

## Age-Level Overview

	Open the Bible	Activate Faith
Lower Elementary	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> Spark Story Bibles</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> Nametags, Bible basket, drums, finger cymbals, triangles, instrument basket, ribbon, canning jar lid rims</p>	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> Spark Story Bible</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> “Mary’s Song” music and lyrics (page 121), piano or keyboard (optional), Orff instrument (optional), xylophone (optional), middle C (C4) hand bell (optional), G above middle C (G4) hand bell (optional), hand bell gloves (optional), whiteboard, markers, magnifying glass</p>
Upper Elementary	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> Nametags, whiteboard, markers, drums</p>	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> Spark Bible</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> Whiteboard, markers, rhythm instruments, poster board, basket</p>
All Kids	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> Spark Story Bibles, Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> “We Three Kings” music and lyrics (page 123), whiteboard, markers, baskets, nametags</p>	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> Spark Bibles, Spark Story Bibles</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> Whiteboard, markers, rhythm instruments, drums, traditional Persian music CDs or downloads—<i>Mehradad Arabi</i> at <a href="http://www.persiandrums.com">www.persiandrums.com</a>, <a href="http://www.sommamusic.com">www.sommamusic.com</a>, CD player, “Surprised by your Love” prayer song (page 125)</p>



Looking for additional Spark content to further engage kids? Visit [www.wearesparkhouse.org](http://www.wearesparkhouse.org) to learn more about these options for purchase.

- The Director CD-Rom contains Activity Pages, Coloring Pages, Family Pages, Large Group Openings, and two additional in-class activities for each lesson.
- A Sparkhouse Digital annual subscription gives you access to all content contained in the Director CD-Rom and the Spark Leader Guides, plus administrative tools and other extras.



**Workshop Focus:** God's love is for everyone.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

- Each week, remember to welcome kids to the rotation. Keep in mind that for some kids it may be the first time they are visiting your workshop!
- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.

## Open the Bible (10 minutes)

### Mary Visits Elizabeth and Jesus Is Born Storytelling

**Set Up:** Place Bible and instrument baskets in the storytelling area. In order to be sure there are enough instruments for everyone, you can make your own finger cymbals. Cut ribbon into 8-inch (20.32 cm) strips. Loop a ribbon strip through a canning jar lid rim. Tie the ends together. Repeat with another lid. Holding the ribbon only, clink the lids together.

#### Activity Instructions

Invite kids to put on nametags when they arrive. When most kids have arrived, ask one or two other kids to pass out a Bible to each kid. The leader will specifically need a pair of finger cymbals.

**Welcome everyone! My name is [Name]. Let's see who is here today. [Name] God's love is for you.** Sound your finger cymbals on the word "God" for each kid until all have been named.

**I'm going to read two stories today from our Spark Story Bible. You may listen with your ears while I read, or you may follow along in your Bible. The first story is called Mary Visits Elizabeth.** Hold up your Spark Story Bible to page 202. **The**

#### Spark Resources

Spark Story Bible

#### Supplies

Nametags  
Bible basket  
Drums  
Finger cymbals  
Triangles  
Instrument basket  
Ribbon, 5/8-inch (1.5 cm)  
wide, 8-inch (20.32 cm)  
strips, 2 per instrument  
Canning jar lids, 2 per  
instrument

**second story is called Jesus Is Born.** Hold up your Spark Story Bible to page 212. After reading the stories, spend some time wondering with the kids. **I wonder what these stories tell us about God.** Pause for kids' thoughts and questions. **These stories tell us that God's love is for everyone! What happened when Mary went to visit Elizabeth?** (*Elizabeth's baby wiggled. Mary sang, etc.*) **Why did the angels tell the shepherds about Jesus?** (*Because God's love is for everyone!*)

Pass out the instruments. **There's a lot of traveling in these stories. Mary travels to see Elizabeth. Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem. The shepherds travel to see the baby Jesus. Let's do some traveling. Find your instruments and stand up on your feet! Let's start traveling in a circle. As we travel, play your instruments.**

**Now I'm going to tell a part of story and every time someone in the story is traveling, I want you to travel in the circle playing your instrument. When the people are not traveling in the story, I want you to be still. Okay! Let's go.**

## Activate Faith (25 minutes)

### Mary's Song

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**Set Up:** Write out the song words to "Mary's Song" (page 121) on a whiteboard. Place Bible and magnifying glass near where you will be sitting.

