



# Mary's House

Drama Leader Manual

**Group**

LOVELAND, COLORADO  
GROUP.COM/VBS

# Groups Hometown Nazareth

Where Jesus was a Kid™

You'll reinforce Bible learning in a big way because the daily Bible Point is carefully integrated into each activity. That's why each center is so important to the overall learning experience.

Explore the entire program at a glance. Refer to the chart to see how each center's activities supplement other activities to make the Bible come to life at your church!



## Bible Content

**Bible Point:** Jesus had a family...we do too.

**Key Verse:** "For nothing is impossible with God." (Luke 1:37)

**Bible:** Mary is chosen to be Jesus' mother. (Luke 1:26-38)

## Celebration

- Learn the Day 1 Bible verse and motions.
- Meet Hometown Nazareth Tribes.
- Sing "God With Us," "Great Things," and "Nothing Is Impossible."

## Hometown Huddle

Share an "impossible" trick to relate that God helps them do hard things.



## Mary's House



Meet Mary, and hear about a time an angel gave her a surprising message.



Discover how Jesus was born, learn what his name means, and find out what their own names mean.

## Fun & Games

Mix "chores" and playtime in Hometown Nazareth!



Play low-tech, high-fun games kids have loved for...well, centuries!



## Marketplace Shops

Choose a few shops to visit each day:



## Day 1



## Day 2

**Bible Point:** Jesus had a name...we do too.

**Key Verse:** "I have called you by name; you are mine." (Isaiah 43:1)

**Bible:** Jesus is born and gets his name. (Luke 2:1-40)

- Discover God Sightings.
- Learn the Day 2 Bible verse and motions.
- Sing "What Child Is This?" and "Angels We Have Heard On High."





## Day 3

**Bible Point:** Jesus had a home...we do too.

**Key Verse:** "There is more than enough room in my Father's home."  
(John 14:2)

**Bible:** Jesus' family escapes to Egypt.  
(Matthew 2:13-14, 19-23)

- Talk about their daily mission in the Marketplace.
- Learn the Day 3 Bible verse and motions.
- Sing "Oh, How I Love Jesus" and "Must Be Done in Love."

Choose a special place in "My Father's House" to remind them there is room in God's heavenly home!



Smell frankincense and myrrh as Mary tells about important visitors and a hurried trip to Egypt.



## Day 4

**Bible Point:** Jesus went to church...we do too.

**Key Verse:** "Let us go to the house of the Lord." (Psalm 122:1)

**Bible:** Jesus goes to the Temple.  
(Luke 2:41-52)

- Review Days 1-3.
- Learn the Day 4 Bible verse and motions.
- Sing "Praise Him," "Fairest Lord Jesus," and "You Gave."

Get rid of red fingerprints on special paper, and learn that Jesus makes their hearts clean and beautiful.



Help Mary clean the house for Passover, and learn what happened when Mary and Joseph took Jesus to Jerusalem for Passover.



## Day 5

**Bible Point:** Jesus served others...we do too.

**Key Verse:** "Serve one another in love."  
(Galatians 5:13)

**Bible:** Jesus does a miracle in Cana.  
(John 2:1-12)

- Sing favorite Hometown Nazareth songs.
- Learn the Day 5 Bible verse and motions.
- Hear Tribe cheers.
- Celebrate each person's contributions to the Operation Kid-to-Kid™ efforts at your VBS.

Use a "sticky hand" to grab cards that tell ways to serve others.



Enjoy a snack, discover what happens at most Bible-times weddings, and hear about the first miracle Jesus did.

Creativity and imagination highlight these fun "home-builder" games.



Play travel games, Nazareth-style—by donkey, foot, or cart!



These games get everyone laughing!



