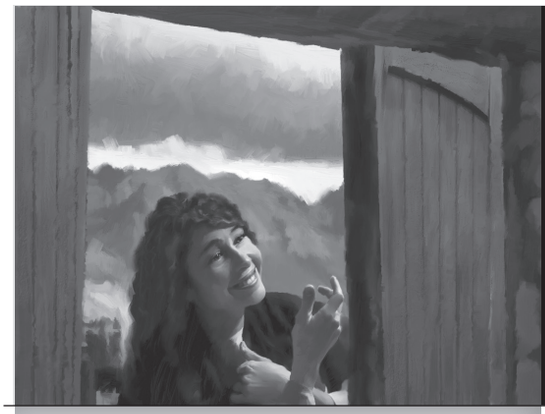


YEAR D | QUARTER 4

12

God in the Center

Grace
God gave Himself to us.

POWER TEXT

"Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long" (Psalm 25:4, 5).

KEY REFERENCES

- Luke 1:39-55
- *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 10, p. 98
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 7, pp. 18-22
- Student story on page 132 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 3, The Father
- No. 4, The Son
- No. 22, Christian Behavior

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that God delights in working with humble, teachable people.
- **Feel** blessed to be called by God's love.
- **Respond** by making Jesus central to all they do.

POWERPOINT

I humbly accept Jesus as the center of my life.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

In Mary's response to God's call we sense Mary's humility and her understanding that all we accomplish here on the earth is by God's power and to His glory. She talks about the great things God has done for her (Luke 1:49), His mighty deeds (verses 51-53), and His mercy to His people (verses 50, 54). She is willing to let Jesus be her reason for living.

This is a lesson about grace.

More than anything, God wants to fill and empower His people. That can be accomplished only when humble hearts are willing to put God first. When we make God central to our lives, He fills us with the power to do great things for Him.

Teacher Enrichment

"The song of Mary . . . is considered one of the most sublime hymns in all sacred literature, a lyric of exquisite beauty worthy of Mary's ancestor David. It is pervaded by a spirit of humble adoration and thankfulness, and glorifies the power, holiness, and mercy of God. . . . [It] is frequently designated the Magnificat, 'Magnifies,' from its first word in the Latin Vulgate. . . .

"The song of Mary has often been compared with that of Hannah (see 1 Sam. 2:1-10), which was a prayer of thanksgiving for Samuel. . . . Mary's song is also reminiscent of the song of Moses (see Ex. 15) and that of Deborah and Barak (see Judges 5), and is similar in spirit to Ps. 113 and 126, among others" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 686).

How humble am I? How do I keep Jesus as my center?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?**

Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the readiness activity of your choice.

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. Groups of Six* *B. The Virtues of Humility*	slips of paper, envelopes paper, pencils
* Prayer and Praise	15-20	See page 127. Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, world map, pushpins, offering plate/basket
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story Experiencing the Story Exploring the Bible	paper, scissors Bibles, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk Bibles, prepared slips of paper
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Scenarios*	written-out scenarios
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Filling the Hole*	papers and cutouts from Introducing the Bible Story, pens, tape
* Closing		Prayer and Closing Comments Reminder to Parents Coming Up Next Week	

LESSON 12

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:
- ☐ slips of paper
- ☐ envelopes

Groups of Six

Note: Adjust the size of the groups in this activity to accommodate your class size. Make fewer or smaller groups if necessary.

To prepare ahead, compose a series of short messages such as "God loves you" or "Jesus died for you" and make six copies of each. Also, prepare two or three single messages. Write each of these messages on a slip of paper and place each slip of paper in a sealed envelope. Give one envelope to each student in class.

Instruct the students to open their envelopes, read the message, then walk around until they find someone else who has the same message. Continue until all the groups of six (or however many your class size allows) have formed. Those with the single messages will still be walking around.

Debriefing

Ask: **How did it feel when you found others who had your same message?** (Great; I felt as though I belonged; etc.) **How did it feel when you couldn't find anyone with the same message?** (Lonely; I couldn't figure out why no one else had my message; I didn't fit in; etc.) **Which of these people—those in a group or those without a group—do you think feel more humble right now? Why? Whom do you think would be more willing to accept advice on getting into a group right now?**

Say: **God does not want us to be lonely, but He is able to use us most fully when we are humble and ready to listen to Him. Only then can God teach us His ways. Our power text today is Psalm 25:4, 5. Let's say it together.**

"Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long" (Psalm 25:4, 5).

Ask: **When the angel told Mary she was going to give birth to Jesus, how do you think she felt? It's only when we are humble that God can be at the center of our lives. That's our power point today:**

I humbly accept Jesus as the center of my life.

