

# 3

# Share Hope

LUKE 1:26-55



## GOAL

Through reading the story of Mary and Elizabeth’s celebration, children investigate the practice of sharing hope in community and begin to shift from only receiving hope to actively sharing it in their community.

- A Art
- AM Active/Movement
- C Conversation
- D Drama
- F Food
- G Game
- M Music
- NS Nature/Science
- QC Quiet/Contemplative
- S Service
- T Technology
- X Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



## PRAYER

God of Mary and Elizabeth, be with me as I journey with these children, these hope-sharers, these hope-givers. Bless our time and grant me a sense of wonder and encouragement as I lead this day. Amen.

## THIS SESSION

This session shifts the focus from noticing and experiencing hope through Jesus Christ—an internal practice—to sharing that hope within a community—an external practice. This session explores how communities share hope with one another.

## THE BIBLE STORY

This story in Luke has inspired incredible art and beautiful choral works. Luke 1:26-55 tells the story of what happened after Gabriel’s visit to Mary. After Mary agrees to play her part in God’s plan, she hastens to visit her dear cousin, Elizabeth, who is also pregnant. Together, the two celebrate Mary’s revered place in God’s plan of redemption for the world. Mary praises God with a song, now known as the “Magnificat” because her first words speak of her soul *magnifying* the Lord.

## CONNECTIONS WITH CHILDREN

Sharing is an integral part of childhood. By the time children are in elementary school, they are true experts at sharing, and they have often even learned to find joy in sharing. Therefore, focusing intentionally on sharing the hope and joy we have in Jesus Christ is a natural extension of their cultivated gifts!

## SESSION PREPARATION

- “Hope Is the Rope” (p. 26): Use rope from sessions 1 and 2, long enough that everyone in the group can hold onto it. Save for session 4.
- “Little Share, Big Impact” (p. 26): Practice the experiment. The point is to create an overflow of bubbly foam from the reaction of the baking soda and vinegar. Add more or less baking soda as needed.

Depending on the options you choose:

- “Baptism Reflection” (p. 27): Invite a pastor or church leader who can talk about baptism and the importance of the community celebrating hope in this sacrament. Provide them with the questions in the activity to guide their talk.
- “Mary’s Song” (p. 28): Watch the suggested YouTube videos and choose one or more that fits your group and time. Some are more contemporary and some are more traditional.
- “Love Feast” (p. 29): Obtain snack foods, such as crackers, cheese, grapes, and apple slices, as well as water or juice. Be aware of any food allergies or dietary restrictions. Make substitutions or provide alternative options as necessary.



## GETTING STARTED

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- Paper
  - Crayons, markers, colored pencils

### FAVORITE THINGS

QC A C

As the children gather, give them drawing supplies and invite them to draw a picture of a time when they shared a favorite something with someone else. Engage the children in conversation around their pictures using the following questions:

- ✿ How did it feel to share something so special?
- ✿ How do you think the person you shared with felt?

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- Rope

### HOPE IS THE ROPE

Gather the children together and invite everyone to hold onto a piece of rope. Wonder together how holding onto this rope unites your group as a community.

Lead the litany below and invite the children to respond with the lines in bold. You could cue the children to say “hope is the rope” whenever you hold out a hand.

When we feel lost,  
**hope is the rope**  
helping us find our way home.

When things are beyond our control,  
**hope is the rope**  
keeping us secure.

In the darkness of the night,  
**hope is the rope**  
giving us something to hold on to.

When we feel alone,  
**hope is the rope,**  
with strands that bind us together,  
helping us comfort and strengthen one another.  
**Thank God for the gift of hope.**



## INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

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- White vinegar
  - Baking soda
  - Dinner spoons and larger soup spoons
  - Food coloring
  - Baking sheet with sides or plastic food storage container
  - Paper towels

### LITTLE SHARE, BIG IMPACT

NS

Tell the children that one of the most incredible resources that we have as people of God is our faith community. Invite the children to do an experiment that shows how just a little can make a big impact. Give each child a soup spoon and a dinner spoon. Fill one child’s soup spoon with vinegar while they are holding it over a baking sheet or a container to catch spillage. Have a volunteer put a drop of food coloring in the spoon. Invite another volunteer to sprinkle about half a dinner-spoonful of baking soda onto the spoonful of vinegar. Watch what happens! Repeat, having

the children take turns holding the spoonful of vinegar, adding the food coloring, and sprinkling the baking soda.

Wonder together about what an impact such a small amount of baking soda had on the vinegar and how we might be like baking soda when we share hope with others.

## FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

### REFLECTING AND CONNECTING




Tell the children that today's story is about an angel's message to Mary about having a baby and Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth to share that news. Encourage them to listen for times Mary and Elizabeth shared hope with each other. Hand out Bibles and have the children follow along as you read Luke 1:26–55, or use Resource Page 1. Pause and discuss any unfamiliar vocabulary or phrases.

Reflect on the passage with the children. Use the following questions to help spur conversation about the story. Give time for the children to respond to the open-ended questions. Encourage them to wonder by wondering with them.

- How do you think Mary felt after the angel Gabriel visited her?
- Why do you think she went to see her cousin Elizabeth?
- When did Mary or Elizabeth share hope?
- Consider the words of Mary's song of praise. What words of hope, for you or for others, do you find in them?
- How do you think Mary's and Elizabeth's hopes and joys were multiplied when they shared them with each other?
- When have you had an experience when you have shared hope with others and it has felt greater than by yourself?

Bibles or Resource Page 1

 The *Common English Bible* is a good one to use with children because of its readability; however, you will need to help children read and understand some words and concepts regardless of the Bible you use.

## FINDING THE PRACTICE ALL AROUND US

Mary and Elizabeth's hope in God's promises and God's favor was multiplied when they could share it with one another. Sometimes, we share hope in celebration with one another as well.

Choose one or both options.


### BAPTISM REFLECTION



Take your group on a visit to the baptismal font in your worship space. Invite the children to look at the font and its space in worship. Consider the following questions together:

- Why do you think it is placed where it is?
- Are there any decorative elements on the font? If so, what do you think they mean or are meant to remind us of?
- Is it empty or full of water?

Baptismal font or bowl of water  
 Invited pastor or church leader

 If it is not possible to meet in your worship space, create a worship space in your room with a bowl of water on a table. Invite the children to recall where the baptismal font is in your worship space.

Introduce your guest and invite them to tell the children about your church's tradition of baptism, focusing on the importance of being baptized in community. Use the following questions to start conversation.

- ✦ Why do we baptize people?
- ✦ Why do we baptize people in front of the whole congregation?
- ✦ Who makes vows during the baptismal liturgy?
- ✦ What do you think is the hope that is shared by the community in baptism?



Some parents choose not to have their infants baptized, so be careful to avoid negative conversation around a child who might not be baptized. God loves all of us deeply, baptized or not!

- Internet-connected device
- Art supplies, such as paper, crayons, markers, pastels, watercolor paints and painting supplies (optional)

Thank your guest and return to your space. Reflect with the children on what they just heard. Center your reflection on the importance of the congregational response in the sacrament of baptism. Share with the children that baptism is one piece of a lifelong faith journey, but the one being baptized is not the sole focus of the event. Comment that the whole community shares in the joy and hope brought through a newly baptized person, *and* the whole community promises to contribute to the baptized person's life of faith.

## MARY'S SONG



Composers have used the words from Mary's song and written music to go with them for hundreds of years. Invite the children to listen to the words of Mary's song of praise again as you read from Luke 1:46–55 or the adapted words to her song on Resource Page 1. Ask the children what they find surprising about what Mary says. Wonder together why this song may be important to so many people.

Show one or more of the following YouTube videos about Mary's song of praise:

- "The Magnificat—Christian Music with lyrics—Christmas Song with Lyrics" ([bit.ly/FMMagnificatWords](https://bit.ly/FMMagnificatWords), 4:20).
- "Mary's Canticle" ([bit.ly/FMMarysCanticleDance](https://bit.ly/FMMarysCanticleDance), 4:45). Children could sing along and follow the motions with the refrain of this song.
- "John Rutter—Magnificat—Anima Mea—Practice" ([bit.ly/FMMagnificatRutter](https://bit.ly/FMMagnificatRutter), 6:55). This video shows the Latin words to Rutter's *Magnificat*. Tell the children that *Magnificat* means "magnify," "glorify," or "praises"; *anima mea* means "my soul"; and *Dominum* means "the Lord." This is the opening sentence of Mary's song.
- "Magnificat (Taizé)" ([bit.ly/FMMagnificatTaize](https://bit.ly/FMMagnificatTaize), 2:41). This is a Taizé version of the Magnificat, which repeats the first sentence in Latin, *Magnificat anima mea dominum*. Invite children to sing along.

If you have a group that particularly likes to do art, hand out art supplies and invite the children to draw pictures about what they are hearing or how it makes them feel. Display the pictures with the title, "Mary's Song of Praise: Sharing Hope with Others."



## PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Sharing the hope that we have through God and Jesus Christ is best done in community, where relationships are plenty and hearts are fertile and receptive. Just as hope is shared with children through baptism, Sunday school, and worship, they can share hope with their community.

Choose one or both options.

