It will help you to read the story carefully and note the details. Read the whole passage before you start.

[Give out handouts. Let the students work in pairs, but filling in their own handouts.[1] Allow only 5 minutes and then let those who have found the answers share them with the class.]

Answers to 'CHECK OUT THESE FACTS'

1. What did Elisabeth call Mary? MOTHER of my Lord.
2. Who is "the fruit of your womb"? JESUS
3. And who is "the child in my womb"? JOHN THE BAPTIST
4. Who was Elisabeth's husband? Z ECHARIAH
5. What did Elisabeth's child do when Mary greeted Elisabeth? LEAPED FOR JOY
6. Elisabeth praised Mary because she BELIEVED what God had promised.
7. What does Mary call herself? God's SERVANT
8. What does she call God? MIGHTY ONE; GOD MY SAVIOUR; THE LORD
9. Mary prophesied that she would be called this throughout history. BLESSED
10. In her song Mary MAGNIFIES God and REJOICES in him.

2. Lets look at this story again from a different viewpoint.

- This is the meeting of 2 spirit-filled women. What is the mood of the meeting? Can you suggest one or two words to describe it? [*Joyful, exciting...*]
- Underline the words in the passage which show this mood. [*in haste, greeted, leaped for joy, loud voice, rejoices*] So we see that the Holy Spirit brings joy and excitement! (He is not a boring God)
- What else does the Spirit do? [*He helps us to recognise God's presence*]. (Elisabeth knew that God was present in her young cousin. She called Mary 'the mother of my Lord'.) It is because we realise that God is present that we experience joy and excitement.
- There's another big action word in this story. Both Mary and Elisabeth do this action... The word is praise. Elisabeth praises Mary, calling her 'blessed among women'. She also praises her for believing in God's word to her. (Although Mary was much younger than her, she honoured her.)
- Who does Mary praise? God! Her whole song is a hymn of praise to God. So the third thing that the Holy Spirit does is make us praise. We praise God as we recognise his wonderful actions and we also learn to see God in others, to see the good in others and praise them. We will try and practise both these kinds of praising today! [*Students fill in answers in [2]*]

- Sometimes people criticise us Catholics and say that we treat Mary like God. They say we should not honour her as we do. If someone speaks to you like this you can explain:
 - In the Bible we see Elisabeth honouring Mary in a very big way.
 - God himself asked us to show honour to one another, and in a special way to our mothers and fathers [4th commandment]. He is happy when we honour Mary, who was chosen by him, and cooperated with him.
 - We do not 'adore' Mary but only praise her. 'Adoration' is for God alone. 'Adoration means to say humbly to God: "You are my Creator! I am yours!"

[Students write these points on the reverse side of their papers]

III. REFLECTION & PRAYER:

- i. Close your eyes and invite the Holy Spirit to fill you. Ask him to help you to be aware of God's presence in your life. [*If time permits, you could sing, 'Open My Eyes Lord.' Or 'Spirit of the Living God'. Lead the students into prayer as follows*]

'Lord, I believe that you are present in my life. Everyday you speak to me, love me, bless me. Even when things seem to be going wrong, you are doing something good. Help me to recognise you.

[Students could now say short prayers of praise aloud

OR write a prayer of praise on the reverse side of their handouts.]

IV. ACTIVITY:

Today we will imitate Elisabeth with the help of the Holy Spirit. Write a letter to any relative and tell her/him what you appreciate about them, what good you see in them.

[Distribute letter paper. Students write letters. If time runs out they finish the letter at home.]

Home assignment: Find out where Mary's hymn (the 'Magnificat') came from. Say it with your family for 1 week.