

*Journeying with **Mary** in Faith*

The 'YES' that changed the world



A Year of Faith resource

How to use this booklet:

1. Small Group Sharing

- a.** Encourages the group to search and discover for themselves [as far as they are able to] the depth and meaning of the questions/points reflected upon.
- b.** Facilitators take on an encouraging and enabling role, instead of a domineering one.
- c.** Every member is recognized. No one is forced to share. However, it is important that everyone feels welcome and accepted within the group. This would encourage everybody to share.
- d.** Sharing takes place in an atmosphere of love, respect and confidentiality.

2. Designed for young people – intended for use in Catholic Secondary Schools by Catholic students, Catholic teachers and chaplains.

**** More information can also be found in our resource booklet**

'Praying with the Bible Alone & 7-steps Gospel Sharing'

This may be downloaded from our website: **www.accs.sg**

*We also provide training to Catholic student leaders on group facilitation.
Please contact us to arrange this.*

Preparation and setting:

Create a peaceful and welcoming ambience in the space or room that you are meeting in. Also have on standby some background soothing instrumental religious music (eg. Taize).

Set up a prayer table:

- ◆ *a table cloth (check liturgical colour)*
- ◆ *candle or tea lights*
- ◆ *a Bible*
- ◆ *a small statue or icon of Our Lady (the cover of this leaflet for example)*
- ◆ *a small vase of flowers (optional)*
- ◆ *a rosary*

Display all items appropriately on your prayer table and light the candle/s when you begin.

Introduction: (Facilitator)

Dear friends,

As we approach the end of the Year of Faith, we want to reflect on Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our Mother because she showed us the way to be faithful and to believe even when it was very difficult.

In his message '*Porta Fidei*' in the **Year of Faith**, Pope Benedict XVI encourages us to take Mary as our model. The *Year of Faith* began on October 11, 2012, and continues until November 24, 2013. This is therefore an excellent time for us to ask Our Blessed Mother Mary to help us grow in faith.

Opening Song:

Holy Virgin by God's Decree

(or any other well-known or suitable hymn)

Holy Virgin, by God's decree, you were called eternally,
That He could give his son to our race,
Mary, we praise you, hail, full of grace!

Chorus: *Ave, Ave, Ave Maria!* (2)

By your Faith and loving accord as the handmaid of the Lord,
You undertook God's plan to embrace,
Mary, we thank you, hail, full of grace! (Ave...)

Refuge for your children so weak,
sure protection all can seek.
Problems of life you help us to face.
Mary, we trust you, hail full of grace. (Ave...)

To our needy world of today
love and beauty you portray,
showing the path to Christ we must trace.
Mary, our Mother, hail full of grace. (Ave...)

Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09vJA0hMPjY>

Facilitator:

Today we come together to celebrate and honour Mary who joyfully followed the will of God all her life. She said 'Yes' to what God asked of her. Mary is truly a model of Faith for all of us. Let us now journey with her.

Let us begin with the sign of the Cross

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Opening Prayer:

Facilitator:

God our loving Father, we thank you for giving us Mary to guide us on the way of faith. We know that she will lead us to your Son Jesus and we pray that with her help we will be able to follow your son more closely. We make this prayer in Jesus' name.

All: Amen

Gospel Reading: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to **Luke** (1: 26-38)
(ask three students to read the parts, the narrator will close)

Narrator: In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy God sent the angel Gabriel to a town in Galilee named Nazareth. He had a message for a young woman promised in marriage to a man named Joseph, who was a descendant of King David. Her name was Mary. The angel came to her and said,

Angel: Peace be with you! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you!

Narrator: Mary was deeply troubled by the angel's message, and she wondered what his words meant. The angel said to her,

Angel: Don't be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you. You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a King, as his ancestor David was, and he will be the King of the descendants of Jacob forever; His Kingdom will never end!

Narrator: Mary said to the angel,

Mary: How, then, can this be?

Narrator: The angel answered,

Angel: The Holy Spirit will come on you, and God's power will rest on you. For this reason the Holy Child will be called the Son of God. Remember your relative Elizabeth. It is said that she cannot have children, but she herself is now six months pregnant, even though she is very old. For there is nothing God cannot do.

Narrator: Mary said,

Mary: I am the Lord's servant, may it happen to me as you have said.

Narrator: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Facilitator:

From today's Gospel reading we can see the earnest faith of Mary at work and her true and trusting devotion to God. Take a moment to ask Mary to help us say with her "I am the Lord's servant..."

