

The Remedial Herstory Project

INQUIRY-BASED LESSON PLAN

STAGING THE INQUIRY

For this inquiry, teachers should consider opening with an intriguing and open ended question, then provide some background on this topic generally in the form of a video, brief lecture, or presentation. Close the introduction by asking students what questions they have, guide them in discussion to the question for the inquiry, highlighted at the top of the next page.

ACTIVITY TASKS

- Pose a broad open ended question. Provide background information.
- Students respond to questions in this packet independently or with a partner.
- Consider doing one of the following to extend the exercise:
 - Facilitate student discussion of the compelling question.
 - Facilitate a 4-corner debate.
 - Facilitate a structured academic controversy.
 - Students assume the characters involved and discuss the compelling question in character.
- Students craft an argument.

C3 FRAMEWORK

D1.1.9-12. Explain how a question reflects an enduring issue in the field.

D1.2.9-12. Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a compelling question.

D2.His.4.9-12. Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

D2.His.5.9-12. Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people's perspectives.

D2.His.10.9-12. Detect possible limitations in various kinds of historical evidence and differing secondary interpretations.

D2.His.11.9-12. Critique

the usefulness of historical sources for a specific historical inquiry based on their maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.

D2.His.12.9-12. Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry and investigate additional sources.

D2.His.14.9-12. Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.

Inquiry Activity: Was Mary a virgin?

The "Virgin Mary," the mother of Jesus Christ has a fascinating story, but one that has changed over time. Her story is important to women's history because it has defined the way that women in Christendom were seen throughout time. Mary's status as a virgin, the mother of a human son, or the son of God, or both matters because it reveals the extent of God's power and sets a really high bar for women to attain spirituality. To be godly, Mary had to be a virgin. If not a virgin, then she becomes human, and saintly. But she also becomes attainable for other women and cultural and religious dialogue about Women's virginity and saintliness disappear. To examine the sink worry, students will explore early Christian primary documents and consider the reliability and contradictory nature of those documents. Students will better understand the story of sick Mary and will better understand the historiography of the Bible and other religious texts. In this inquiry, students will examine primary and secondary sources to answer the inquiry question. Students should read the documents and respond to the questions, keeping in mind the big question for analysis and debate.

Secondary Source A: Six Scholars for the BBC

Mary has always been a central figure in Christianity. She's always been absolutely key, right from that moment early in Luke's Gospel when she's told "Blessed are you amongst women". The interesting thing for modern scholars is that she's being reassessed because we've become much more sensitive to female characters in the biblical story and because female characters in the biblical story are often quieter than the men. In a contemporary world we want to reimagine Christian origins and involve women much more. And one of the most important women in that story is Mary, of course, and that's why it's worth hearing her voice in a fresh way.

One of the reasons that Mary has maintained her popularity is that there were all the makings in the biblical text for a fascinating story, and yet with much of the detail missing. Often when details are missing, tradition will do its own part in trying to fill in those details and imagine those details to make that person's life a little bit fuller and understand a bit more about them.

Reflecting on stained glass images of Mary in a Norfolk church, Sister Wendy Beckett thinks that Mary's popularity in the Middle Ages was due to her depiction as a caring mother.

One of the roles that Mary fulfils is the mother that we see in early Christianity; she's the role model for mothers. She also plays an important role throughout Christian history in providing us with a female that's right at the heart of events. Christianity, after all, can be a fairly male-dominated affair. The Holy Trinity always sounds to contemporary feminists rather male dominated; there's a Father, a Son and there's a Holy Spirit, and the characters in the New Testament are all male. But here we actually have somebody who we can interact with as a female in Christian tradition.

Many people, Protestants particularly, object to the figure that Mary has become. She is seen almost as a goddess figure, possibly derived from the fact that many Pagans became Christians in the early centuries of the church and they believed in goddesses, so Mary became to them the goddess. Many people would say that was something that went wrong with Christianity. There's nothing about Mary being a goddess in the New Testament.

Jesus is God and human so therefore Mary is simply human. Christian theology has always maintained that she was a human being and not God, but nevertheless, she was a human being in a very important and intimate place in the story of Jesus.

There have been many images of Mary through the centuries. Some have derived from the Bible, such as the image from the book of Revelation showing Mary with a crown of 12 stars. She represents the early church with the 12 tribes of Israel represented by the stars.

There have been images of Madonna and child; Mary seated in a chair with the child on her lap. Some of these images look very similar to images that we know about from some of the pagan goddesses at the time. Isis, for example, was seated in such a chair with the infant Horus on her lap in the same way.