The music in today's lesson works for unaccompanied or accompanied children's voices. *Mary's Song* has optional Orff, xylophone or hand bell accompaniment and/or optional piano accompaniment.

For accompanied voices, gather any instruments you have decided to use. If using Orff instruments, remove all the notes except C and G. Set up the instruments near where the activity will take place.

#### Activity Instructions

Gather kids. Reread pages 204-205 of the Spark Story Bible. **Wow! God's love filled Mary up with so much joy that she could not keep it inside of her.**

**Mary's song of praise is called a "Magnificat". Everyone say "Magnificat".** (*magnificat*) **What do you suppose "magnificat" means?** (Allow children to answer.) **"Magnificat" means to magnify.** Hold up magnifying glass and look through it. Pass it around the circle. **Mary says in the Bible "My soul magnifies the Lord." What do you think it means to magnify the Lord?** (*looks bigger, looks like God, etc.*) **Mary is saying God's love is in her and that it's getting bigger and bigger.** Pause for kids thoughts. When everyone has looked through the magnifying glass, set it aside.

**Today we are going to sing a "Magnificat." I want you to close your eyes and just listen to this song.** Sing the song. **Close your eyes again and this time, just**

**Spark Resources**  
Spark Story Bible

#### Supplies

"Mary's Song" (page 121)  
Piano or keyboard (optional)  
Orff instrument (optional)  
Xylophone (optional)  
Hand bell, middle C (C4) (optional)  
Hand bell, G above middle C (G4) (optional)  
Hand bell gloves (optional)  
Whiteboard  
Markers  
Magnifying glass

**listen to the repeating part of the song.** Sing the refrain. **Let's all sing the refrain together.**

**Now I want you to close your eyes one more time.** Sing the middle section. **Let's try this middle section together.** Sing the middle section together two or three times. **It's time to put it all together. Let's stand up and sing the whole song.**

Introduce the instruments you plan to use for "Mary's Song." The accompaniment for the bells or xylophones is a simple repeating C G C G C G pattern played in a steady, unstopping beat. In music terms the accompaniment is a repeating quarter note pattern in 4/4 time.

Teach and review the C G C G C G pattern with all the kids. Ask if any kids want to try the instruments. Explain that bell ringers or instrument players do not have to sing at the same time as playing.

Put the song and accompaniment together. The goal is for the kids to get a sense of steady movement as if Mary is walking and thinking about God's love for her.

**My soul will magnify the Lord.**

**My soul will magnify the Lord.**

**My spirit rejoices in God.**

**My spirit rejoices in God.**

**My soul will magnify the Lord.**

**My soul will magnify the Lord.**

**This song reminds us how much God loved Mary. It also reminds us that God's love is for everyone.**

## Send (5 minutes)

### Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

Gather kids in a circle again. **We made some good music today! We learned that God's love is for everyone. How did we find out God's love is for everyone?** (*The Bible stories told us.*) **How did Mary show her love for God and God's love for her?** (*With her song*)

Spark Resources  
Family Pages



Supplies  
None

## Prayer Time

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**The angels filled the sky and sang “Glory to God in the highest!” We are going to use the angels’ words in our prayer.** Stand up and hold hands in a circle. **I’m going to start a wave and when the wave comes to you, I want you to send the wave on.** Practice sending a wave around the circle. **Now, we know “Glory to God in the Highest,” and we know the prayer wave. Let’s put it all together. When the wave comes to you, wave your arms and say “Glory to God in the Highest!” At the end we will all say Amen.**

**Workshop Focus:** Nothing is impossible with God.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

- Each week, remember to welcome kids to the rotation. Keep in mind that for some kids it may be the first time they are visiting your workshop!
- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.

## Open the Bible (10 minutes)

### Jesus' Birth Storytelling

**Set Up:** Gather drums where you will be sitting. Lay out the instruments so that everyone can see their choices. Take a minute to review the “Do Not Be Afraid” rhythm. Write Luke 1:26-38, Matthew 1:18-25, and Luke 2:1-20 on the whiteboard.