## Daily Schedule

**Bible Point:** Jesus had a family...we do too.

➔ **Bible Story:** Mary is chosen to be Jesus' mother. (Luke 1:26-38)

**GROUP A**

**GROUP B**

**GROUP C**

**GROUP D**

**Issachar**

**Gad**

**Joseph**

**Levi**

**Naphtali**

**Simeon**

**Zebulun**

**Reuben**



**Time**

6:00-6:15	Celebration	Celebration	Celebration	Celebration
	<i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.</i>			
6:20-6:35	Hometown Huddle	Hometown Huddle	Hometown Huddle	Hometown Huddle
	<i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.</i>			
6:40-6:55	Mary's House	Fun & Games	Visit Marketplace	
	<i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.</i>			
7:00-7:15	Fun & Games	Mary's House		
	<i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.</i>			
7:20-7:35	Visit Marketplace		Mary's House	Fun & Games
			<i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.</i>	
7:40-7:55			Fun & Games	Mary's House
	<i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.</i>			
8:00-8:15	Hometown Huddle	Hometown Huddle	Hometown Huddle	Hometown Huddle
	<i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.</i>			
8:20-8:35	Celebration	Celebration	Celebration	Celebration

**Today's Announcements:**



## Welcome Home!



We're glad you've joined the staff of this exciting Holy Land Adventure! During this event, families will explore the culture of ancient Nazareth—Jesus' hometown! As Jesus' mother, Mary, you'll give the inside scoop on what it was like when Jesus was a kid. You'll help children and adults understand that while Jesus was God's Son, he also had many of the same emotions and experiences that we do today. Kids and adults will walk away with the comfort of knowing that God understands them, cares for them, and loves them enough to give his only Son.

Families will spend 15 minutes visiting with Mary (that's you) and listening to her share about what it was like to be Jesus' mom.

### Make Each Visit Count

**Smile!** Mary's hospitality and kindness should make families feel warmly welcomed. Engage families in conversation, as if they're truly guests in your home.

**Dig into your role.** In Matthew 13:55, people in Nazareth had listened to Jesus teach. Their response? "Then they scoffed, 'He's just the carpenter's son, and we know Mary, his mother, and his brothers—James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. All his sisters live right here among us. Where did he learn all these things?' And they were deeply offended and refused to believe in him." It seems as if the people who knew Jesus and watched him grow up had seen *only* his humanity. To them, he was just the kid next door. The people in Nazareth missed out on the astonishing discovery that Jesus truly is God's Son! Everyone except Mary, that is. Explore what it might have been like for Mary to *know* Jesus' "true identity."

**Be prepared.** It's important for you to know and understand what you'll cover, since it connects to what is said and done in other areas of the program. Practice your script several times with the person playing Eunice so you both feel comfortable with your lines.

**Be consistent.** It's important that you're available to be at every session of Hometown Nazareth VBS.

## Notes From Nazareth

One-quarter of the Tribes (groups of about 10 people) will visit with you at a time. For example, if you have 120 people at your Hometown Nazareth VBS, 30 of them will come visit at one time. Check with your Director to see how many people you should prepare for.



### Did You Know?

Nazareth most likely gets its name from the Hebrew word *netser*, meaning "a shoot" or "to blossom." Scholars have called Nazareth "the Flower of Galilee," in reference to the way the city sits in a high, hollow plateau encircled by rounded hills. The result looks like the petals of a flower.