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils

The Virtues of Humility

Brainstorm with the students the character traits of people who display humility (i.e., they put others first; they do not long for praise; they are willing to yield for the benefit of others). Ask them to close their eyes for a few moments and think of a person who displays these character traits. Tell them that they will try to visually depict what a humble person looks like. You may want to prepare in advance to show them a sample illustration of how you view a humble person. Distribute paper and pencils to students and give them a few minutes to illustrate what a humble person looks like to them. Once they have finished, allow them to share their drawings with the class. Allow those students who prefer writing to describe in words the qualities and actions of a humble person. At the end take a couple of minutes to have students share briefly their works.

Debriefing

Ask: **What have you learned from this activity? How would your life look like if you chose to act humbly?**

Say: **God wants us to be humble so He can teach us. It's only then that He can be the center of our lives. Our power text says,**

"Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long" (Psalm 25:4, 5).

God can only guide us in His paths when we're listening to Him instead of taking charge and doing all the talking ourselves. Let's say together the power point:

I humbly accept Jesus as the center of my life.

Prayer and Praise

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"Spirit Song" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 72)
"Humble Thyself" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 81)
"Seek Ye First" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 83)
"Shepherd of My Soul" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 99)
"Open the Eyes of My Heart" (*Praise Time*, no. 49)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Use *Adventist Mission for Youth and Adults* (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. For the mission story, have a map of the world where the students can identify the location of the mission story and compare it to where they are. You could use pushpins to mark where the mission story takes place.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ offering plate/basket

Remind the students that when God is the center of our lives, how we spend our money becomes open to His guidance. Encourage them to pray about and talk with the adults in their lives about what they can do for the special mission projects this quarter.

Prayer

Remind students that in ancient times a conquering king would demand that his new subjects kneel before him as a sign of humility and subjection. When we choose to kneel before God, we are acknowledging His Lordship and showing our humility to Him. When you pray, ask God to give your students tender, humble hearts and willingness to put God at the center of their lives. Close with a prayer for the students' joys and sorrows, for the birthday and other special event celebrants, as well as for the visitors.

Notes

2

BIBLE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ paper
- ☐ scissors

Introducing the Bible Story

Give each student a piece of paper and a pair of scissors. Instruct them to fold the piece of paper in half, then in half again the other way to create four sections. Starting at the corner where the four sections meet, fold the paper again diagonally to create a triangle. (You'll have a larger flap left over on one side. Don't worry about it.) Tell your class the piece of paper represents their lives. Ask the students to remember something embarrassing that has happened to them, or to imagine being in an embarrassing situation—being scolded by the teacher in front of the class, having an article of clothing rip or fall off in public, tripping while walking across a stage, et cetera. As they remember or think of that situation, ask them to cut off about one inch of the tip of the triangle, cutting in an arc, so that when they open up the paper it will have a hole in it.

Ask them to unfold and hold up their papers. (Tell them to save the holes and papers for a later activity.)

Debriefing

Say: **The paper represents your life and the hole represents how you feel when something embarrassing happens to you. How would you describe that feeling?** (Humiliated, humbled) **What can fill that hole?** (Accept answers.) **Think about the embarrassing situation Mary found herself in. She was pregnant and unmarried. How did she fill that hole? The answer is found in our Scripture passage, Luke 1:46-55.**

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk

Experiencing the Story

Draw a line down the middle of the board. At the top of the left side write "Who." At the top of the right side write "What."

Ask the students to find Luke 1:46-55 in their Bibles. This passage is full of energy and action if you take the time to read it carefully. In each sentence, ask the students to identify who is doing what and record their answers on the board in the appropriate category. For example, in the first sentence the "who" would be Mary and the "what" would be glorifying the Lord. Some sentences contain several "whos" or "whats." In those cases, go through them phrase by phrase.

Debriefing

Ask: **How did Mary fill the humble spot in her life?** (With God) **According to the song of Mary, whom did God scatter?** (Verse 51) **Whom did He bring down?** (Verse 52) **Whom has He lifted up?** (Verse 52) **Whom has He filled?** (Verse 53) **Whom has He sent away empty?** (Verse 53) **What does Mary call herself?** (Verse 48) **How did God use Mary? With what kind of people can God work best?**

I humbly accept Jesus as the center of my life.

YOU NEED:
- Bibles
- prepared slips of paper

Exploring the Bible

Write each of the following Scripture references on a slip of paper. Ask students to find and read the references. They will prepare a skit to present to the rest of the class based on their reference. The number in parentheses beside the text indicates the minimum number of people and the roles needed to present this scene.

