

## Mary, Faithful Disciple

In this unit students explore the concept of discipleship through an exploration of Mary. They learn about Mary as the Christian model of discipleship through an analysis of The Annunciation and The Visitation in Luke's Gospel and the Wedding at Cana in John's Gospel. At the conclusion of the unit students identify ways in which they can live as a disciple in their school or family situation. They also plan and participate in a liturgy or devotion to Mary.

### DOCTRINAL FOCUS

In planning to teach this unit the following references from the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church are recommended:

**#487** What the Catholic faith believes about Mary is based on what it believes about Christ, and what it teaches about Mary illumines in turn its faith in Christ.

**#148** The Virgin Mary most perfectly embodies the obedience of faith. By faith Mary welcomes the tidings and promise brought by the angel Gabriel, believing that 'with God nothing will be impossible' and so giving her assent: 'Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be [done] to me according to your word'.  
(See *Compendium #26 Who are the principal witnesses of the obedience of faith in the Sacred Scriptures?*)

**#2618** The gospel reveals to us how Mary prays and intercedes in faith. At Cana, the mother of Jesus asks her son for the needs of a wedding feast; this is the sign of another feast – that of the wedding of the Lamb where he gives his body and blood at the request of the Church, his Bride. It is at the hour of the New Covenant, at the foot of the cross, that Mary is heard as the Woman, the new Eve, the true 'Mother of all the living'.  
(See *Compendium #546 How did the Virgin Mary pray?*)

**#971** 'All generations will call me blessed': 'The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship'. The Church rightly honours 'the Blessed Virgin with special devotion. From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honoured with the title of 'Mother of God', to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs ... This very special devotion ... differs essentially from the adoration which is given to the incarnate Word and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and greatly fosters this adoration'. The liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and Marian prayer, such as the rosary, an 'epitome of the whole gospel', express this devotion to the Virgin Mary.  
(See *Compendium #198 What kind of devotion is directed to the Holy Virgin?*)

### SPIRITUAL REFLECTION FOR TEACHERS

In Luke's Gospel Mary hears the word of God and acts on it. Listening to and discerning the voice of God in one's life and living out one's response is what marks discipleship for Luke. Discipleship is about allowing God's word to be at home in your life and allowing it to shape your life. Are you aware of God's word in your life? In what ways has the voice or presence of God shaped your life? Have there been key times in your life when you have been particularly conscious of God? In what ways are students conscious of God in their lives?

'Here I am, the servant of the Lord. Let it be with me according to your word' (Lk 1: 38). Like other women who have preceded Mary in the history of Israel, Mary faithfully serves the purposes of God. Through Mary, an unmarried girl of little status, the Messiah will be born. In Luke's portrayal of Mary we also see discipleship as the welcoming of and response to God by a person on the margins of her society.

We often find God in unlikely places and among unlikely people. Have you had this experience? What does it teach us about discipleship? What does it teach us about God?

## **LINKS WITH STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES**

Some students may have a strong devotion to Mary that has been shaped by family and cultural influences. They may be familiar with images, stories and traditional prayers of Mary. *What experiences and understandings of Mary do students bring to this unit?*

Like Mary, many students have a consciousness of God in their lives. *When and where do they feel close to God? When do they feel far away from God? What forms of personal prayer are significant for students? What other forms of prayer can you immerse students in to attune them to the word of God in their own lives?*

## **EXPLANATION OF SCRIPTURE**

### **Jn 2: 1–12                      The Wedding at Cana**

The Marriage Feast at Cana is one of two events occurring at Cana which show Jesus Christ's mission, and reflect trusting and faithful responses to him. The other event is the cure of the royal official's son (Jn 4: 46–54). The Marriage Feast marks the beginning of Jesus Christ's ministry with the first of the signs given by him. In this text we see an interplay between Mary and Jesus. The need expressed is simple: 'they have no wine'. In Jesus' society the bridegroom was responsible for the provision of wine, a symbol of life and abundance. To have run out would have been embarrassing for the bridegroom, and would have been seen as a bad start to the marriage. The symbol of the bridegroom was often used to describe the relationship between God and God's people.