## Creating the Environment



### Costumes

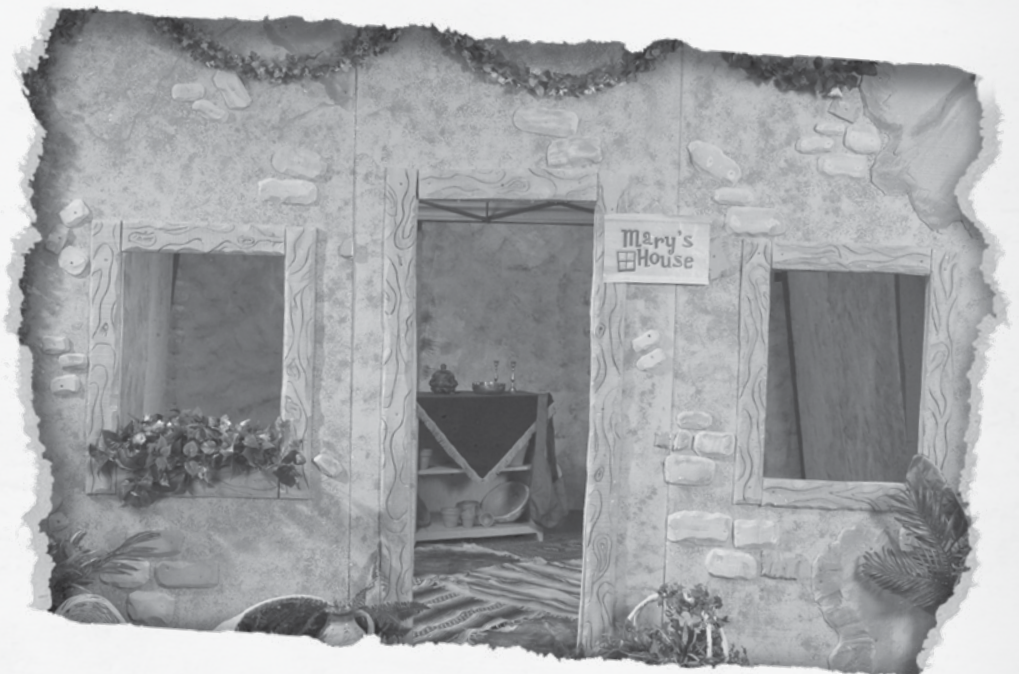
As the wife of a carpenter, Mary probably had an average home and belongings. People needed carpenters—who worked with stone as well as wood—so Joseph likely stayed busy and made a modest income. A simple Bible-times tunic, belt or sash, and sandals will suffice. (Remember, people in Bible-times *did* wear bright colors, so it's OK to wear something lively and cheery!) Jewish women weren't required to cover their heads at home, but they probably did when they went out into the marketplace. By wrapping their hair in cloth, women protected it from dust, dirt, and sun. Eunice is another housewife, just like you, so her costume can be similar to yours.

You may want to call local churches and see about borrowing several good-quality Bible-times costumes. Or visit [group.com/vbs](http://group.com/vbs) and find simple Bible-times "fashions" at cool prices!

### Mary's Home

First, find a room that will comfortably accommodate one-quarter of the total Tribes. If possible, find a place that's quiet and removed from the bustle and noise of the Marketplace and the games area.

Then transform the room into a cozy Bible-times home. The easiest way to decorate is to hang tan or brown cloth from the ceiling to create plain walls.





This also helps everyone use their imaginations, since they're not distracted by modern-looking bulletin boards, white boards, posters, and furniture.

If you can't move furniture, hide it under solid-colored sheets and set large baskets or bundles of cloth on top. Hang dried herbs or grasses from the ceiling or on the walls (women would have used these for cooking), scatter rugs on the floor, and fill shelves or tabletops with earthenware pots or bowls. Have fun making Mary's house... well, homey!

## Mary's Neighbor

Find a hammy assistant to play Eunice (pronounced "YEW-niss"), Mary's fictional nosy neighbor. Be sure you and "Eunice" understand each character's personality and role.

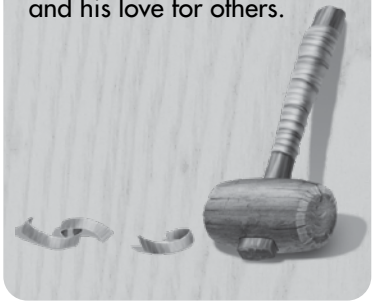
- ➔ Eunice represents the people mentioned in Matthew 13:55. She doesn't believe that Jesus is really God's Son—she thinks Mary is just making up stories. Eunice's disbelief gives kids and adults a chance to verbalize their faith and practice sharing the truth of who Jesus really is. In past Holy Land Adventure programs, this kind of character has provided some of the most powerful, memorable moments in the entire program!
- ➔ Mary should be a friendly, personable, likable character that kids and adults enjoy spending time with. Help the families in your church see Mary as a *real* person—someone who did dishes, laughed with her neighbors, worried about her kids getting sick, and loved God. Go beyond the sanitized pictures you've seen on the Christmas cards, and have fun with your character.

