



“This is the Story...”

Written by Talashia Keim Yoder and Daniel Yoder. Artwork by Christa and Jonathan Reuel.  
Song lyrics and music by Jonathan Reuel.

## **Week 28: God Looked at Me**

Luke 1:26-56

**Intro Video:** <https://youtu.be/dZ5sua54sYY>

**Review the big story:** God created the cosmos and humans and called it all good. We were created to live in harmony, but sometimes we miss the mark. All of humanity missed the mark, and they had to live with the consequences, but God stuck with them and continued to love them. Then God called a family to be a blessing to the whole earth. Like the humans before them, the generations of this family often missed the mark, but God was faithful. When the people became slaves in Egypt, God raised up Moses to be their leader. God performed many signs and wonders, and delivered them from slavery. In the wilderness, they learned to be a people of God, trusting in God’s provision, living out God’s commandments, and wrestling with the law in shalom community. As they prepared to go into the promised land, they were given the *shema*, words of love to keep with their whole beings. Through miraculous works, God brought the people into the promised land. Once there, they had to learn again how to be God’s people. They missed the mark a lot, and God sent judges to guide them. Ordinary people showed creativity and steadfast love in the way they continued the story of the people of God. When the people demanded a king, God sent prophets like Samuel to try to keep the people faithful to God. Kings Saul, David and Solomon continued to miss the mark, and the kingdom divided into the north (Israel) and south (Judah). God stuck with the people through leaders and prophets, and continued to call the people back to God, even as first the northern, and then the southern kingdom fell to invading powers. Some of the people were sent into exile, and some were left in the ruins of the kingdom. Through prophets and everyday people, God continued to stick with the scattered people and to reveal that God is so much bigger than they imagined. The people were finally able to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the temple. Through all the turmoil, prophets like Isaiah brought comfort to the people. Now we’re in what we call the “second temple times,” when Rome is the power in charge and when the people of God begin to wait for a Messiah.

- **Key verses:** Luke 1:31; 38; 46-47

**Tell the story:** An angel came to a young woman named Mary, and told her that she would have a son, a very special son who would be the Son of God. Mary responded with, “Let it be,” and went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who also was miraculously pregnant. Mary sang a song about the justice and joy of God.

- Read Luke 1:26-56
- Read page 161 in the Shine On story Bible

## Prime the pump:

- **Things to notice:**
  - This story invites us to imagine and empathize. If you choose to do that, try it multiple times with different personalities for Mary. She's often portrayed as meek and mild, but notice what happens if you imagine her as strong, thoughtful but direct with the angel.
  - Verse 29 says "in the sixth month." The sixth month of what? Of Elizabeth's pregnancy. Imagine. Time is being measured by gestation.
  - Notice what Mary does in verse 39. For a woman of her time to have freedom of travel is a big deal!
  - If you have heard this story a lot, the wonder of it may have worn off. Read it with fresh eyes. It's full of mystery, of the supernatural. An angel, a virgin conception, overshadowing by the Holy Spirit, an unborn child leaping for joy...
  - Mary's song is political. Read it and really notice what it's proclaiming.
  - Mary went to Elizabeth in the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy and left three months later. Do the math.
  - Get out your map and notice where these things happen. Where is Nazareth in relationship to Judah? And how did Joseph's people, from Judah, end up in Nazareth?
- **Background information:**
  - This passage is *full* of allusions to Old Testament scripture. Here are just a few:
    - "The Lord is with you" (vs 28) is a conventional greeting. Find it elsewhere: Judges 6:12; 2 Samuel 7:3; 2 Chronicles 15:2.
    - All of verse 32-33 mirrors 2 Samuel 7:13-16, the promise made to David.
    - "Son of God" sometimes refers to humans (like Adam), but also refers to divinities (see Psalm 29:1).
    - "Nothing will be impossible with God" (verse 37) - this phrase has been said several other times, including in Genesis 18:14 about Sarah being pregnant with Isaac.
  - Mary's Song, the canticle of verses 46-55, is similar to Hannah's prayer (1 Samuel 2), and also has similarities to other songs sung by women like Miriam and Deborah. All of these are highly political songs.
- **Conversation starters:**
  - The name we translate as Jesus was a really common name of the time and culture. It means "the Lord saves," and variants of it include Joshua and Hosea. How does it feel/sound to think of this extraordinary baby having such an ordinary name?
  - There is an arch to this story. Fear and confusion, then acceptance, and then, when Mary gets to Elizabeth, the emotion turns to joy. Wonder: Why did Mary go "with haste" to Elizabeth? What was it about this woman-to-woman relationship that brought Mary to her song?
  - Scholars think that Luke/Acts (they go together) was written primarily for a Gentile audience, and there is a complicated relationship with Judaism here. But the commentary of *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* encourages the reader to consider that Jesus' care for the poor, the sick, the sinners, etc, are not in contrast to his Jewish context, but rather grow out of his identity as a Jew. (Levine, Amy-Jill and Marc Zvi Brettler, Eds, 2017. *The Jewish Annotated New Testament, 2nd Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press, pg 107.) He is calling all the people of God to realize who they really are and who God really is. Read and discuss the passage with this in mind.

