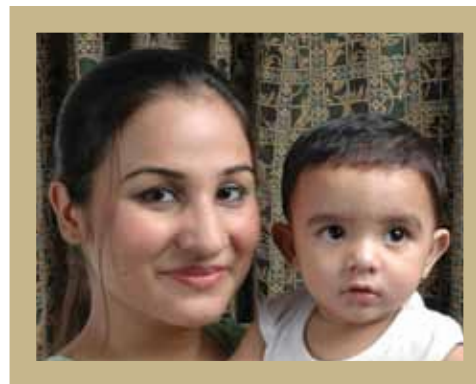


Closing thoughts...

Christmas is “the most wonderful time of the year.” Yet sometimes, we get so busy with shopping, decorating, cooking, programs, plays and entertaining that we end up making ourselves frazzled. We forget the reason for the season. Jesus is the reason for Christmas. Jesus is the reason we can enjoy the holidays. This year, before doing any of your activities, take time to include the Christmas Story. Reflect on how Mary raised the Son of God to become the most important figure who ever lived on this earth; the One, the I Am, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Jesus has many names. I’m thankful we can know each of them.

FACILITATOR’S GUIDE DECEMBER 2013



study by
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My Name is Favor

Beginning thoughts...

Being the mother of Jesus is something barely conceivable to us who have children of our own. I remember the toddler temper tantrums, the teen years, the college years and many other times of disagreements. I don’t believe Jesus, however, did anything disrespectful or disobedient. Mary had a perfect child. Jesus was the only sinless person who ever lived. How Mary handled that when her other children were born is beyond me—unless God’s favor stayed with her throughout her life. I tend to think she was the same humble, obedient person when her son died as the day the Angel of the Lord visited her.

The most blessed event in Mary’s life was the birth of her son. That was the day she went from poverty to richness unimaginable. She became the mother of a king. This tiny baby would grow up to be King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and the Savior of all mankind. How did she react when the lowly shepherds came? How did she react when the magi came to visit? It would be my guess that she acted with the same humility and gentleness that she had exhibited throughout the earlier part of her life. Mary was chosen because she was a wonderful example of graciousness and charity. Her life was consistent and dedicated to God. Having Jesus only made all these characteristics grow deeper and stronger.

The worst event in her life came when she had to watch her baby, her son die on the cross. She was there at the foot weeping with every fiber of her being as her Son, with whom God had favored her, was humiliated, tortured and brutalized in a way normally saved for criminals. Only Jesus wasn’t a criminal. He was the Son of God. How could she survive? How could she go on? How could she live without Him? She would, in answer to all three, live with hope. She knew the prophecies. Jesus told her He would be resurrected. That Hope did not disappoint. She will be with Him forever.

My Name is Favor

A WILL TO SURRENDER

Key Verse: “And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her” (Luke 1:38).

Key Thought: God entrusts us with His work as we surrender our wills and lives to His control.

- ✳ Write the key verse in your journal.
- ✳ Go over the questions and answers on p. 13, *Treasure*.
- ✳ Do you like the term submission?
- ✳ Some women tend to cringe when they read/hear Ephesians 5:22. How do you react to this verse?
- ✳ If we understand this chapter in Ephesians, it’s all about the authority of Christ and the church. Read on to verse 25.
- ✳ How do we know that the young Mary knew and worshiped God? (*She recognized His authority—Luke 1:38, our Key Verse.*)
- ✳ What other word besides *submit* can we use to describe Mary? (*Humble—James 4:10*)
- ✳ What are some characteristics of humbleness? (*meekness, servant heart, gentle in spirit, doesn’t think too highly of self*)
- ✳ What did it cost Mary to surrender her will at the moment she believed the angel? (*Spend a few minutes thinking of scenarios she may have had to endure. Example: Distrust of Joseph until the angel appeared to him—Matthew 1:20.*)
- ✳ Did Mary come from a privileged background? (*The poverty of Mary and Joseph is shown in their offering—Leviticus 12:6-8; Luke 2:24.*)
- ✳ Does God only save those who can afford it? (*No, God is no respecter of persons—Leviticus 19:15; 1 Timothy 5:21.*)
- ✳ Was Mary the only person who had the favor of God on her life? (*No, read Genesis 18:3—Abraham; Genesis 29:17—Rachel; Acts 7:45-46 and Psalm 89:16-20—David.*)
- ✳ Write the name *Jehovah-jireh*, the God who provides, in your journal along with the previous names written.

Reflection: Dismiss with prayer asking God to help you in surrendering completely to Him.

My Name is Favor

A HEART OF HUMILITY

Key Verses: “And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed” (Luke 1:46-48).

Key Thought: As we humble our hearts before the Lord, He entrusts us with the display of His splendor and beauty to a watching world.