#### Activity Instructions

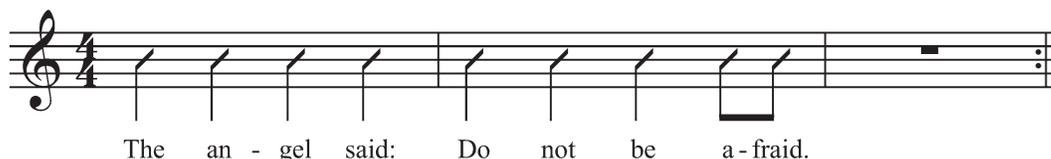
As kids enter the space, welcome them by name, ask them to get a nametag, a Bible, and stickers. Ask kids to sit in a circle. **Welcome to Music!** Point out the three Bible passages on the whiteboard. **Today we will read three parts of the Christmas story.** Ask a volunteer to read Luke 1:26-38, then give kids a minute to find verse 30. **Find the spot where the angel Gabriel tells Mary not to be afraid and mark the spot with a Spark Bible Sticker.**

#### Spark Resources

Spark Bibles  
Spark Bible Stickers

#### Supplies

Nametags  
Whiteboard  
Markers  
Drums, 1 per kid



Ask a volunteer to read Matthew 1:18-25. Kids now find verse 20, where Gabriel tells Joseph not to be afraid, and they mark the verse with a Spark Bible Sticker. Ask a volunteer to read Luke 2:1-20. Kids now find verse 10 and mark it with a Spark Bible Sticker. By this time, kids probably will have caught on to the pattern!

**What message did the angels bring from God to the people?** (*Do not be afraid!*) **I wonder what you think of that message.** Pause for kids' comments. **If Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds had stayed afraid, how would the story have changed?** (*maybe the shepherds would not have visited Jesus, maybe Joseph would have broken off the engagement, etc.*) **Fear can change our behavior and our own stories.** Pause just in case kids' have a response! **I'm glad Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds listened to the angels!**

Pass out the drums. **Let's take our drums and use the words of the angel Gabriel to create a drum circle chant.** Demonstrate the chant with drum accompaniment. Repeat several times. **Please join me.** Experiment with using the chant in a call-and-response form. Kids take turns saying "the angel said" and "do not be afraid."

Put drums aside before moving to Activate Faith.

## Activate Faith (25 minutes)

### Not-Impossible Twists

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**Set Up:** Write "Nothing is impossible with God." on the whiteboard. Place rhythm instruments in a basket in the storytelling area. Write NOTHING in big letters on a piece of poster board. Continue writing each word from today's workshop focus on a piece of poster board. Arrange the poster board words in order along a wall or on the floor.

#### Activity Instructions

Gather kids and shepherds. **The angel Gabriel told Mary not to be afraid. The angel also told Mary "Nothing is impossible with God."**

Point out the sentence on the whiteboard. **Our challenge today is to take this sentence, just this sentence, and twist it around. We are making a twisted chant by changing the word order.** Point to the poster board words. **I wonder how we can twist up these words.** Ask a volunteer kid or Shepherd to write down all the twists kids make on the whiteboard. After kids come up with five sentence twists, add a new twist. Take out the word "is" and play with just four words.

**Now we have some twists on "Nothing is impossible with God." Let's read through the list starting at the top.** Read through the list as a group. **Sounds definitely like we have a twisted chant. How can we use the rhythm instruments or music to add to our twisted chant?** Generate some ideas about using rhythm instruments as an accompaniment. Experiment with tempo and volume

#### Spark Resources

Spark Bible

#### Supplies

Whiteboard

Markers

Rhythm instruments

Poster board, 5 pieces

Basket

(dynamics). If kids want to add music, teach them the “Not Impossible with God” musical phrase seen below. **When we take a sentence or a musical phrase and change it around, we call it theme and variation. “Nothing is impossible with God” is the theme and all our twists are the variations.**

**Who can tell me what the angel Gabriel told Mary?** (*Nothing is impossible with God!*) **That’s right! Nothing is impossible with God. And how many ways can we say it?** Let loose with all the variations on the verse.



