



NAC-USA  
DEVELOPMENT  
INSTITUTE

Mary's  
Song - The  
Magnificat

# PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Isaiah's  
Prophecy

**2015**

December





Mary went from being a poor, unknown Hebrew girl to the most honored woman in the history of the world because of what God brought into being through her. As we take a moment to pause during this advent season to reflect on what God has done for us through Jesus Christ, do we recognize how great our God is? Do we see how He has changed our lives and how His gifts and His presence in our lives can make all things new? Will people come to see and know God through our lives?

***For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.***

God is unchanging. He is mighty and can do great things for us. Our God sees us, protects us, and fights for us. Do we recognize how mighty our God is? Does our worship reflect our humbleness in bowing before Him? God is merciful to those who fear him. This means that those who look up to Him with respect and with humbleness will be recipients of His mercy, which is God's loyal, gracious, and faithful love.

***He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.***

In the second part of her song, Mary emphasizes the humble being exalted. Just as God exalted Mary, who was of lowly origins, He will also exalt the humble and hungry. Conversely, He will bring down the proud, the rulers, and the rich.

***He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.***

The last expressions of Mary's song make it clear that God, in sending Jesus, was keeping a promise to His people. God's actions in the life of Mary were based on commitments He had made centuries before. Through the sending of Jesus and His establishment of God's kingdom, we witness God fulfilling His promises, and therefore, can grow in our trust and confidence in the Lord. We are God's people today. God will take care of us and He will fulfill His promise to send Jesus again.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. How does being humble increase God's presence in your life?

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## Bible References

### Luke 1:46-55

And Mary said:

*"My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit has rejoiced in God  
my Savior.*

*For He has regarded the lowly  
state of His maidservant;*

*For behold, henceforth all  
generations will call me blessed.*

*For He who is mighty has done  
great things for me, and holy is  
His name.*

*And His mercy is on those who  
fear Him from generation to  
generation.*

*He has shown strength with His  
arm; He has scattered the proud  
in the imagination of their hearts.*

*He has put down the mighty from  
their thrones, and exalted the  
lowly.*

*He has filled the hungry with good  
things, and the rich He has sent  
away empty.*

*He has helped His servant Israel,  
In remembrance of His mercy,*

*As He spoke to our fathers, to  
Abraham and to his seed forever."*

## Going Deeper

### Magnificat

The name given to the first of the three hymns in Luke's infancy narratives (1:46-55), the other two being the Benedictus (1:68-79) and the Nunc Dimittis (2:29-32). The name derives from the opening line of the poem in the Latin Vulgate (Magnificat anima mea Dominum).

2. Mary sets God apart from all other things by calling His name holy. How do you set God above everything else in your life?

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3. The script talked about Mary's words turning the traditional understanding of God's favor on its head; the mighty are put down, the lowly exalted, the hungry are filled and the rich are sent away empty. What do you understand as God's favor? Has your understanding changed over time?

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4. How does God's favor relate to blessing?

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5. What are God's promises for your life? What is your role in the unfolding of these promises?

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6. What do we learn about God by seeing Him work through Mary? Can you think of another person whose life taught you something about who God is?

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7. What has God's presence made new in your life?

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**PERSONAL TAKE-HOME:** Try writing the Magnificat in your own words. This could be a creative way to express your praise to God.



various forms of demonic, economic, social, and political bondage that oppress them. Jesus will also restore sight to the blind, not only at a physical level, but also figuratively, reviving the prophetic vision of the year of the Lord's favor. The year of the Lord's favor refers to the jubilee, when debts are cancelled and slaves are freed, and represents what Jesus brings for those who respond to His message of hope. Jesus builds on the picture of Isaiah's prophecy, which also proclaimed such hope, and notes that He is fulfilling what the prophet proclaimed.

What about the verses in Isaiah and Luke are relevant to our lives? Jesus accepts His calling and fulfills it. He does this in two ways; through the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit, and through the guidance of His Father's will.

The prophecy in Isaiah starts with "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me." Isn't it interesting that Jesus, who is the Son of God, references the power of the Holy Spirit as being so significant to Him? In Luke we read that Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit after being tempted in the wilderness. Even as we live through temptation and weakness in our lives, we can also feel the power of the Spirit. What wilderness in our hearts must we confront to emerge strengthened by the Spirit? Our role in the Body of Christ requires more wisdom, strength, and talents than we possess on our own, but the Holy Spirit lives in us and equips us with spiritual gifts.