Jesus Christ responded to Mary's request with what may seem at first to be a rejection, but which shows that Jesus Christ acted on his own initiative in response to Mary's request. Mary brought the need to Jesus' attention, then trusted unconditionally that the request would be heard and action taken. The text shows us the faith of the first, true believer in Jesus Christ.

### **Lk 1: 26–56                      The Annunciation and Visitation to Elizabeth**

The writer of Luke's Gospel introduces Mary as a young girl just betrothed. She is presented as deeply disturbed, even afraid, of the experience she is having, although with enough confidence to ponder within herself what it could all mean. Most of the text is about the child she will conceive. Only at the beginning and the end of the Annunciation narrative do we have some insight into Mary's reaction. The very last verse indicates that she was willing to be part of the event even though she did not yet totally understand. She agreed, and calmly said, 'Yes, let it happen to me'. This is an expression of Mary's faith. She, like many other women of the Old Testament,

displayed absolute faith. She would serve the purpose of God and be the first disciple. All of this is in keeping with the Jubilee theme of the Gospel of Luke, that God's abundance is available to the least expected: 'A virgin from the obscure town of Nazareth will conceive and bear a son who will be great, the Son of God'.

It was Mary who visited Elizabeth in a city of Judah. In this way the New Testament reaches out through Mary to the Old Testament, transforms it and gives it its ultimate significance. Because of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and extols the blessedness of Mary and her child. Mary's response to all of this was in the form of a canticle, the *Magnificat*, whose form and prayer was inspired by Hannah's song in 1 Sam 2: 1–10. Mary declared the greatness of God her Saviour and turned to the extraordinary reversals of divine history. This canticle announces and summarises many of the major themes of Luke's Gospel and, among other things, reminds us of our necessary concern for the poor and the weak, and that Christian leadership must not assume the ways of human power.

## POSSIBILITIES FOR PRAYER AND WORSHIP

- Find an image or painting of the Annunciation and reflect on what is happening in it. Invite your parish priest or a parishioner to the class to describe how, traditionally, *The Angelus* bell was rung three times a day. Pray *The Angelus* daily throughout this unit.
- Pray a decade of the Rosary. Choose one of the *Mysteries* that is related to the life of Mary, e.g. 'The Finding of Jesus in the Temple'. (The list of *Mysteries* is found in *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 4, Chapter 18, p. 154). Use a short phrase from the related Scripture before each Hail Mary, e.g. 'Now every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover' (Lk 2: 41). *Hail Mary ...* And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival' (Lk 2: 42). *Hail Mary ...*
- Pray the Litany in 'Our Prayer', *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 4, Chapter 9, p. 72.
- Students prepare a Liturgy of the Word around the Scripture text, 'The Marriage Feast of Cana', in *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 4, Chapter 9, pp. 70–71. Students choose music and write prayers reflecting the needs of the world today.
- Spend some time in silent reflection, imagining what life was like for Mary in the country and time that she lived. Use the prayer from 'In Tradition' in *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 4, Chapter 9, p. 71. The prayer asks that, like Mary, we always respond with a generous spirit towards others.
- Suggested Music:

*Love is Our Measure* (CD) Kevin Bates SM

*My Spirit Sings* (CD) Michael Mangan

**Related Chapters** – *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 4: Chapter 9, Mary Helps Us To Know And Follow Jesus.

**Faith concepts:** discipleship, faithfulness, prayer.

**Seeking understanding:**

Who is Mary in the Christian tradition?

How does Mary show Christians how to be a disciple?

**Understandings:**

Mary, mother of Jesus Christ, is the perfect disciple.

Discipleship is listening to the word of God in your life, and responding.

There are many people in the present and past Church who are models of discipleship.

**Scripture Text:** Jn 2: 1–12 The Marriage Feast of Cana; Lk 1: 26–56 The Annunciation and Visitation.

**Unit specific learning:**

<b>Students will learn about</b>	<b>Students will learn to</b>	<b>Students will undertake to</b>
<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	<i>Reasoning &amp; Responding</i>	<i>Personal &amp; Communal Engagement</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The setting, location, characters, events and message of Jn 2: 1–12 and Lk 1: 26–56.</li><li>• The characteristics of discipleship in Luke’s Gospel expressed in the role of Mary: listening to the word of God and responding.</li><li>• Mary as the first disciple of Jesus Christ.</li><li>• Significant events in Mary’s life, i.e. the Annunciation, the Visitation and the Wedding at Cana.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make connections between their own lives and the qualities of discipleship demonstrated in Mary’s life.</li><li>• Express their feelings, beliefs and ideas about discipleship in light of new learnings about Mary and the call to be a disciple.</li><li>• Decide a way in which they will live out the call to discipleship in their own lives.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plan a liturgy focusing on Mary and the call to discipleship.</li></ul>

