

Suggested video resources for talk:

Youtube video – CeeLo Green: Mary did you know by ‘Bible Series’

Show last clip from Star Wars 3 (Revenge of the Sith) where the baby twins of Jedi Knight Anakin Skywalker [A human from Tatooine] and Senator Padme Amidala, a human from planet Naboo, are given to new parents. Leia is given to the royal family of Alderaan, rulers Bail and Beba Organa and is brought up as a princess. Luke is given to Beru & Owen Laars [A moisture farmer on Tatooine (a distant planet on the outer rim, remote and insignificant), and a step-brother of Anakin]. The future of the Empire rests in these two babies, who need to grow up in the right way safely to fulfil their destiny.

### **Intro**

**Joke** – Mary goes back into the innkeeper clutching a hand full of straw, and says ‘You misheard me, I said I wanted to see the **manager!**

That didn’t happen, but then of course there is no ‘innkeeper’ at all in the biblical narratives. Mary though was very real, and very special. There’s something about Mary. So today we are going to look she was special, and then ask the question - are we special too?

### **Greatest Miracle**

If you substitute Jesus’ name for ‘the Words’ in John’s gospels as intended then John says - In the Beginning was Jesus, and the Jesus was with God, and Jesus was God. In other words he always existed up in heaven. So if you believe in the Nativity story also, then you have the part of God we know as Jesus taking on the form of a baby. If we believe these things, that this is in my opinion the greatest miracle that Jesus performed. If you can believe that he is God, and can do that, then the other miracles like ‘walking on water’, healing leper etc should not challenge you. Basically if you can believe in Christmas then anything is possible with God. The unique thing about this miracle is that Jesus could not do this one without help. Some miracles he chose to have help such as the feeding of the 5000, miraculous catch etc but could have done it anyway without help. This one he needed a lady who would birth him and bring him up. He needed a Mum.

### **Star Wars:-**

**Star Wars.** (Revenge of the Sith) where the baby twins of Jedi Knight Anakin Skywalker [A human from Tatooine] and Senator Padme Amidala, a human from planet Naboo, are given to new parents. Leia is given to the royal family of Alderaan, their rulers Bail and Beba Organa and is brought up as a princess. Luke is given to Beru & Owen Laars [A moisture farmer on Tatooine (a distant planet on the outer rim), and a step-brother of Anakin]. The future of the Empire rests in these two babies, who need to grow up in the right way safely to fulfil their destiny. If you had a very precious baby that the future of the world depended on, who would you choose to be the parents. Possibly royalty, but probably not a simple moisture farmer from the outer rim as the Jedi chose for Anakin Skywalker in Star Wars 3 (Revenge of the Sith). He was vulnerable but well hidden growing up, whilst his sister had the protection of royalty.

### **Two Empires**

God had a plan. But if his plan was going to work, then he needed some-one to have this special baby. Looking around the inhabitants of planet Earth who was he going to choose.

In the 200 years before Jesus, we see the development of two great world powers. The first was established in Asia by the ruthless King of Chin, Ying Chun, who brought together the 50 million people he had conquered into one kingdom, he named China. He destroyed all the individual capital cities and cultures, and had one government, one system of writing, one currency and one capital. 4500 miles away another Empire centred on the Mediterranean, ruled over nearly as many people, and nearly as much land mass. The Roman Empire. Both had a great engineering culture, and both had great military might. Both thought that they ruled the whole of the known world. Separated by about 4500 miles they were unaware of each other. Over half the whole planets population were governed by one of these two empires. They were the world powers.

### **Least Significant – all generations will call me blessed.**

The smaller was the Roman Empire, just. Israel was the insignificant back water in the Empire. [Despite the Jews letting God down repeatedly, he still decided to fulfil their prophecies. He kept to the script). The Galilee region in the North was the least significant in Israel, and Nazareth, a mountain hamlet of no concern. 'Does anything good come out of Nazareth'. Then in this small community is a young girl, living at home with her parents, a hand maid working hard and of little importance to anyone. Mary. God chose her.

Of all the people on the planet, she was one of the least significant in World terms. That's special in itself! Yes we believe she knew his scriptures, she was a devoted young Jew, but so were thousands of others her age. What I think made her really special, was that she wasn't – in human terms she would have been seen as very very low down the pecking order – an insignificant girl just reaching maturity. So on the world stage (with the great Chinese and Roman Empires) as it looked at the start of the new era, could this girl have been any more insignificant than she was.

Yet today, you can go to any Catholic Church around the whole globe and there will be statues of her. You can look at stained glass windows in Catholic and Protestant churches alike and she's there. Look up at the frescoes inside the domes of the biggest cathedrals worldwide, and she is there, usually in a prominent position with Jesus and God. Next to Jesus, it is not Peter (the rock on which Jesus built his Church) who comes in at number 2 in the popularity stakes – it's Mary, the mother of Jesus. Whilst pregnant she composed a song, with that included the words from now on, all generations will call me blessed... she was right.

There's something about Mary!