At times, do we attempt to live as Christians without seeking the guidance, gifts, and strength that the Holy Spirit brings?

Jesus is guided by God's will to save mankind from their sin. Jesus's calling put Him in the middle of suffering, pain, and rejection, but He was not discouraged. This is also God's will for us. We are called to give of ourselves, especially in reflection of this Advent season. This will be challenging, but with God's guidance, Jesus as our example, and the power and gifts from the Spirit, we can take this prophecy of Jesus from Isaiah as our mission; *preach[ing] good tidings to the poor...heal[ing] the brokenhearted, to set at liberty those who are oppressed...to comfort all who mourn...*

### Discussion Questions:

1. What about Isaiah's prophecy and the verses in Luke are relevant to our lives?

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## Bible References

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Isaiah 61:1-2

Luke 4: 14-21, 22-30

Luke's emphasis on the poor:

Luke 7:22, 14:13, 14:21, 16:20,  
16:22, 18:22, 21:3

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## Going Deeper

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The Shema

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

The Shema is a prayer that is the centerpiece of Jewish prayer services. It is a declaration of faith in one God and is considered the most important part of the prayer service in Judaism. As an act of testifying in God, the recitation of the Shema discusses some of Judaism's basics: love of God, Torah study, the principle of divine reward and punishment, and the Jews' exodus from Egypt.

2. The Jubilee year in Jewish tradition is a year when debts are cancelled and slaves are freed. How does this symbolize Jesus' ministry? What would you like to be "freed" from?

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3. The video asks the question, "What wilderness in our hearts must we engage to emerge filled with the Spirit?" How can we be filled with the power of the Spirit after engaging in a wilderness of temptation?

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4. Can you be a Christian if you don't seek the guidance, gifts, and strength that the Holy Spirit brings? Why or why not?

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5. If part of Jesus' calling was to be in the middle of suffering, pain, and rejection and he was still not discouraged, what are reasons that we become discouraged in similar circumstances? How can Jesus bring hope to us?

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6. What do you think the people thought when Jesus ended His reading with "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing"?

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7. Take a moment to read Luke 4:22-30. What do you think of the people's recorded reactions? Could they mirror your own?

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## Going Deeper

*To act well, and suffer evil, to praise God in all things, and never to draw vanity from his good gifts – such is the life of the just.*

- Thomas A. Kempis

### The book of Isaiah

Isaiah is the second-most-quoted book in the New Testament, preceded only by Psalms. Every book in the New Testament contains allusions or direct quotations from Isaiah. The Gospel of Luke for example, portrays the entire life of Jesus through the theological lens of Isaiah:

- Jesus is “God with us,” like Emmanuel in Isaiah’s prophecy, and born of a “virgin” (Luke 1:27-28, 31; Isa 7:14)
- Jesus is born into the “house of David,” like “the servant, the branch” comes from Jesse – David’s father – lineage (Luke 1:27; Isa 11:1-2)
- The angels’ song echoes the song in Isaiah’s vision (Isa 6; Luke 2:14)
- Zechariah is looking for God’s salvation and finds it in Jesus (Luke 2:29; Isa 12:2-3)
- John the Baptist prepares the way like the voice of the one crying in the wilderness (Luke 2:4-6; Isa 40:3-5)
- Jesus uses Isaiah’s words to defend His view against the temptations of Satan (Luke 4:12; Isa 7:12)
- Jesus cites Isaiah, and then says that the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled (Luke 4:16-21; Isa 61:1-2)
- People marvel at Jesus’ words just as people marveled at the Suffering Servant’s words. They noted that Jesus seems ordinary, which also fits the description of the Servant (Luke 4:22; Isa 52:14-15; 53:3). They despised Jesus, like the Servant, shortly after (Luke 4:23-30; Isa 53:3).

8. How does Jesus’s focus on the poor in the Bible affect you? How can you focus more attention on the poor?

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9. “Do not waste time bothering whether you “love” your neighbor; act as if you did. As soon as we do this we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone you will presently come to love him.” – C.S. Lewis  
How do you interpret this quote? What does it mean to you?

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10. From the script: “Jesus is guided by God’s will to save mankind.” What kind of actions would demonstrate that a person today is guided by God’s will to save?

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11. How are we made more aware of God’s faithfulness by studying the Old Testament?

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12. How can you “preach good tidings to the poor”?

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How can you “heal the brokenhearted”?

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How can you “set at liberty those who are oppressed”?

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How can you “comfort all who mourn”?

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