

The Christmas Story & Mary's Remarkable Faith December 20th, 2020



PICTURE 1

For the last Remarkable Faith Encounter I am going to begin by reading the story of Baby Jesus through ART. Throughout time and across cultures artists have depicted this story in many remarkable ways. Let's listen and take a look 😊

PICTURE 2

A long time ago, in the town of Nazareth, lived a young woman named Mary. Mary did her chores, was kind to others, and loved God very much. She was engaged to be married to Joseph, who was a carpenter.

PICTURE 3

One day, while Mary was at home, an angel suddenly appeared. Before Mary could say anything the angel told her that she was favored by God, and that God was with her. Mary was surprised. She was trying not to be afraid, but she had never seen an angel before. The angel quickly tried to reassure her. "Do not be afraid!" the angel said. "God has found favor with you. You will have a baby boy, and are to give him the name Jesus." Mary was confused; she was not yet married to Joseph, so how could she have a baby? The angel thought that this might concern Mary so he said, "The Holy Spirit will perform a miracle, and because of this your baby will be called the Son of God." Nothing is impossible with God. Mary couldn't believe what she was hearing; she didn't know what to say. She realized that she was trembling, and knelt down. When she was finally able to

speak she said, "I am the Lord's servant, and I hope everything you have said will come true." Then the angel disappeared, and Mary was left alone.

PICTURE 4

Soon after, Joseph found out that Mary was going to have a baby. Joseph was confused by this, but an angel came to him in a dream and said, "Joseph do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. The child Mary is going to have is God's son, and you are to give him the name Jesus." When Joseph woke up he remembered what the angel had said. He knew that everything was okay.

PICTURE 5

In those days, the government decided that they should count everyone that lived in that area of the world. So Joseph had to take Mary to his town of Bethlehem to register. It took Mary and Joseph a long time to get to Bethlehem. This was very tiring for Mary because she was soon going to have a baby.

PICTURE 6

When they reached the town, all the inns were full and there was nowhere that they could stay. Finally, someone felt bad for them and offered them a place to stay at his inn...a stable in a small barn. Mary and Joseph were thankful that they at least had a place to rest. It was warm, and there was plenty of straw to lay on.

PICTURE 7

That night an exciting, wonderful thing happened: Mary and Joseph had a baby! But this wasn't just any baby, he was Baby Jesus! The creator of the whole world, the King of Kings, and the one who would save the world.

PICTURE 8

Baby Jesus fell asleep in Mary's arms. She wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger.

PICTURE 9

Some shepherds who lived near Bethlehem, were out at night in their fields watching over their sheep. Suddenly there was a bright light - a beautiful angel was standing in the air just above them with his arms opened wide. Then the angel spoke to them. "Do not be afraid. I'm here to bring you good news for all people. Today in Bethlehem a baby has been born, He is the one that will save the world. You will know the baby because he will be wrapped in cloths, and laying in a manger." Suddenly, just as quickly as the first angel came, there were a large

group of angels, and they said together, "Glory to God, and peace to all people on earth."

PICTURE 10

The Shepherds just had to go see this baby the angels were talking about. They went as fast as they could, and soon found Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. The shepherds fell to their knees when they saw Jesus.

PICTURE 11

Soon after Jesus was born, wise men were traveling on their camels. One night they noticed a very strange star in the sky. They knew that this star meant that the One who would save the world had been born. They didn't know exactly where the baby was, but at night they followed the star in the east. They followed the star until it hung right over the very place where Jesus was.

PICTURE 12

Since it took the wise men a while to get to baby Jesus, they probably didn't arrive the day Jesus was born but sometime later. When they finally had arrived they were very excited and happy. They found Jesus laying in Mary's arms, and they bowed down and worshipped him. They opened the gifts they had brought Jesus. The gifts were gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

PICTURE 13

The story of Christmas is special, full of miracles and visitors all coming to visit a King and someday the Savior of the world. So now, I have a question for you - first, we know the story is about Baby Jesus but we are going to focus on Mary. This is a photo by the way of an actual sculpture...designed by two sculptors and it is called The Peace Monument. It shows Mary in a blue robe holding a white dove in her right hand, symbolizing a petition of peace for their country. It is over 153 feet tall!!!!...taller than the Statue of Liberty. What did Mary have to have throughout the entire story?

PICTURE 14

That's right! **REMARKABLE FAITH**. Mary is an excellent **MODEL** of **REMARKABLE FAITH**. **WHY?** Well, to put it simply, Mary said yes to God - it didn't make sense, it was going to be hard and she was afraid **BUT** in order to say yes and do what God asked she just had to have faith that all would be OK and it certainly was!

PICTURE 15

Throughout this story we looked at famous works of art like this one called Adoration of the Magi which was created by an artist in 1423. These works of art illustrate this miraculous story in remarkable ways. How would you like to illustrate the Christmas story? Maybe you want to focus on Mary and her remarkable Faith or on Joseph or baby Jesus or the wise men or the shepherds, the angels, the stars. Create some art of your own. Use whatever supplies you have on hand. Perhaps you will draw a picture, maybe you will paint a painting or sculpt out of clay. It is up to you. Just interpret the story in your creation in any way that you would like featuring whatever character or idea that comes to mind.

PICTURE 16

Have a very merry Christmas EVERYONE! I would like to see your art! All ages are invited to participate and create a work of HEART. Please email your submissions to me. I would like to create an inspirational ST. JOHN's Christmas Virtual Art Gallery. Try to get your work in before or on Christmas DAY!☺
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Let's end with a prayer

Dear God

Thank you for Mary

Thank you for her remarkable faith.

Thank you for Jesus.

And Lord, please help us to have remarkable faith.

AMEN