### **What did she do?**

Mary – Hebrew form is Miriam. What we know about this gutsy young lady Mary. We think she was a young teenage girl. She had been betrothed to an older man, Joseph. Mary presents Jesus at the temple when he is 40 days old. The old prophet Simeon prophesies over him as saviour of the world. She goes on to have a large family. She went on to have a big family. We know from Matthew (13v55) that Jesus had four brothers, James (led Jerusalem church), Joseph, Simon, and Judas (wrote Jude). He had several sisters but we don't know how many. But a family of say 10 was quite possible. When Jesus was 12. Like most peasant families she would have led a simple poor life. A few broke out of it, perhaps became a tax collector for the Romans, like Zachheus or Matthew, but were hated for it. For most it was a hard agricultural life, with a few tradesman and fisherman.

Mary is involved in the only event in Jesus' adolescent life that is recorded in the New Testament. At the age of twelve Jesus, having become separated from his parents on their return journey from the [Passover](#) celebration in [Jerusalem](#), was found among the teachers in the temple. It's not surprising the 12 year old was not being watched consistently if Mary had more than 6 smaller children to look after too !

She is with Jesus in the wedding at Cana, and is mentioned at other times during his ministry. She is at the foot of his cross, and she is the upper room with Jesus' brothers after the ascension for Pentecost. She was there from birth to death, and rebirth to ascension, then took on board his Spirit and served him for the rest of her life. There's something about Mary.

Mary not only stayed with Jesus throughout his ministry as a mother, but she then devoted the rest of her life to following Jesus and would have no doubt supporting the fledgling Church as it started to spread throughout the world

### **What she risked**

Mary had a Mums lot and some. You would have thought being the Mother of the Messiah would be easy. Who wouldn't agree to it. Not a bit of it.

Mary was scared at first of the mighty Angel Gabriel (the one that recently struck a relative of hers dumb for months because the priest had questioned the validity of what the Angel has told him), but it must have been awesome being in his presence. He told her what was going to happen, she wasn't asked if she wanted to become pregnant, but she embraced it, because she wanted to please and serve God. If Gabriel had given her a job spec for being the 'highly favoured lady – Mother of our Lord', it would not have made good reading. It was a dangerous job. There were no obvious short-term benefits, but instead she immediately risked being stoned, as a betrothed girl who became pregnant outside the relationship, and if she avoided that, she would still have an illegitimate baby, which they called a Mamzer, and would have a stigma and a list of restrictions.

Mary would not have known her due date. There was no ultra-sound to measure the length of the foetus! Contractions near Bethlehem. Perhaps Joseph helped deliver the baby in the stable. Joseph probably died during Jesus' late teens, leaving Mary to bring up a large family as a single parent.

But that was only the start, when Jesus was still a small baby, Herod was out to kill him. The "[wise men](#)" showed up at the "house" where Jesus and his family and told them so they fled by night going on the run as a refugee to Egypt, only returning after Herod's death. Then as Jesus grew up and started talking about being the Messiah, some people expected to him to lead a revolution against the Romans. Even such talk, with no army to back him up, put not just Jesus but his whole family in danger. Then after Jesus' death it would not be long before Mary was on the run again, with the other disciples, fleeing the Christian persecution. For much of Mary's life she was either at a risk of danger, in danger because of Jesus.

The prophet Simeon had been right when on seeing the baby Jesus as the Saviour, told Mary that a sword would pierce her soul. In other words she would suffer. . It was a risky job, being the Mother of Christ, but there's something about Mary.

### **God Appointed and Anointed Mary – (Define this)**

We have seen God had a plan, and it involved Mary. It was God's plan for her life not hers. He appointed her to the task of being the Mother of Jesus, God's own. To be anointed by God is not only to be picked, but also to be empowered by Him for the task or position to which He has called you. Mary was given the means to carry out her risky mission. She stuck at it through-out her life. She loved God. If you like she was a D.O.G Disciple of God, and we all know that a D.O.G is for life not just for Christmas.

There's something about Mary.

### **God Appoints and anoints you -**

QE2 was born in 1926, and became Queen in 1952 when her Uncle Edward ran away from his duty as King for an American woman. But God had chosen her anointed for the task of Queen, and she has done this for 60 years now, and become the most famous living woman and ruler in the world. I think it's wonderful who God chooses, who he anoints for a job. It's never usually the person we would choose.

It's amazing who God chooses sometimes isn't it? New Archbishop of Canterbury – get his background. Mother Theresa, Bruce Willis etc.

Mary was favoured by God, if you like under Gods favour and blessing. She was also loved by her Son, and stayed faithful to him throughout her life. .... There's something about Mary.

The Good News today is that you are also under Gods favour, and you are also loved by Marys Son, Jesus Christ, and he wants you to step into those things that he has set apart for you to do, things that will success because of his anointing and blessing. Yes there is something about Mary that's special, but then there is also something about you that's special, that draws Gods favour and Jesus' love. He wants you not just for Christmas, or a short period, he wants you for life. Luke Skywalker was place in Tattoine and fulfilled his destiny, Jesus was place in Nazareth and fulfilled his, God place new promises in you where you are and wants you to fulfil your purposes too. Amen.

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