## PHASES OF STUDENT INQUIRY

Additional Reading for Teachers	Orientation to Inquiry <i>What do students already know, think or feel in relation to the topic? What are students' questions about the topic? What experiences and reflections can we offer students to become engaged with the topic?</i>	Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning
<p>Little is known of the personality or the specific details of Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. Her greatness comes not through her outstanding personal characteristics, but from her joyous and faith-filled response to the action of God in her life.</p> <p>That <b>Mary</b> should have been chosen as mother of the longed-for Messiah would have seemed surprising to the people of Jesus' time. Mary came from the Galilean town of Nazareth, not from Jerusalem, the centre of religious and political power. Galilee was adjacent to the Gentile regions of the north, little respected by religious leaders. Moreover, Mary was an unmarried village girl.</p> <p>Mary is principally mentioned in <b>the Infancy Narrative</b> of the Gospel of Luke which gives an account of the story of the conception and birth of Jesus Christ. She is mentioned briefly in the Infancy Narrative of Matthew, and appears in John's Gospel at the marriage at Cana. Other references to her are very brief before she re-enters the story at the crucifixion and resurrection of her Son, Jesus Christ.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Write, Pair, Share</b> Individually students list what they know about Mary. They share their lists with a partner. Bundle all similar information together. Bundle as a whole class (Murdoch, K, <i>Classroom Connections</i>, p. 14).</li> <li>• <b>Images of Mary</b> Provide lots of different images of Mary. Ask students to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Have you seen any of these images before? Where?</li> <li>– Which one do you like? Why?</li> <li>– How do you feel when you see these images?</li> <li>– What qualities do you associate with Mary in the images?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>True or False Quiz</b> Ask students to consider these statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Peter was a disciple. True or False?</li> <li>– Elizabeth was a disciple. True or False?</li> <li>– Jesus Christ was a disciple. True or False?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Assessment for Learning</b> This activity will indicate students' prior knowledge and experience of Mary.</p> <p><b>Assessment for Learning</b> This activity will indicate students' prior knowledge and experience of what it means to be a disciple. Responses given by the students will give the teacher an insight into how the students perceive discipleship.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– John was a disciple. True or False?</li> <li>– Pope Benedict is a disciple. True or False?</li> <li>– Mary MacKillop was a disciple. True or False?</li> <li>– Moses was a disciple. True or False?</li> <li>– Mary was a disciple. True or False?</li> </ul> <p>Students identify three individuals who they believe have qualities of discipleship.</p>	
<p>Yet Mary is called Mother of God, Queen of Heaven, Star of the Sea, and many, many other titles, and has been depicted in thousands of images in the history of the Church.</p> <p>This is so simply because, in her obedience and openness to God, Mary was the first and most faithful disciple of her Son, Jesus Christ.</p> <p><b>Disciple</b> (Latin <i>discipulus</i>: learner, pupil). A person who follows a teacher. All believers in Jesus Christ may be called his disciples.</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Additional Reading for Teachers</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Development</b></p> <p><i>What experiences and religious texts will provide new learning for students? What skills will students need in order to work with these resources? What strategies and tools will enable students to think and reflect on these experiences and texts? How will students process their thinking and learning?</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning</b></p>
<p><b>Annunciation</b> means an announcement or</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Scripture: Lk 1: 26–38 The</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Assessment of Learning</b></p>