(Pause for students to reflect on the Gospel)

Let us now read the excerpt from 'Porta Fidei' on Mary, which summarises her faithful obedience to God and her exciting and fruitful journey of faith:

By Faith, Mary accepted the Angel's word and believed the message that she was to become the Mother of God in the obedience of her devotion (cf. Lk 1:38).

Visiting Elizabeth, she raised her hymn of praise to the Most High for the marvels he worked in those who trust him (cf. Lk 1:46-55).

With joy and trepidation she gave birth to her only son,... (cf. Lk 2:6-7).

Trusting in Joseph, her husband, she took Jesus to Egypt to save him from Herod's persecution (cf. Mt 2:13-15).

With the same faith, she followed the Lord in his preaching and remained with him all the way to Golgotha (cf. Jn 19:25-27).

By faith, Mary tasted the fruits of Jesus' resurrection, and treasuring every memory in her heart (cf. Lk 2:19, 51),

she passed them on to the Twelve assembled with her in the Upper Room to receive the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1:14; 2:1-4).

(Porta Fidei, 13)

Facilitator:

Keeping in mind what you have just read, let us now divide into small groups of 3 or 4 to study this further. Here is what you can do in each group:

- ❖ Choose one of the Scripture texts below for discussion:

Luke 1:38

Luke 2:19, 51

John 2: 4-5

John 19:25

Acts 1:14

- ❖ Read your text twice and have a quiet moment to think.

- ❖ Discuss in your group using the following questions as a guide:

- What is Mary's response or reaction here?
- How is Mary's faith observed in action?
- How does this verse or discussion 'speak' to me?
- What can I learn from Mary's example?

- ** When the small group sharing is done, please share your discussion with the whole group, a representative from each small group can present the points.

Personal Reflection time (optional)

Facilitator:

We now enter a time of quiet where all are encouraged to reflect on what we've learnt and heard today. Have you some points you want to remember in prayer? Write them in a journal. Find a comfortable spot (sitting, standing, kneeling) to do this if possible.

(background music may be played during this time)

Prayers of the Faithful:

We ask Mary for her prayers and accompaniment that she may intercede with God for us.

Response: ***Mary, Mother of God pray for us***

Mary was the Mother of Jesus. May we learn from her how to bring Jesus into the world for others. *R*

Mary lived a life pleasing to God. We ask Mary to show us how to listen to God and follow his call. *R*

Mary gave glory to God through her life. May we understand how to give praise to God in all we do. *R*

Mary was very close to God. May we stay close to Mary and discover how to be a close friend of God in Jesus. *R*

Facilitator: Now let us all pray the '***Hail Mary***' together.

All: Hail Mary, full of grace the Lord is with you.
Blessed are you among women
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.



Facilitator:

Holy Mary, Mother of God
Holy Mary, Mother of Christ
Holy Mary, Mother of the Church
Holy Mary, Help of Christians
Holy Mary, Queen of all saints
Holy Mary, Queen of Peace

All:

Pray for us
Pray for us
Pray for us
Pray for us
Pray for us
Pray for us

Facilitator: Pray for us most Holy Mother of God.

All: That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen.

Closing Prayer:

Facilitator:

Mary was always faithful to God's will. She was faithful at the stable in Bethlehem, she was faithful on the flight to Egypt, and she was faithful at the foot of the Cross. She was God's faithful servant. We should follow her example and be faithful to God's Will in our lives.

All:

Father, help us to do your will even when it is difficult. Help us to be like Mary and respond **'YES'** to what You ask of us. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Closing Song:

I HEAR THE BELLS

I hear the bells of Mary's Ave ringing
Joy to my heart, like angel voices singing
Calling to prayer, with echoes from afar,

Ave MariAve Maria!

O Gabriel,
Sent down from heavens bright glory
To tell to all
This true wondrous story,
I join with thee
To praise God's brightest star,

Ave MariAve Maria!

O Queen assumed,
Star-crowned in God's celestial light,
May thy sweet name
Be on my lips in death's dark night;
Guide me to heaven,
O radiant morning star.

Ave MariAve Maria!



Images: *Writer's own*

References & Resources

The Catholic Youth Bible, (2nd Ed) St Mary's Press, 2011
<http://www.vatican.va> *PORTA FIDEI OF THE SUPREME PONTIFF BENEDICT XVI*, 2013
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YEAR OF FAITH ²⁰¹²₂₀₁₃

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Assisting Catholic Schools in developing whole persons for God and Society