**Microsong:** "God Looked at Me" (Listen: <https://youtu.be/UCOxHCavtBc>)

The angel says, "You'll have a son, and God will give him David's throne." Mary says, "God looked at me now I'm the luckiest person around. God scatters the proud, brings the tyrants down, helps the victim, lets the hungry feast. And beyond that, God does exactly what God promised to . . . from Abraham till now."

**Sing the big song:** (Listen: <https://youtu.be/Wufbbi9dP0M>)

This is the story of how it all began. God made matter, and chaos shattered.

Eve and Adam, they tried to hide. The world got violent and God replied with a mark and flood  
and a rainbow sign, God's love written on skin and sky,

*And then God called a family to be a blessing to the earth, oh ohhhh*

A mother and her favorite son wrestle for the blessing, another son becomes a slave, the land is  
saved from famine.

God's family grows. Egypt oppresses. They groan to God and God sends Moses.

*Ten strange signs say "Please release them!" By the sea God saves them. Oh ohhh.*

The people complain and God rains bread. Daily food and ten new rules.

Five sisters come and ask for land. God says "Yes, amend the law!"

*Moses says, "In your new life across the Jordan, love God with your whole heart and with all your  
being, and your strength, now listen: God is One, only God! God is One, only God!"*

Cross over Jordan, stories and stones. Circuits and shouts and the walls come down.

God sends judges like Deborah and the land has rest.

Ruth's worth more than seven sons; Redeem the lost with steadfast love.

Corruption in the temple and God sends Samuel.

God gives them a prophet, they ask for a king. Does God need a temple? A wise king forgets.

And when a bully rules the land, the nation tears apart and loses David's heart...

A widow's gift and a prophet's cry. God brings life in desperate times.

Josiah reads this misplaced scroll. He turns to God wholeheartedly like David did. In his time.

God gives Jeremiah a picture of God's ruined family...

Is there any hope left, is there any hope left, is there any hope left for you, Jerusalem?

Any hope? Any hope left? Is there any hope left for you?

By the streams of Babylon, how can we sing when you are gone, Jerusalem...

I'm in a valley of human bones. These bones are Israel, God's breath is hope.

Haman plans death for Esther's exiles. She risks her life so they might survive.

Finally God's family rebuilds the temple in Jerusalem. God plunges them into a sea of joy and  
celebration of Only God. God is One, Only God.

Comfort to Jerusalem, your warfare finally ceases.

Matthew lists these generations, Abraham to Jesus.

The angel says "You'll have a son and God will give him David's throne." Mary says "God looked  
at me now I'm the luckiest person around."

*God loves every one of us, it's true, and God loves the universe.*

**Go do your household project!**