Genesis 4:3-10—Cain and Abel (3; Cain, Abel, God)

Genesis 13:5-13—Lot and Abraham separate; Lot chooses the better land for himself (2; Lot, Abraham)

Deuteronomy 8:2, 3—God humbled the Israelites with hunger, then provided manna (4-5+; Israelites)

2 Samuel 10:4, 5—Hanun shaved half the beards of David's men to humiliate them (4-5+; Hanun, men, David)

2 Chronicles 33:21-25—Amon did not humble himself; his officials assassinated him and made Josiah king in his place (4; Amon, officials, Josiah)

2 Chronicles 36:11-19—Zedekiah did not humble himself before Jeremiah; the Babylonians sacked Jerusalem and took the people prisoner (4-5+; Zedekiah, Jeremiah, Babylonians, prisoners)

Daniel 5:18-30—Daniel recounts to Belshazzar how Nebuchadnezzar was stripped of his glory when he became arrogant and predicts Belshazzar's doom; Belshazzar is slain (3; Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar)

Matthew 26:31-35, 69-75—Jesus predicts that Peter will deny knowing Him; Peter declares he will die first. Peter later denies Jesus and, when he realizes what he has done, weeps bitterly (3; Jesus, Peter, servant girl)

Acts 20:17-21—Paul served the Lord with humility and preached to both Jews and Greeks (3+; Paul, Jew, Greek)

Colossians 3:12—God's people clothe themselves with humility (1)

Debriefing

As you have seen, the Bible is full of examples both of humble and proud people. The lives of the Bible characters show that there are consequences to the course of action one takes. That's why, as our power point states,

I humbly accept Jesus as the center of my life.

YOU NEED:
- written-out scenarios

Scenarios

Divide your class into three groups. Give each of the groups one of the following scenarios to discuss. Bring the groups back together to share their scenarios and solutions.

1. Martin loves the spotlight. He's never happier than when he's the center of attention. He knows that his need for recognition is probably interfering with his relationship with friends and with God, but he figures he'll have plenty of time to make up for that later, after he's really famous. What does Martin need to know about humility? (Hint: Matthew 5:5)

2. James likes everyone to know that he and God are close. In fact, he drops that tidbit of information into every conversation on any subject. After all, he says, people need to know who the good guys are. He considers himself a role model and the spiritual giant of his school. What has James yet to learn about humility? (Hint: Matthew 6:1-4)

3. Shelley loves God, but she's sick of trying to get along with others. Other people are so annoying—so self-righteous, so stuck-up, so judgmental, or just plain dumb. She's thinking of dropping out of church and just doing it alone for a while. What would you tell Shelley about humility? (Hint: Micah 6:8)

Debriefing

Ask: **Are Martin, James, and Shelley like anyone you know? Have they really put God at the center of their lives? What pride problem do each of them have? How can they get their hearts back to the place where they are teachable? What does God want most from them and from you?**

Say: **Remember our power point,**

I humbly accept Jesus as the center of my life.

(Adapted from *PointMaker Devotions for Youth Ministry* [Loveland, Colo.: Group Publishing, 1997], p. 31. Used by permission.)

4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ papers and cutouts from Introducing the Bible Story
- ☐ pens
- ☐ tape

Filling the Hole

Ask your students to take their paper and the piece they cut from the center for Introducing the Bible Story and sit in a circle. Ask each student to take a turn naming something they or other juniors/teens might put at the center of their lives instead of God, writing it on the circle, then turning it over and writing "Jesus" while they say, "I choose to make Jesus the center of my life." Have them tape the circle back into the hole.

Debriefing

Ask: **How often do we need to ask God to give us humble hearts that keep Him at the center?** (every day, all day long) Say: **Let's repeat our power text together.**

"Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long" (Psalm 25:4, 5).

Let's remember:

I humbly accept Jesus as the center of my life.

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Thank God for the example of Mary, who remained humble even though God selected her to be the mother of His holy Son. Ask God to give your students humble hearts that are always willing to put Him first in their lives.

Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **Zechariah praises God. Salvation is God's greatest desire for each of us.**

Notes

Student lesson

God in the Center

Have you ever wanted to be important or to be the best at something?

Mary gave a sigh as she turned the corner of the dusty road and saw Elizabeth's house at the end. It had been a long trip, and she was tired. Normally, walking through the hill country of Judea didn't wear her out so much. She reminded herself that she was pregnant, and even though it wasn't showing yet, she knew that was the cause of her extra fatigue.