<p>proclamation. The Feast of the Annunciation of the Lord is 25 March.</p> <p>The story of the Annunciation is found only in Luke's Gospel. It is set in Nazareth. Luke tells the reader what is confirmed in the rest of the gospel, that is, that Mary's significance lies in her openness to the word of God in her life.</p>	<p><b>Annunciation</b></p> <p>Revisit images from the Orientation phase and identify those that relate to the Annunciation.</p> <p>Students listen to a sung version of the Hail Mary. Orally retell the story of the Annunciation, repeating words and phrases accurately. Identify when and where the narrative is set.</p> <p>Students complete a character map or senses chart that explores:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What did Mary see?</li> <li>– What did Mary hear?</li> <li>– What did Mary think?</li> <li>– What did Mary feel?</li> <li>– What did Mary say?</li> </ul>	<p>The character map will indicate what students understand about Mary in the story of the Annunciation.</p>
<p>The <b>Visitation</b> refers to Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth who was also pregnant. When Elizabeth's child leaps for joy in her womb in recognition of Jesus Christ, whom Mary is bearing, Mary sings a song of praise to God.</p> <p>The <b>Magnificat</b> is the title given to this great song. Magnificat is the first word of the Latin phrase <i>Magnificat anima mea Dominum</i>: My soul magnifies (glorifies) the Lord. The Magnificat is sung or recited every day at Vespers or Evening Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Scripture: Lk 1: 39–56 The Visitation</b></li> </ul> <p>Light an oil lamp or candle (oil lamps were the main source of light in Middle Eastern homes at the time of Jesus).</p> <p>Identify images from the Orientation phase that represent the Visitation.</p> <p>Students listen to a song/hymn of the Magnificat, e.g. <i>The Magnificat</i> by John Michael Talbot.</p>	

- Learning About the Visitation**  
 Read the Bible version of the Visitation. On a data chart or scripture probe (White, D, *Into the Deep*, p. 62) record:

Questions	Responses
Who are the main characters?	
What events come before the story?	
What happens immediately after this story in the Scriptures?	
What are the key words in the story and why?	
What is the story setting?	
What is the image of Mary in the story?	
Considering the people of this time, what would be the impact on the hearers of this story ?	
Does the author have a message?	
When you hear this story again in the future what image will come back to you?	

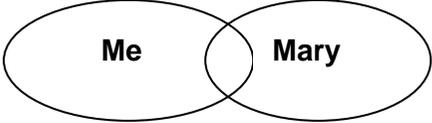
In small groups clarify responses. In the whole class share and compare how students interpret the author's

### Assessment of Learning

This task will demonstrate the students' understanding of the characters and events of the Visitation.

	message.	
<p>At the <b>wedding feast at Cana</b> Mary shows her faith in Jesus Christ again. Her words 'Do whatever he tells you' show her complete trust that Jesus would be able to save the situation. The story is deeply symbolic. The wedding feast is a common image of the Kingdom of God, and so it is fitting that Jesus' first sign of glory is given at such a feast. The fact that Mary introduces the public work of Jesus Christ also highlights her cooperation in her son's mission of redemption.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Read the Story: The Wedding Feast of Cana</b> Read/tell the story of the Wedding of Cana (Jn 2: 1–12) in pictorial form. Students become a newspaper reporter for the 'Canaan Times' and write a report on the incident. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What did you see?</li> <li>– What did you hear?</li> <li>– What did people do?</li> <li>– What do you think about the incident?</li> <li>– How do you explain what Mary said and did?</li> <li>– How do you explain what Jesus said and did?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Assessment of Learning</b> This task will demonstrate the students' understanding of the characters at the Wedding at Cana and the relationship between Mary and Jesus Christ.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Responding to Scripture: Comic Strip</b> Students personalise one of the Scripture texts by retelling the narrative through comic strips from the perspective of one of the characters (see Ryan, M, <i>Teaching the Bible</i>, p. 45).  Ask students to share their comic strips in small groups. Pose the questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What word would best describe how Mary is portrayed?</li> <li>– What are the similarities and differences in each person's</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Assessment as Learning</b> The comic strip will demonstrate how students identify with Mary as a disciple.</p>