Practice with Eunice ahead of time so that her entrances, your dialogue, and her exits can be smooth and natural.



## Field Test Findings

At our field test, kids sought out Eunice so they could tell her that Jesus really *is* God's Son and that he loves her. Parents loved hearing their kids boldly talk about Christ and his love for others.





## Supplies



### All Week

- ➔ simple Bible-times costumes for Mary and Eunice
- ➔ tan or brown cloth to cover the walls, if necessary

### Day 1

- ➔ broom or a palm branch to use as a broom
- ➔ eggs (1 per Tribe per rotation, plus a few extras)
- ➔ pitchers of water (1 per Tribe per rotation)
- ➔ paper towels (tuck these away in case of a dropped egg)
- ➔ 2 bowls (1 for the broken eggs and 1 to hold all of the eggs)
- ➔ earthenware bowl filled with wheat kernels (or something similar)

### Day 2

- ➔ baby name books, with name meanings (1 per Tribe per rotation)
- ➔ blankets or sheets (to use as props)
- ➔ woven wicker laundry basket
- ➔ another basket to hold the baby name books

### Day 3

- ➔ frankincense- and myrrh-scented incense\* (or 2 different scented oils)
- ➔ 2 small, ornate jars with tight-fitting lids
- ➔ handful of imitation gold coins or small stones painted gold
- ➔ small box or velvety bag to store the coins
- ➔ handful of wood beads from the Bead Bazaar shop and a length of cord for stringing beads

### Day 4

- ➔ matzo or flatbread (enough for each participant to taste a piece)
- ➔ bread baskets (1 per Tribe per rotation)
- ➔ cloth to cover the matzo or flatbread
- ➔ a bit of flour (to dust your hands and clothes with)

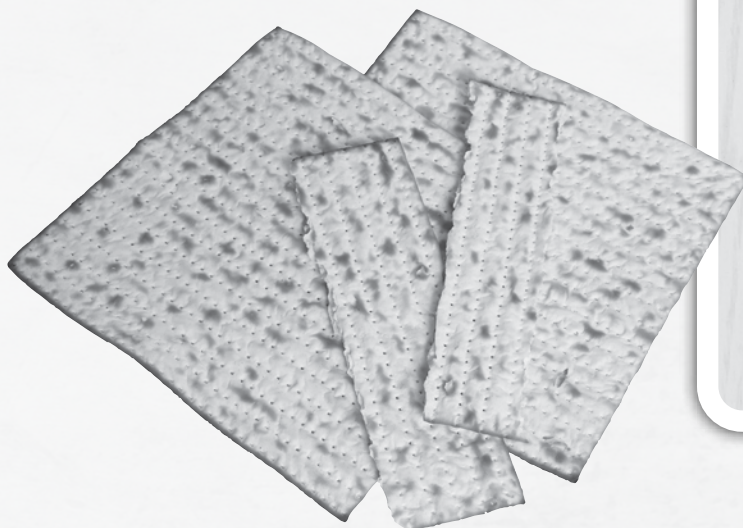
\*available from group.com or your Group VBS supplier



- ➔ grains of wheat (flax seeds work well, too) to scatter on the floor
- ➔ rugs
- ➔ several brooms
- ➔ old washcloths or scraps of cloth to use for cleaning (some shops may have these that you can borrow)

## Day 5

- ➔ basket of real or imitation fruit
- ➔ grape juice (enough for each participant to have about ¼ cup)
- ➔ pitchers for grape juice (1 per Tribe per rotation)
- ➔ pitchers of water (1 per Tribe per rotation)
- ➔ 4-ounce cups (1 per participant)
- ➔ basket for trash (be sure it has a plastic bag liner in it)
- ➔ matzo (enough for about one-third of the participants per rotation to have a small taste)
- ➔ volunteer to refill pitchers between rotations
- ➔ tarp or old rugs (optional)



# DAY 1



**Bible Point:** Jesus had a family...we do too.

## Why It Matters

You'll likely have a mix of two-parent families, single-parent families, blended families, foster families, adoptive families, and more at your VBS. God cares about every family—he placed his precious Son into one long, long ago. Use today's activities to help kids and adults realize that Jesus was part of an earthly family and that we can *all* belong to God's wonderful family.