## Send (5 minutes)

### Wrap Up

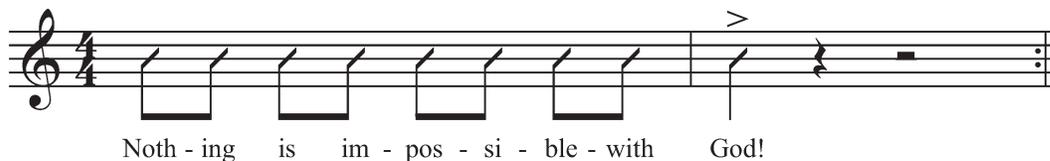
Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven’t already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

Ask kids and Shepherds to choose a drum and make a circle on the floor. Make sure you have a drum as well. **Who remembers what the angel Gabriel said to Mary?** (*“Do not be afraid.” “Nothing will be impossible with God.”*) **“Nothing will be impossible with God.”** Pause. **Let’s all say the words of Gabriel together. “Nothing will be impossible with God.”** Keep repeating these words. When the group is chanting together, add the same rhythm with your drum that you used in Open the Bible. Let the drum circle ebb and flow and eventually flow into Prayer Time.

**Spark Resources**  
Family Pages



**Supplies**  
Drum, 1 per person



## Prayer Time

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Change the rhythm of the drum circle to a steady beat. **I'm going to begin our prayer and then pass it around the drum circle so that everyone has a chance to add to the prayer. You will say something you're thankful for, like your friend or your dog. We'll keep the beat going as the prayer moves around our circle.**

**Dear God,**

**Thank you for the beat of your love.**

**Thank you for** (each kid adds a word).

**Amen**

**Workshop Focus:** God's love is surprising!

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

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- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
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## Open the Bible (10 minutes)

### Wise Men Storytelling

**Set Up:** Write out the words to the refrain of "We Three Kings" on a whiteboard. Prepare for today by placing Spark Story Bibles and Spark Bible in baskets near the storytelling area. Invite kids to get a nametag when they arrive.

**Welcome to Music! Today we will hear the story of the wise men. The wise men followed a star. The star was their map. What do you use for a map?** (*GPS, atlas, fold out map, etc.*) **There's a wonderful Christmas carol about the wise men following the star. Listen while I sing the refrain.**

**We Three Kings** (*Refrain*)

**Oh, star of wonder, star of night,  
Star with royal beauty bright;  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to thy perfect light!**

Sing the refrain through together.

**Let's find Wise Men on page 218 in our Spark Story Bible or Matthew 2:1-12 on page 1058 in our Spark Bible.** Read today's story from the Spark Bible. Show illustrations from the Spark Story Bible. After reading today's story, ask the

#### Spark Resources

Spark Story Bible  
Spark Bibles  
Spark Bible Stickers

#### Supplies

"We Three Kings" music and lyrics (page 123)  
Baskets  
Nametags, 1 per kid  
Whiteboard  
Markers

following questions. **What did the wise men find surprising?** (*the dream, a baby king*) **Who was afraid of the infant Jesus?** (*King Herod*) **Why do people make long journeys?** (*to move, to visit family, to escape*)

**God showed his love in a surprising way. God's love was a little baby named Jesus. God's love was surprising 2000 years ago, and is still surprising today.**

## Activate Faith (25 minutes)

### The Sounds of Surprise

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**Set Up:** If you don't happen to have a CD of traditional Persian music, go to the website listed in the Supplies section and listen to the ancient sounds of the desert. Choose a piece to download, borrow a CD from your local library, or plan to have kids listen through a laptop computer. Transfer the chart on page 119 to the whiteboard. Set out the rhythm instruments and drums.

#### Activity Instructions

Gather kids and Shepherds in a group. **What surprised you about the story of the wise men?** Listen to kids' thoughts. They may not be your thoughts. **I was surprised by** (fill in the blank). Write all the surprises your group named in the chart on the whiteboard.

**Let's think of a voice sound or instrument sound that we can use for each of the different surprises in the story.** Go through the list you made on the chart and name one or two sounds for each surprise. Listen to kids' thoughts and ideas. Write them down next to the sounds. Reread the story if necessary. Continue until you have a musical sound for each listed surprise in the story. Add the places sounds occur in the story to the chart.

**Okay! Now we can tell the story of the wise men using all these sounds of surprise. Let's figure out who will play each surprising sound.** Make sure there is at least one person playing each sound. Add the names to the chart. If you have a large group, double and triple up on each sound. Play through the story using either the Spark Story Bible or the Spark Bible.