	<p>portrayal of Mary?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Is there a portrayal that puzzles you?</li> <li>– Is there a portrayal that is your favourite? Why?</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Data Chart</b> Compare the three scripture texts and complete the following data chart.</li> </ul> <table border="1" data-bbox="835 568 1435 847"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="835 568 1055 671">Text</th> <th data-bbox="1055 568 1196 671">Images of Mary</th> <th data-bbox="1196 568 1435 671">What does it tell you about discipleship?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="835 671 1055 740">The Annunciation</td> <td data-bbox="1055 671 1196 740"></td> <td data-bbox="1196 671 1435 740"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="835 740 1055 775">The Visitation</td> <td data-bbox="1055 740 1196 775"></td> <td data-bbox="1196 740 1435 775"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="835 775 1055 847">The Wedding at Cana</td> <td data-bbox="1055 775 1196 847"></td> <td data-bbox="1196 775 1435 847"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Text	Images of Mary	What does it tell you about discipleship?	The Annunciation			The Visitation			The Wedding at Cana			
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Debrief</b> As a class develop a statement that summarises the characteristics of discipleship demonstrated in the three texts.</li> <li>• <b>Venn Diagram 1</b> Students read information about Blessed Mary MacKillop (<i>KWL</i>, 2nd edn, Year 4, Chapter 9, pp. 73–74). Compare and contrast how Mary, Mother of God and Mary MacKillop listened and responded to God. Use a Venn diagram to illustrate similarities and differences.</li> </ul>													

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Venn Diagram 2</b> Students will complete a Venn diagram comparing their lives and Mary's model of discipleship.</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="833 411 1413 587" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <p style="text-align: center;">How do you listen and respond to God?</p>  </div>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Brown Paper Bag</b> Students are given a list of twenty words pertaining to the qualities of a disciple. The words are both positive and negative, e.g. scared, loving, brave, giving, leader, trustworthy, teacher, dishonest, loyal, sad, angry, happy, generous, loud, shy, lonely, understanding, compassionate, fair, strong. Students cut out the words and sort them into what they perceive as 'disciple' and 'non-disciple' words. From their 'disciple' words students choose words that describe themselves. Paste these onto the outside of the paper bag. Place the other 'disciple' words inside the bag.  Take the 'non disciple' words. In small groups students discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Why don't these words describe a disciple?</li> <li>– Can you think of a time when this</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Assessment of Learning</b> This task will indicate the students' understanding of the term discipleship.</p>

	<p>word would describe a disciple?</p> <p>Inside the bag are 'disciple' words that students wouldn't use to describe themselves. They choose one of these that they would like to develop for the next week</p>	
<p><b>Additional Reading for Teachers</b></p>	<p><b>SYNTHESIS</b></p> <p><i>How will students demonstrate their understandings, beliefs, values, skills and feelings in relation to the topic? How will students take action based on their learning? What strategies and tools will enable students to discern their action, to plan and implement action and to evaluate their action?</i></p>	<p><b>Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Journal Entry</b> Provide students with reflection starters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– I already knew ...</li> <li>– The most surprising thing I learned about Mary was ...</li> <li>– The most interesting thing I learned about Mary was ...</li> <li>– I'm not sure about ...</li> <li>– Could I ...?</li> <li>– I am puzzled about ...</li> <li>– How might I ...?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Assessment as/of Learning</b></p> <p>The journal will indicate development in students' knowledge about Mary. It will also enable students to monitor changes in their thinking and learning.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Put Yourself in the Picture</b> How do I see myself as a disciple this week? Students draw a picture of themselves within a picture frame representing how they see themselves in relation to the topic of discipleship</li> </ul>	<p><b>Assessment of Learning</b></p> <p>This task will enable students to demonstrate how they see themselves in relation to the Christian practice of discipleship.</p>

	(Murdoch, K 1998, <i>Classroom Connections</i> , p. 116).	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Liturgy of the Word</b> Students prepare and lead a school liturgy celebrating Mary's life and the invitation to discipleship.</li> </ul>	<b>Assessment of Learning</b> This task will indicate students' ability to plan a liturgy using a given form.

## RESOURCES

### ***To Know, Worship and Love, 2nd Edition***

Year 4: Chapter 9, Mary Helps Us To Know And Follow Jesus.

### **Teacher Resources**

Murdoch, K 1998, *Classroom Connections*, Eleanor Curtin, Armadale.

Ryan, M 2001, *Teaching the Bible*, Social Science Press, Katoomba.

White, D 2003, *Into the Deep*, KD Publications, Marayong.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STANDARDS

This unit may be used to assess some of the Level 3 standards.

Students identify with biblical characters and people in the past and present Church by making inferences about their actions, feelings and motives. Students collaboratively plan liturgy using appropriate symbols, words and actions, following a given liturgical form.