

INTRO

- What is a favourite tradition you have as you prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus?

Advent is a time of waiting, longing, and anticipation. Mary's story reminds us that faith, and surrender are essential in navigating life's uncertainties and God's direction for our lives. As we focus on Mary, we'll reflect on her faith, humility, and willingness to embrace God's plan despite uncertainty.

READ

Luke 1:26-38, 39-45

REFLECT

Faith in Uncertainty:
Mary responded to the angel's message with trust, saying, "I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled."

Qu: How do you respond when faced with life-changing or unexpected situations?

Qu: In what ways can Mary's example encourage you to trust in God during uncertain times?

Favour:

Mary was described as *highly favoured*. Favour in this context is a gift of love from God — that is not earned — that we are not entitled to on our own merit. To find favour with God means to receive God's grace, goodwill.

Qu: Do you feel God's favour in your life?

Qu: How does recognizing God's grace help you in difficult circumstances?

Surrender:

Mary surrendered her doubts & questions, her future, her reputation and even her physical body to follow God's will.

Qu: What areas of your life are hard to surrender to God?

Qu: How can surrendering control to God bring peace and purpose?

RESPOND

Processing with Community:
Mary sought support from Elizabeth, who immediately affirmed and celebrated that Mary had been chosen to be the mother of the long awaited Messiah. "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!"

Qu: Who in your life provides spiritual encouragement and affirmation?

Qu: How can you support others who are navigating challenges?

Some Advent Practices

Daily Surrender:
Take time each morning to offer your day to God, asking Him to guide your thoughts, actions, and decisions.

Gratitude for Grace:
Reflect on specific ways God has shown you favour and grace in your life. Write them down in a journal and thank Him in prayer.

Prepare Your Heart:
As part of Advent, spend time each week praying, and reflecting on how Jesus' birth brings hope and redemption to your story. Take time to read the gospel of Luke as you reflect on the birth, life & instructions of Jesus.

PRAY

Anticipation and Hope:
Advent symbolizes the spiritual journey of believers as we affirm that Christ has come, that He is present in the world today, and that He will come again in power.

Advent is also a season of longing for a better story where grief and sorrow are no more — longing for our Saviour.

Qu: What are you hoping for this Advent season?

Pray for one another.