**Bible Story:** Mary is chosen to be Jesus' mother. (Luke 1:26-38)

## Read the Passage With This in Mind...

- ➔ The marriage betrothal in Bible times was more binding than an engagement today. Engaged couples took public vows and acted in many ways as a married couple except that they didn't live together as man and wife. But they *did* call each other husband and wife!
- ➔ In Bible times, girls could get engaged as young as age 12.
- ➔ The angel Gabriel told Mary five things about her son: Jesus would be great, be called the Son of the Most High, be given the throne of David, and reign over Israel forever, and his Kingdom would never end.
- ➔ Mary apparently trusted God completely. She didn't ask for a sign from the angel but merely asked how she could be with child, since she was a virgin.

## Bible Verse:

"For nothing is impossible with God."  
(Luke 1:37)





# A Big Responsibility



## Getting Ready

Place eggs in a bowl. Set the bowl within easy reach in the room. Hide the earthenware bowl of wheat kernels outside the room.

You'll meet Tribes outside the door, where you're sweeping your "porch." Eunice should wait outside the room, out of sight, until everyone has entered and you've closed the door most of the way. She needs to listen carefully for her cue.

## Meeting the Tribes

Sweep the floor just outside your room as you wait for Tribes to gather.

Say: **I was hoping you'd come by! I heard those songs you were singing about Jesus, so I know that you know who he really is!** Look at people's clothing. **Hmmmm, you don't look like you're from Nazareth. Where do you live?** Listen to people's answers. **I've never heard of that city, but praise God that people all the way in [name of your community] know that Jesus is God's Son! Come inside, and let's talk!**

## Chosen

Welcome everyone inside, and have them sit on the floor.

Say: **It's so nice to talk with people who actually believe that Jesus is God's Son. Not everyone in Nazareth feels the same way.**

**My name's Mary, and I grew up right here in Nazareth. In fact, it was here that I learned a little about God's huge plans...and that I would have a part in those plans! I got chosen to do something so amazing, so incredible, so unbelievable...well, maybe something like that has happened to you before.**

**Think about a time you were chosen for an important job or got to do something special. Talk about that with the people in your Tribe, and I'll listen in.**

Direct Tribes to circle up, making knee-to-knee circles so Tribe members can hear each other. Allow a couple of minutes for discussion, moving from Tribe to Tribe and listening intently.

Say: **Some of you have had some important jobs!** Repeat some of the jobs you heard people share. **Those are different from the job I was given. Let me explain what happened.** Motion to an older girl or teenager (about 12 or 13 years old). **I wasn't much older than you when I got engaged.** Ask the girl you motioned to:

**?** **What would you think about getting married and starting a family right now?** (That would be weird; yuck; no way.)

## Supplies for Today

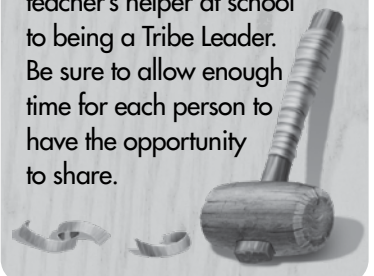
- ➔ broom or a palm branch to use as a broom
- ➔ eggs (1 per Tribe per rotation, plus a few extras)
- ➔ pitchers of water (1 per Tribe per rotation)
- ➔ paper towels (tuck these away in case of a dropped egg)
- ➔ 2 bowls (1 for the broken eggs and 1 to hold all of the eggs)
- ➔ earthenware bowl filled with wheat kernels (or something similar)

## Notes From Nazareth

You can use regular white eggs, but brown ones are a little different than most kids are used to and are an easy way to convey a farm-like setting.

## Field Test Findings

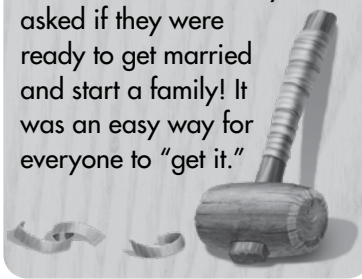
We found that kids and adults really did want to share about their important jobs—everything from being a teacher's helper at school to being a Tribe Leader. Be sure to allow enough time for each person to have the opportunity to share.