But now the house was in sight. It would be so good to see Elizabeth, whom the angel had said was also expecting a son. Elizabeth and Zechariah had long since given up on having children. The child Elizabeth was carrying had to be a miracle baby too. Mary couldn't wait to hear the whole story. All the angel had told her was that Elizabeth was in her sixth month of pregnancy and that nothing was impossible with God. Mary smiled at the thought. She knew that firsthand.

She was at the doorstep now, sticking her head inside the simple home. "Elizabeth?" she called. "Are you home?"

Elizabeth turned, startled. She stopped quickly as her hand reached instinctively for her rounded belly. A second later she had recovered and was on her feet. "Mary!" She quickly ran to hug her younger relative. "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy" (Luke 1:42-44).

Mary smiled shyly at Elizabeth's words. So she already knew.

Elizabeth went on. "Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!" (verse 45).

Mary thought about that for a second. Indeed, she had received the angel's message. She believed that God would keep His word. That's why Mary had accepted the special call to become the mother of Jesus.

"I praise the Lord," said Mary, "and I'm so happy that God is my Savior. I'm just a humble servant of His, but from now on, in every generation, people will call me honored because of the great things God has done for me."

Mary gratefully took the chair and cool drink Elizabeth offered her. The water tasted sweet and good.

"His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation," Mary continued (verse 50). She knew that in all times, God has done great things for those who love Him and for those who are humble.

Mary thought about Abraham, the father of all Israel, who was willing to leave his home and family and go to a country he knew nothing about, because God called him there. God did indeed make him into a great nation.

She thought of Moses, who begged God to find someone else to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Yet no leader in all of Israel's history was greater than Moses; God spoke to him face-to-face. If anyone had reason to be proud, it was Moses. And still, he was called the humblest man who ever lived.

She thought of David, who refused to harm King Saul when he had the chance. Saul was trying to kill David, and David had been promised Saul's throne someday. Yet David refused to dishonor the man whom God had chosen to be king. It was David who went on to build Jerusalem into a great city.

But many other kings of Israel and Judah refused to honor God. They had stubbornly worshiped the idols of the Canaanites, instead, and God had finally given them over to the Babylonians. Their great city, Jerusalem, had been burned, along with the temple. Thousands had been killed, and the rest had been taken prisoner to Babylon.

Mary continued speaking to Elizabeth: "He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors" (verses 51-55).

Yes, God always did great things through those who were humble; those who were willing to put Him at the center of their lives.

Elizabeth poured herself a drink, and the two women sat in silence for a minute, bonded together by the special sons they carried. They both had big jobs ahead of them. Above all, they would need to keep humble hearts and God in the center of their lives.

KEY REFERENCES

- Luke 1:39-55
- *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 10, p. 98
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 7, pp. 18-22
- Our Beliefs nos. 3, 4, 22

POWER TEXT

"Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long" (Psalm 25:4, 5).

POWER POINT

I humbly accept Jesus as the center of my life.







Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 89.

Sunday

READ Read Luke 1:39-45 and this week's story, "God in the Center."

REVIEW Review the power text, Psalm 25:4, 5.

PRAY Pray for a new insight into God's will for your life.

Monday

READ Read Luke 1:46–55.

THINK These verses are often called the song of Mary. What are the main things for which Mary praises God?

WRITE In your Bible study journal, summarize in your own words the key points of Mary's song.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to show you His ways and guide you in His paths.

Tuesday

READ Read 1 Samuel 2:1–10.

REWRITE Pick three phrases or thoughts from this passage that are also found in the song of Mary in Luke 1:46–55. Rewrite them in your own words in your Bible study journal.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to give you a humble, teachable heart.

Wednesday

READ Read Numbers 12:3.

THINK What do you know about Moses' life that would back up this statement?

RESEARCH Look up the word "humble" in the dictionary and write the definition in your Bible study journal. List five things a humble person would or wouldn't do.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you put Him in the center of your life.

Thursday

READ Read Proverbs 6:16, 17 and 16:18, 19.

FIND What does "haughty" mean? Look it up in the dictionary if you don't know.

TALK Ask an adult to tell you about someone they know or knew who was humble and someone whom they know or knew who was proud. With whom was it more pleasant to spend time?

PRACTICE Say your power text to someone else.

PRAY Ask God to keep you from being proud.

Friday

READ Read Matthew 5:14–16.

THINK What are the things that you are sometimes tempted to put in the center of your life instead of God?

DISCUSS With your family members, discuss how you could keep God at the core of your life, above everything else that is important to you.

PRESENT Say your power text at family worship. Tell your family the Bible story for the week.

PRAY Ask God to help you keep Him as first priority in your life.