

12-20-09 EGCC Middle School Class

Theme: Chewed-up & Re-shaped

OPENING ACTIVITY - Bubble Gum Sculptures

- o I'm going to give each of you 5 pieces of gum.
- o I want you to take all five pieces and put them in your mouth.
- o And chew away.
- o Once you've got all five pieces in your mouth and nicely chewed, it is time to take the gum out and put it on the plate in front of you.
- o Now we're going to each take our lump of gum and make it into a sculpture!
- o Don't tell anyone what you are making because we'll guess what it is after everyone's done.

TELL

- o So the gum was just a big ol' mess when you took it out of your mouth, wasn't it?
- o But with some tender loving care, you made it into what? A big ol' sculpture, right?
- o Christmas is coming up and one of the stories that get read during this time is when an angel tells Mary that she's going to have a child.
- o Let's read that story, now.

READ Luke 1:26 - 44

26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to the Galilean village of Nazareth 27 to a virgin engaged to be married to a man descended from David. His name was Joseph, and the virgin's name, Mary. 28 Upon entering, Gabriel greeted her:

Good morning!
You're beautiful with God's beauty,
Beautiful inside and out!
God be with you.

29 Mary was thoroughly shaken, wondering what was behind a greeting like that. 30 But the angel assured her, "Mary, be not afraid. God has a surprise for you: 31 You will become pregnant and give birth to a son and call his name Jesus.

34 Mary said to the angel, "But how? I've never slept with a man."

35 The angel answered,
"The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
the power of the Highest hover over you;
Therefore, the child you bring to birth
will be called Holy, Son of God.

36 The angel continued, "And did you know that your cousin Elizabeth conceived a son, old as she is? Everyone called her barren, and here she is six months' pregnant! 37 Nothing, you see, is impossible with God."

38 And Mary said, "Yes, I see it all now and I am ready to serve the Lord. Let it be with me just as you say." Then the angel left her.

39 Mary didn't waste a minute. She got up and traveled to a town in Judah in the hill country, 40 straight to Zachariah's house, and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby in her womb leaped. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, 42 and sang out exuberantly,

"You're so blessed among women,
and the babe in your womb, also blessed!

43 And why am I so blessed
that the mother of my Lord visits me?

44 The moment the sound of your greeting entered my ears,
The babe in my womb skipped like a lamb for sheer joy."

ASK

- In verse 30, the angel tells Mary to be not afraid. If you were told what Mary's told in verse 31, would *you* be afraid? Why or why not?
- In verse 39, Mary leaves for her cousin Elizabeth's house. Why do you think she might have done that? (She wanted to be with someone else who was pregnant; because the angel mentioned her; because people in her home town wouldn't see Mary's pregnancy)
- Verse 41 – 44: That's quite a greeting, isn't it? And it probably helped Mary to know that she had come to the right place, right?

TELL

- There's two things that we're going to focus on today.
- One, though there's excitement generated both by the angel and by Elizabeth, in at least one way, this is NOT good news for Mary. This is really scary news for her.
 - Just imagine the conversation Mary has to have with her parents and then with Joseph. Do you think her parents would believe her?
 - Do you think Joseph believed her right away? If not, Joseph could become really upset (he might not believe her) and call off the wedding.
 - And if he did that, to be pregnant and not married at that time was an offense punishable by death!
- Two, in verse 35, the angel says "the power of the Highest will hover over you" – does that sound like a strange thing to you?
 - The language is meant to mirror the creation story in Genesis 1:2 that reads: "...God's spirit hovered over the face of the waters."
 - In the Jesus walking on water story, we learned that water represented...what? (chaos). Right.
 - So this strange language in verse 35 of "the Highest will hover over you" is meant to be a reminder that God will help shape and create whatever chaos might happen for Mary.
 - It is meant to be a helpful reminder that God has "been there and done that" before and will do so again with Mary.
 - This is where the beginning

- We're going to watch a video clip now that shows a young woman named Juno, who is probably a little bit older than Mary was (Juno is 17; Mary was probably 14 or 15), tell her dad and step-mom that she is pregnant.
- In some ways, this is probably the same conversation Mary had with her parents (and in other ways, probably not)

WATCH the edited Juno Clip

ASK/TELL

- o What did you think of Juno's parents' response?
- o Did you think they were too much of anything toward her, like too angry or too easy on Juno? Why?
- o Did you think Juno felt supported by her parents? Why?
- o Do you think what Juno's parents offered to help her with (multi-vitamin pills; going to see the possible adoptive parents) was at all comforting to Juno?
- o Do you think Mary's parents had similar reactions? Why?
- o Going back to our opening activity...what did we start out with? (pristine sticks of gum)
- o And what did we do this gum? (we chewed it into a lump)
- o And when we pulled that lump out of our mouths, did it resemble much of anything? (No, not really).

TELL the Good News

- o Adding another life to your life, like having a baby, can, especially when you're not planning on it, can chew your life up.
- o The story of Mary's pregnancy reminds us that even when our lives get all chewed up, God is with us, hovering over us and around us, leading and guiding us to those who can help us make that chewed up lump into something new – like a sculpture.
- o And, sometimes, God will lead others whose lives are chewed up, to us, to be God's gift to those other people in a hard time – like Elizabeth was for Mary.

If there's time...

JOURNAL

- o What are some chaotic parts of my life that I would like God to "hover over" and help lead me through?
- o Who are some people that I think God is might be telling me to ask for help with these chaotic parts in my life?
- o If someone who is close to me is having a hard time in their life, what ways of being do I think God might want me to offer/show this person?