- ✳ Write the key verse in your journal.
 - ✳ Go over the questions and answers on p.15, *Treasure*.
 - ✳ Do you consider yourself a humble person? Why or why not?
 - ✳ Look up these Scriptures that reveal Jesus’ humbleness (*Matthew 11:29; 1 Peter 2:23; Philippians 2:7; John 13:4-5*).
 - ✳ Did Mary also have the characteristics of humbleness? (*Luke 1:28, 30, 34, 46*)
 - ✳ How do you think Mary was brought up? Did her parents prepare her for being the typical wife and mother?
 - ✳ When Jesus was growing up, how do you think Mary treated Him? How do you raise God’s Son?
 - ✳ Why did God choose Mary? (*She was righteous and obedient—Luke 1:5.*) For that matter, why did God choose Elisabeth, mother of John the Baptist? Was Elisabeth humble, too? (*Luke 1:43*)
 - ✳ Did Jesus and John see each other as children? (*We’re not told. However, Luke 1:80 leads me to think that they did not.*)
 - ✳ Was John the Baptist humble during His ministry?
 - ✳ Can a pastor/preacher be humble and still preach the truth of God’s Word? (*Matthew 3:11*)
 - ✳ What did John call the multitude in Luke 3:7? (*Generation of Vipers*) Those are pretty strong words coming from a wild looking man, don’t you think (*Matthew 3:4*)?
 - ✳ Read on in Luke 3:15-18 and realize that John knew and fully understood what he was preaching. Do you agree?
 - ✳ Do you suppose Mary recognized that God’s favor was on Jesus’ life as he was growing up (*Luke 2:52*)?
 - ✳ Do you seek God’s favor on your life?
 - ✳ Write the name for Servant Messiah: *Eved Mashiach* in your journal. Reflect on how He served others.
- Reflection:** Dismiss in prayer asking God to help you grow closer to Him and be a servant to others.

My Name is Favor THE SON AS SAVIOR

Key Verse: “His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it” (John 2:5).

Key Thought: As we, in faith, acknowledge the Son as our Savior, He entrusts us with eternal life and extends to us His favor.

- ✱ Write the key verse in your journal.
- ✱ Go over the questions and answers on p. 17, *Treasure*.
- ✱ Have you acknowledged Jesus as your Savior?
- ✱ What does that mean (*1 Timothy 1:15; Hebrews 7:25; Acts 5:31; Luke 2:11*)?
- ✱ Are there any more Saviors? (*No, Jesus is the One and Only—John 3:16, Acts 4:12; 1 Corinthians 2:2.*)
- ✱ Did Mary fully comprehend that she was the mother of the Son of God, even after the angel told her (*Luke 1:27-35*)?
- ✱ Where do we find that others were told of the Savior’s birth by the angels (*Luke 2:8-14*)?
- ✱ Do you view these verses as just the Christmas Story?
- ✱ Could this have been the very first group of missionaries? (*In Luke 1:15-18, notice the phrase in verse 17: “they made known abroad...”*)
- ✱ What did Zacharias proclaim when he could speak again (*Luke 1:68-79*)?
- ✱ Did Zacharias believe it was his son who would be Savior? (*He knew John would prepare the way for the Savior—Luke 1:76.*)
- ✱ Mary was already espoused (engaged) to Joseph when she became pregnant (*Matthew 1:24*). Why did Joseph go ahead and marry her? What kind of man was he? (*Joseph was a just man—Matthew 1:19.*)
- ✱ Just for thought, would Joseph have married Mary without the visit from the angel of the Lord (*Matthew 1:20-23*)?
- ✱ Did Joseph recognize Mary’s son as the Savior of the World? (*Remember, Joseph, also knew the prophecies from Isaiah 7:14, 9:7 and 11:2.*)
- ✱ Can you imagine Mary and Joseph discussing these prophecies over breakfast, during devotions, or sitting around the fire at night?
- ✱ Do we talk of Jesus as our Savior with our children, our family, our friends or even strangers?
- ✱ Write *Adonai*, which means Lord, in your journal.

Reflection: Dismiss in prayer and thank God for being Lord over all.

My Name is Favor BLESSED THROUGH OBEDIENCE

Key Verses: “For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother” (*Matthew 12:50*).

Key Thought: As we follow Christ through obedience, He counts us as family and entrusts us with blessings.

- ✱ Write the key verse in your journal. Try to memorize it.
- ✱ Go over the questions and answers on p.19, *Treasure*.
- ✱ Do you agree or disagree that love is a powerful motivator?
- ✱ We obey Jesus because we love Him. Does He require that of us (*John 14:15, 15:9, Deuteronomy 6:5; Psalm 31:23; Jude 21; 1 John 4:16*)?
- ✱ Many other Scriptures declare our need to love and obey God. Record some from your concordance if you have time.
- ✱ Why does God bless obedience? (*Solid foundation of character—Matthew 7:24; Essential to belong to God’s family—Matthew 12:50; Key to spiritual knowledge—John 7:17; Source of divine fellowship—John 14:23; 1 John 2:17.*)
- ✱ Can you think of people in the Bible whom God blessed because of their obedience? (*Paul—Acts 26:19; Joshua—Joshua 11:15; Abraham—Genesis 22:2-3; Noah—Genesis 6:22.*)
- ✱ Let’s not forget Joseph (*Matthew 2:13-15*). What if he had not obeyed the Angel of the Lord? What could have happened to Jesus (*Matthew 2:16*)?
- ✱ As a result of Joseph’s obedience, where did the family return? (*Israel—Matthew 2:19-21.*)
- ✱ Did they stay there? (*No—Matthew 2:22-23.*)
- ✱ This time, who warned Joseph to leave? (*God.*)
- ✱ Where did Mary and Joseph raise Jesus? (*Nazareth.*)
- ✱ Why is obedience to God necessary (*Acts 5:29-32*)?
- ✱ Do you have a problem with disobedience? How can that show up in our lives? (*Lack of prayer, lack of Bible reading, not attending church, being critical or unloving—so, so many ways.*)
- ✱ Write this name for Christ in your journal: *Love Himself.*

Reflection: Dismiss in prayer thanking God for the love He gave to us in the form of His Son Jesus