## Field Test Findings

Pointing out a preteen girl was a fun way to drive home just how young Mary was—especially for marriage and a family. Preteen girls made faces, widened their eyes, and frantically shook their heads “no” when Mary asked if they were ready to get married and start a family! It was an easy way for everyone to “get it.”



## Notes From Nazareth

When you ask a question, be sure to repeat the answer that a child or adult gives. Some people are soft-spoken, and you may have ambient noise from the Marketplace that makes it hard for others in the room to hear. By repeating the answers aloud, you'll help everyone feel like they're part of the conversation.

Act surprised at the answer.

Say: **Hmmm, well, in Nazareth most girls get married around 13, so I'm not sure why that seems strange. Anyway, I was engaged to a wonderful man named Joseph. He was a builder here in town—a very good man. I don't know what it's like where you live, but engagement here is a big deal! It's almost like being married.**

**Joseph and I were busy making wedding plans, when something surprising happened; one day, an angel appeared to me! Ask:**

**?** **What's the first thing you'd do if an angel suddenly showed up in your bedroom?** (Scream; cry; laugh; run.)

Say: **The angel said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!" Well, that was a surprise. What in the world could the angel mean? Then things got even stranger. The angel—his name was Gabriel—told me that I was going to have God's Son, and I should name him Jesus. Joseph and I were already going to have a family! Ask:**

**?** **Why do you think God wanted to put his Son into a family?** (So someone would care for him; so people could take care of him; so he'd have brothers and sisters.)

### Pass the Egg

Say: **I was so confused! I mean, me...a mom? I thought, "I'm nobody special. I'm just an average girl from a town in the hills of Galilee." I wasn't the prettiest girl in town or the best runner or the best at weaving baskets. I wasn't the best anything—I was just me! And God chose me to care for his Son? And...wow, caring for a tiny baby! What a huge responsibility!**

Pick up the bowl of eggs. **It kind of reminds me of these eggs that I just gathered. They're fresh eggs—not cooked.** Carefully hand each Tribe Leader an egg. (You may want to ask Tribe members to remove any rings they're wearing.)

Say: **In your little circle, hand the egg from person to person to person like this.** Hold an egg about 12 inches above a Tribe member's outstretched hands, and then drop it into his or her palm. As Tribe members pass the egg, remind them to pass it from one hand way up high to cupped hands that are down low. (You'll see lots of nervous faces!)

When everyone has passed the egg around their Tribe, gather the eggs carefully into the bowl. (If anyone drops the egg, that's OK. Just use paper towels to clean it up, and give them a new egg to try the experiment again.) Then ask:

**?** **What went through your mind as you passed the egg?** (I hope I don't drop it; I hope we don't break it; oops!)



Say: **Then maybe you can understand a teeny, tiny bit of what I felt! I mean, babies are so helpless—you have to take extra special care of them. Pause. You know, your family cares for you that way. Of course, sometimes people make mistakes and are rough. Set a bowl on the ground and throw an egg into it so the egg breaks. Sometimes our feelings get hurt and our hearts get broken. But God doesn't ever do that. We're his children, and he loves us. We're part of God's family. That's why when the angel told me that God had chosen me, I wanted to obey God. I wanted to serve him and take care of his Son, Jesus.**

This is Eunice's cue to knock loudly.



## A Visit From Eunice

*(Eunice knocks.)*

**Mary:** I'll bet I can guess who that is...

*(Mary opens the door, and Eunice enters, without being invited in. She gives everyone a suspicious look and continues to glance around the house somewhat disapprovingly.)*

**Eunice:** Oh, Mary, I...uh...didn't know you had company. And so many!

**Mary:** Hi, Eunice. These are some friends who just dropped by to talk. We've been, um, talking about old times. Is there anything I can do for you?