Add another layer of musical sound. **Let's add some more sounds. What sound or instrument sound might sound like camel hooves?** See what kids come up with. **That's a great idea. Who wants to play the camel hooves?** Ask these kids to get the instruments they will need to be camel hooves. **Where in the story could we put the sound of camel hooves?** (*when the wise men are traveling*) **Great! Every time the wise men travel, let's hear the sound of camel hooves. What**

#### Spark Resources

Spark Story Bible  
Spark Bible

#### Supplies

Whiteboard  
Markers  
Rhythm instruments  
Drums  
Traditional Persian music CDs  
or downloads  
Mehradad Arabi at [www.persiandrums.com](http://www.persiandrums.com)  
[www.sommamusic.com](http://www.sommamusic.com)  
CD player

**other sounds can we add to our story?** Generate some more ideas. You could add recorded traditional Persian music every time the words *wise men* are read. Or you could use the Persian-influenced melody shown here as a prelude to the story. Be creative, have fun, and be open for more surprising sounds!

With movement



Run through the story again incorporating the additional sounds. The story this time will have more layers and textures. **Our music today is surprising. The story today is surprising. God's love is so surprising!**

Surprise	Sound	Where in the story	Musicians

## Send (5 minutes)

### Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

After cleaning up gather again in the storytelling area. **God's love is surprising! It was surprising that kings from another country traveled a great distance to see a little baby. It was surprising that a powerful king, Herod, was afraid of a tiny baby. It was surprising that God sent love to earth as baby. God's love surprises us! We might notice God in a beautiful flower that God made, or in a kind friend who helps us.**

Spark Resources  
Family Pages



Supplies  
"Surprised by your Love"  
prayer song (page 125), 1  
per kid

## Prayer Time

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Pass out a copy of the song to everyone. **Our prayer song today is called "Surprised by Your Love." Let me sing it to you first and then please join me.**

### **Surprised by Your Love**

**Mary was surprised by your love.**

**Joseph was surprised by your love.**

**The shepherds were surprised by your love one night.**

**And the wise men followed a star.**

**Surprised, surprised by your love.**

**Surprised, surprised by your gift.**

**Surprised and grateful and thankful too!**

**Help us to follow your love.**

**Amen.**

**Amen.**

**Amen.**

**Amen.**

# Mary's Song

## Mary's Song

Handbells (opt.)

The musical score is written in 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of music. Each system includes a handbell line (treble clef), a vocal line (treble clef), and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The piano accompaniment is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The lyrics are: "My soul does mag-ni-fy the Lord. My soul does mag-ni-fy the Lord. My spir - it re-joic-es in God! My spir - it re-joic-es in God! My soul does mag-ni-fy the Lord. My soul does mag-ni-fy the Lord." The score concludes with a piano (*p*) and pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic marking.

My soul does mag-ni-fy the Lord. My

soul does mag-ni-fy the Lord. My spir - it re-joic-es in God! My

spir - it re-joic-es in God! My soul does mag-ni-fy the Lord. My

soul does mag-ni-fy the Lord. *p* *pp*



# We Three Kings

## We Three Kings of Orient Are

1 We three kings of O - ri - ent are; bear - ing gifts we tra - verse a - far,  
2 Born a king on Beth - le - hem's plain, gold I bring to crown him a - gain;  
3 Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I; in - cense owns a de - i - ty nigh;  
4 Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume breathes a life of gath - er - ing gloom;  
5 Glo - rious now be - hold him a - rise, King and God and Sac - ri - fice;

field and foun - tain, moor and moun - tain, fol - low - ing yon - der star.  
king for - ev - er, ceas - ing nev - er, o - ver us all to reign.  
prayer and prais - ing, glad - ly rais - ing, wor - ship - ing God Most High.  
sor - rowing, sigh - ing, bleed - ing, dy - ing, sealed in the stone - cold tomb.  
heav'n sings al - le - lu - ia: al - le - lu - ia the earth re - plies.

### Refrain

Oh, star of won - der, star of night, star with roy - al beau - ty bright;

west - ward lead - ing, still pro - ceed - ing, guide us to thy per - fect light!



# Surprised by Your Love

## Surprised by Your Love

Lively



Ma-ry was sur-prised by your love. Jo-seph was sur-prised by your love. The



shep-herds were sur-prised by your love one night and the wise men fol-lowed a



star. Sur - prised, sur-prised by your love. — Sur - prised, sur-prised by your love. —



— Sur - prised and grate - ful and thank - ful, too! Help us to fol - low your



love. A - men. A - men. A -



- men, a - men! A - men.