

ANSWER GUIDE

**SCRIPTURE AND
THE ROSARY**



*A ministry of the Diocese of Little Rock
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The Joyful Mysteries

1. These first few questions provide an opportunity for participants in your Bible study to talk together about the role of the rosary in their lives and their hopes in this particular time of study. There are no right or wrong answers, no judgment about each other's spiritual practices.
2. Again, this is simply a time to speak together about your own experience with the rosary.
3. The original burning bush drew Moses to God and at the same time was never consumed. Mary also draws people to God through her son Jesus, and in her own life was on fire with God's life.
4. Discuss the advantages gained from pausing before speaking, thinking before acting, reflecting before making assumptions. Sometimes these paused moments to think and reflect can help us see a larger plan or open us to a moment of encounter with God. An example or two from within your group would be helpful.
5. Mary's unique role is seen in the very fact that she is called "favored"; her son's name means "God saves" and he will be called Son of the Most High. The promise of David's throne to her son is a sign that he is the anointed of God that Israel had been waiting to welcome; the conception of Jesus is through the Holy Spirit so that this is a virginal birth; her son will be called the Son of God, etc.
6. We are sons and daughters of God by God's own doing, by faith, which is a gift from God.
7. a) While it might seem that the journey is to verify Elizabeth's pregnancy, that is not the case. Mary's response to the angel Gabriel is already complete; she must already believe the news is true. The story is told to highlight the significance of both pregnancies and to share the joy of how God is working in their lives for the sake of the world.
b) Responses will vary based on circumstances. By calling to mind a particular event, we are more likely to be able to identify how mutual sharing can be an important part of spiritual growth.

8. Mary identifies herself as the Lord's handmaid (1:38). Elizabeth humbly acknowledges that Mary is the mother of "my Lord" (1:43). Mary praises God for looking upon her lowliness (1:48). The Lord has done great things for Mary; they are not of her own doing (1:49). God's mercy is upon those who fear God (1:50). God lifts up the lowly (1:52).
9. Much of the phrasing in Hannah's canticle is incorporated into the prayer of Mary, showing a continuity with the past and Israel's history, and indicating that in Jesus' coming the great reversal of values is beginning—the poor are given food, the lowly are lifted up, etc.
10. Placing the birth of Jesus during the reign of a specific Roman emperor was a way of showing that Roman rule was irrelevant in the face of God's rule; Jesus' birth was truly Good News. From the Jewish perspective, the Messiah was to come from the city of David (Mic 5:1), and Bethlehem was the birthplace of David.
11. Taken separately, the details show sensitivity to the message needed in each original community of hearers: Matthew highlighted Jesus' royal lineage and Luke highlighted the priority of the poor hearing the Good News.
12. Responses will vary and sharing experiences can help to build up the community you are forming in your group and can help each other identify the ways we are like these earliest followers.
13. By the time Luke wrote his gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, the church had separated from traditional Judaism, and Gentile believers outnumbered Jewish believers among the followers of Christ. However, Luke wanted to assure his community that Jesus had been raised in a faithful Jewish household and was in fact the fulfillment of the messianic promises of Judaism. By describing Mary and Joseph's faithfulness to the temple, and by having Simeon and Anna vouch for his identity, Luke offers proof of Jesus' heritage and God's fulfilled promises.
14. Responses will vary. Certainly there could be some discussion about the value of faithful waiting, the importance of being present to the moment in order to recognize what God is doing, the reality that rejoicing often also includes some sorrow, the importance of spreading the word of what God is doing, etc.

15. Take time to share some examples that help you recognize that God's plan is alive and well.
16. Allow time for discussion.
17. His natural family worried about him, searched for him, and questioned him about his staying behind. This scene shifts our attention, with that of Jesus, toward his relationship with his divine Father and the obligations that had to be fulfilled.
18. This requires no answer but may prompt some to share their experiences of praying for Mary's intercession.

LESSON 2

The Mysteries of Light

1. Discussions will vary. We may gain a deeper appreciation for how Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God and how we are called to do the same. We may have a better understanding of the relationships Jesus tried to build.
2. The kingdom of David had long ago lost its power, and the rule of Israel's leaders at the time of Jesus was allowed only by the Romans who occupied their land. When John and Jesus spoke of the kingdom of heaven/God, some would have felt their power was being threatened, while others might have hoped for a return of the line of David, and still others were awaiting some new action of God.
3. John's baptism was for the forgiveness of sin, a way to renew their covenant relationship with God. The waters would have served as a reminder of their ancestors who came into the Promised Land as part of their covenant with God.
4. The confusion has to do with how we understand Jesus: If he is sinless, then why would he be baptized for the forgiveness of sin? Was this a witness for others, a way of inviting them to do the same? Was this the necessary first step before entering into public ministry? Was this an opportunity for those present to begin to recognize his stature?
5. Certainly in baptism we are made sons and daughters of God. Each day there is the opportunity for God to affirm this dignity in us through our time in prayer and service.