

LET THERE BE JOY

BIG IDEA

Although Mary was misunderstood and encountered many difficulties, she discovered that cooperating with God and persevering through the trials led to extreme blessing!

SCRIPTURE

Have your group read aloud Luke 1:26-49, 56.

OPENER

During the Christmas season, our highs seem higher and our lows seem lower. Share briefly a high and low you experienced in 2019.

QUESTIONS

1. Share a time when you felt the Lord was asking you to cooperate with Him and do something (like God asked Mary), and you knew it would be difficult, but you said, "I am the Lord's servant."
2. Many didn't believe Mary's story, and she felt misunderstood. Tell of a time when you have felt totally misunderstood. How did you respond?
3. Have you thought of asking the Lord to show you others who may need you to be intentionally compassionate and an encourager to them? Discuss.
4. How are you sharing the joy of Christ this season? Be specific.
5. Share a situation where you or a loved one "stuck it out" through a tough situation and were blessed by it.

TAKEAWAY

In times of difficulty and trials you can do 4 things while you wait for the Lord to defend you:

- 1) Serving others
- 2) Sing and worship the Lord
- 3) Stay where you are
- 4) Stay faithful

REFERENCES

Luke 1:39	Luke 1:26-56	Psalm 139:13, 15
Psalm 135:14	1 Timothy 2:5	Luke 9:24
Matthew 1:19, 20	Isaiah 40:31	Psalm 8:41

DIGGING DEEPER

1. During the sermon, cultural issues were addressed that are currently seen as acceptable, but the Bible tells us they are not. As followers of Jesus, knowing we may be misunderstood, how can we respond when culture and the Word are at odds?
2. What can you do when we are waiting for the Lord to defend you? Look at the examples below, which Mary demonstrated as she waited for the Lord's response to her trial.
 - a. Serve others: What outcome can you expect when you turn your focus away from yourself and direct it toward others?
 - b. Sing: Worshipping the Lord is a salve to the soul, and it can draw you closer to Him. Do you have a "go to" worship song that you sing when you are in a time of turmoil and/or distress? Share what song you sing and any other means of worship that comfort you.
 - c. Stay: Have you ever experienced a time you wanted to run away? During this time did you call on the Lord for help and did He respond? Explain.
 - d. Stay faithful: Share as many ways as you can think of that would help someone remain faithful to the Lord during a trial/hard time.