

Our Blessed Mother

The Story of Mary for Children



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Introduction

What is your favorite family story? Is it a funny story, a sad story, or a story that inspires you? It could be a story about a relative you have never met. It could even be a story about you! We tell family stories over and over again. Sometimes they make us laugh and sometimes they make us cry. They tell us about who lived before us, and they help us imagine who we can grow up to be.

The family of God has favorite stories too. The stories in this book are very special family stories about a very special mother, Our Blessed Mother, Mary. These stories about Mary have been passed down from the people who knew Jesus and Mary. These family truths are called *Tradition*. Tradition is the faith of the family of God as it has been lived out and passed on.

Most of these stories about Mary were written down by early followers of Jesus. We can read them in the Bible. The authors of the Bible were inspired by the Holy Spirit. That is why we call the Bible the word of God. In these stories, we learn that the Mother of God was a person just like you and me. We learn that God's grace helped her to do extraordinary things. From Mary, we learn to trust in God and to love Jesus. We don't worship Mary because Mary is not God. But we honor Mary, we love her, and we ask her to pray for us. We learn about her life because it lights the way to her Son, Jesus Christ, who is God.

May these family stories about Mary help us to be good disciples of Jesus, today and always!

Part One

The Life of Mary







God's Promise

A very long time ago, God created the first man and the first woman. Their names were Adam and Eve. God loved Adam and Eve very much. God loved them more than the flowers and the trees, more than the animals and fish in the sea. God blessed Adam and Eve and said, "Have children and use the good things I have created. Take care of the earth."

Adam and Eve loved God and were very happy! They were God's special friends and God gave them everything they needed. Each day they talked and walked with God in the Garden of Eden.

God told them they could eat the fruit from any tree except for the tree in the middle of the garden. Then, one day Adam and Eve chose to disobey God and ate from that tree! Because of their sin, Adam and Eve had

to leave the garden. Their joyful friendship with God was broken because they did not do God's will. Although their relationship with God was not the same as it had been in the garden, it was not over.

Adam and Eve had children. Their children had children, and soon there were many people. But the sin of Adam and Eve had caused a separation in the relationship between God and all humans. Original sin was now a part of human life, and when people died they could not go to live with God.

God loved all people and wanted them to be with him forever. He promised those who believed in him, "I will send a Savior. He will help you become my friends again. He will save you from sin." God wanted to save our first parents. God wanted to save all people. God waited for the right time to send the Savior.

As time went on, there were many Jewish people living in the land of Israel who believed in the one true God. God sent holy men and women called prophets to share his messages with the people. The prophets told everyone that the Savior would come. They made sure the people didn't forget God's promise. The prophets said, "Believe God's promise! God will send a Savior who will free us from sin. A young woman will be his mother." The people listened to the prophets and waited for the Savior, happy to know that God cared for them.



Mary

Many, many years passed and the Jewish people continued to wait for God to fulfill that promise. Joachim [JOE-uh-kim] and his wife, Ann, were a faithful Jewish couple who loved God and tried to do God's will. They lived in a small town called Nazareth.

Although they had been married many years, Joachim and Ann did not have any children. For a long time they asked God to let them be parents. One day, Ann discovered that she was going to have a baby. Joachim and Ann were so happy that God had answered their prayers.

God had special plans for Ann and Joachim's baby. Their little girl would grow up to be the mother of God's Son, the promised Savior! Since she would one day be Jesus' mother, God preserved her from original sin from the first moment she existed in Ann's womb. When the

baby was born, Ann and Joachim named her Mary. Mary was filled with God's grace. She would never sin throughout her whole life!

According to a story that has been handed down over the years, Ann and Joachim brought Mary to God's house when she was still a young girl. The house of God was very big and beautiful. It was in Jerusalem and was called the Temple. Living there, Mary learned about God and served him.

She became friends with the other girls who lived at the Temple. With her friends, and all faithful Jews, Mary prayed that God would send their Savior or Messiah. She did not yet know that God had chosen her to be Jesus' mother. Mary grew up loving God with all her heart. She always said "yes" to God's will and followed his commandments.

On December 8, we celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception. This refers to the truth that Mary was preserved from original sin.

We remember Mary's birthday on September 8. Mary's birthday is a very special day because Mary is a very special person. She is the mother of our Savior!