**Eunice:** Do? Er, uh...well, I came over to borrow *(looking around for an idea)* a cup of grain. Do you have a cup of grain I can borrow to make my famous camel's milk flatbread? *(To the "guests")* Everyone in town raves about it, you know.

**Mary:** Of course I can share some grain with you. I have a new bag just outside. I'll be right back. *(To guests)* Excuse me for just a minute, OK?

*(Mary exits, retrieving the earthenware bowl of wheat while she's gone.)*

**Eunice:** *(Speaks to guests conspiratorially, as if sharing a big secret.)* I know you're new in town, so I wanted to talk with you before Mary filled your head with a lot of nonsense about that son of hers. *(Rolls her eyes.)* Jesus! Now, I know a mother loves her children and thinks each one is special...but really! She thinks that man walks on water! He's just a person like you and me. *(Touches her index finger on a table, as if inspecting for dirt.)* Hmph! If she'd spend a little more time attending to her household and a little less time raving about how special Jesus is—

*(Mary enters with the earthenware bowl.)*

**Mary:** A cup of grain, just for you, Eunice.

**Eunice:** *(With false appreciation)* Why, thank you, Mary! *(Starts to exit.)* I'll get this little bowl right back to you. You have so little, and I know you probably need it more than I do.

**Mary:** Thank you, Eunice. Have a good day.

*(Eunice exits, and Mary turns back to the guests.)*



## Nothing Is Impossible

Say: I'm sorry. Eunice is a good neighbor, but she's never believed that Jesus is God's Son. Ask:

① What would you say to someone like Eunice—who doesn't believe in Jesus? (I'd tell them to read the Bible; I'd pray for them; I'd keep telling them he's really God's Son.)

Say: That's good advice. Maybe you can help me. While you're in Nazareth, if you see Eunice, would you tell her what you believe about Jesus? Take responses.

Now, where was I? Pause for a moment, as though thinking. Oh! The angel. When the angel told me I'd get to be Jesus' mother, I was confused, frightened, and overwhelmed! I mean, I'd never done anything that would make it possible for me to have a baby. But the angel said something that I've never forgotten. He said, "Nothing is impossible with God." Ask:

② How do you feel when you hear that nothing is impossible with God? (Better; encouraged; happy.)

Say: I felt that way, too! So I told Gabriel that I would serve God completely. What an honor to give Jesus a family! Well, I'm sure you're ready to explore Nazareth a little more, so I'll let you go. Would you come and visit with me tomorrow? I'd love to tell you some stories about when Jesus was just a tiny boy. And have I got some stories! Let's plan to get together again soon. Let Tribes exit.





**Bonus!** Includes optional role of Tax Collector!

# Congratulations!

## You're about to give kids a glimpse into Jesus' life!

This leader manual will show you how.

You're Mary at Hometown Nazareth VBS...so what do you do—and how do you do it?

As Jesus' mother, Mary, you'll give the inside scoop on what it was like when Jesus was growing up. You'll engage families in conversation and interact with your neighbor, Eunice, who only saw Jesus as the kid down the street, not the Son of God.

### Questions?

Here's how to get answers:

- ?** **First, check carefully through this book.** There's a LOT of helpful information tucked into these pages. The answer is probably already in your hands!
- ?** **Connect with your VBS Director and leadership team.** Remember, you're not alone! You're part of a dynamic ministry team, so don't be afraid to take advantage of the people resources that surround you.
- ?** **Expand your possibilities with Group's VBS Facebook page.** This network connects you to other Hometown Nazareth leaders nationwide. Share ideas, ask questions, and brainstorm with VBS Directors across the globe!



Ready to change a kid's life?  
Open up this leader manual and get started!

Follow GroupVBS on   

And don't forget to pray! God put you in this VBS leadership role for a reason, and he wants you to succeed.

### The tools you need to succeed

are right in this manual—full scripts for each day...costuming and staging ideas...practical, field-tested tips... Bible backgrounds... discussion starters... and more!



### Did you know?

You can find cool costumes and props for Hometown Nazareth online! Visit [group.com/vbs](http://group.com/vbs) or your Group VBS supplier today for great deals on exclusive items.

2024 HOLY LAND ADVENTURE VBS



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