## LOVE FEAST




Tell the children that there is a Christian tradition called the Love Feast, or it is sometimes called an *agape* meal (a Greek word for *love*). It is a fellowship meal that recalls the many meals Jesus shared with others, always in community. Wonder together when were times Jesus ate with other people. Some suggestions may be: the Last Supper in the upper room, feeding the five thousand, at Zacchaeus's house, with outcasts and sinners, at the Pharisee's house when the woman anointed his feet with precious oil, and so forth. Wonder together what hope was shared in any of these instances mentioned.

Invite the children to prepare the table and the feast together. Encourage them to serve one another and wait until all have been served and the food has been blessed before they eat.

Offer a simple blessing over your feast and your time together.

Cultivate conversation around how this love feast, or any time of eating together, is an act of sharing hope. Wonder together what meals the children share with others and how hope may be shared at those meals.

- Snack foods, such as crackers, cheese, grapes, apple slices, and so forth
- Water or juice
- Cups, plates, napkins

 Be aware of any food allergies or dietary restrictions. Make substitutions or provide alternative choices.

## SHARING HOPE FLASH MOB



Comment that flash mobs have become quite popular over the last few years, used for proposals, songs, and dances. Wonder who has seen, or been in, a flash mob. Tell the children that they will be in a flash mob today as you practice a verse with motions and then go share that hope and joy with an adult Sunday school class, during fellowship time, or during another opportunity at your church. Encourage the children to see what happens when they share their hope and joy with others.

Learn together Luke 1:46b–47 (CEB): “With all my heart I glorify the Lord! . . . I rejoice in God my savior.” Invite the children to create motions to go with the verse. They may do them all together or have some start and others join in. Encourage creativity! Then go visit other groups in the church and loudly and joyfully share your hope and joy!



## FOLLOWING JESUS

Encourage the children to be sharers of hope in their families and communities in the coming week. Suggest that the children notice what happens when they share hope. Wonder if it will be like the reaction of the baking soda and vinegar, a little bit of hope and joy creating more in others.

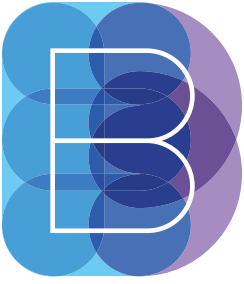
Invite the children to repeat after you as you pray:

God, thank you for giving us hope. /

Jesus, thank you for being our hope. /

Holy Spirit, thank you for reminding us to have hope. /

Amen. /



## BIBLE STORY

### BASED ON LUKE 1:26–55

Long ago in Nazareth, a girl named Mary was engaged to Joseph, who was a descendant of King David (which is important in the story about Jesus' birth). God sent the angel Gabriel to give Mary a most important message. Gabriel said, "Be joyful, Mary! God is with you!"

The angel and the message were quite startling and confusing to Mary. She wondered what was going on. So Gabriel continued, "Don't be afraid, Mary. God wants you to do something very special. You will have a baby and name him Jesus. He will be God's Son. He will continue the good work that King David started, and there will be no end to his kingdom."

Mary was really confused. She said, "How can this be?"

Gabriel told Mary that God's Holy Spirit would be with her and her baby would be holy, God's Son. He reminded Mary that nothing is impossible for God and that even her cousin Elizabeth, who was very old, was going to have a baby.

Mary said, "I love God and follow God's ways. Yes, I will do this not-impossible-for-God thing!"

After the angel Gabriel visited Mary, she felt some big feelings. She was surprised and excited and probably a little bit nervous. So she went to see her cousin Elizabeth. It is good to be with people you love when you have big news!

Elizabeth was also going to have a baby, and she was so excited to see Mary. When she saw Mary, the baby inside Elizabeth's belly started to move all around! It seemed like he was excited to see Mary too. Elizabeth said, "Wow, Mary! God has blessed you and your baby so much! Just seeing you makes my heart happy, and it made the baby inside me happy too! You are blessed by God because you believed what God said to you would happen—that you would have a baby, God's Son!"

All of the big feelings Mary had inside her bubbled out of her in a song that she sang to Elizabeth.

"My heart, my body, and my soul all praise God!

My heart is happy because I know God is my savior.

I might not be very important. I'm not a queen or a princess,  
but God has shown me how much God loves me. Me!

From now on, everyone will know the gift God gave me.

God's name is holy.

God takes care of the people who worship God.

God is strong and powerful.

God doesn't listen to all the people who brag about themselves.

God cares about people who don't have very much.

God gives people who need food and love what they need.

God has helped God's people, Israel, who have listened to God.

God has been kind and good to them.

God has kept God's promise to our ancestor, Abraham, and to all God's children."