When Christianity was spreading across the Empire, it's clear that it deliberately took images from the pagan world in which it lived and into which it spread and used those images. Old holy wells and shrines were turned into Christian shrines. In Egypt a shrine of Isis was deliberately and self-consciously re-created as a shrine of Mary.

One of the important cities for Mary was Ephesus, where the goddess Diana was worshipped. It's not surprising that Mary drew upon the imagery associated with the goddesses, because that was the imagery the people knew. In the same way, we have imagery of Christ with a triumphant crowd looking like an emperor.

Later Rabbinic sources tell us that Jewish girls could be betrothed as early as 12 years and a day or any time after the age of twelve and a half. The actual marriage involved two stages. First of all there was the betrothal and then - after an interval of several months, perhaps a year - the young girl would have been taken to the house of her husband to be and at that moment, once they started to live together, they were considered properly married. This could have been quite a traumatic process for a young girl; to leave behind her mother and father and all the people she was used to, and go to live in an alien household. The choice of husband was made by the family, not by the girls themselves. It was a legal agreement between the father and the husband. Girls did not have a part in that legality.

Pregnant out of wedlock

A girl who became pregnant out of wedlock would have been terrified. The whole social structure was set up for children to be born within marriage. Genealogy and ownership of children was seen as very important. Girls who became pregnant outside marriage would probably have had to leave their homes and their families.

There was the potential of being sold into slavery or of being stoned to death. She may have been married off quickly or banished from her home and village, which may have led a woman to prostitution or slavery when she had no way of supporting herself. According to the New Testament Joseph, after being visited by an angel, decided not to send her away or to expose her but to marry her.

A woman's life

Jewish women in first century Palestine had very limited legal and economic rights. It's particularly in the domain of economic rights that this is a big problem. When a girl was in the household of her father, any work that she did or wages that she earned

would belong to her father. Once she married, her wages and products that she made belonged to her husband. There were very few times when she would have any sense of financial and economic autonomy.

A woman didn't have the right to divorce her husband, but he could divorce her. If she divorced she would lose her children as well. Most inheritances that she received would go straight to her husband. The husband would maintain legal responsibility for the children.

We have multiple sources for knowing about women's lives in 1st century Roman Palestine. There are literary sources such as the Bible, texts from writers such as Josephus and Pliny and the Apocryphal texts (although these have to be read with a pinch of salt as they refer to a slightly later time). There are the early Rabbinic materials, which provide a good deal of information. There's also archaeological evidence and material culture to give us clues about how women lived and what kind of houses they lived in. There is a great deal of information about Roman women's lives in Roman texts and novels throughout the provinces of Rome.

Mary, like most Jewish women and girls of her time, would have spent most of her day working. Almost as soon as she could walk she would have been helping out with the many chores it took to keep daily life going. Stoves needed to be tended, beds needed to be made, homes need to be kept in repair, food needed to be prepared, animals needed to be tended whether one was on a farm or in a village. Food needed to be prepared for the future, so meat and vegetables needed to be preserved for future times as well. Water had to be drawn from cisterns and from wells. An incredible amount of work had to be done every day and it was done primarily by women and girls...

One can imagine there was talk about trusting in God and that maybe in their lifetime he would send a Messiah. The Jews, as they became more and more oppressed, may have become more and more obsessed with God. They may have thought that this could be the time for the Saviour to come. And it was in this highly charged theological atmosphere that Mary wove her way to the well, perhaps holding in her arms the infant Jesus...

Mary's virginity and immaculate conception

The immaculate conception of Mary has no historical basis at all. This is something that was invented by later Christians to extend the idea of her holiness. The purity, the perpetual virginity, all of those kind of themes end up with Mary (as well as Jesus) having to be conceived immaculately. One of the difficulties that many people today have with the virgin birth is not so much historical, the idea that it couldn't happen, but theological; the idea that it must have happened in order for Jesus not to have had any sin.

Early Christians like Augustine tended to think that Adam's original sin was passed on in the act of sex and that therefore in order for Jesus to be holy and sinless it was necessary for him not to have been born from parents who had had sex. Theologically people now have more problems with the Virgin Birth than they would have done in the past. In the past it was almost necessary to have a virgin birth in order to get Jesus out of this rather sticky difficulty of having been born with ordinary human parents who'd had sex.

In the New Testament, many of the women characters are either so holy and pure that it's unrealistic, or they're prostitutes. And Mary falls into the category of being holy and pure and absolutely without sin; and she carries on in that trajectory right through the tradition so that she gets more and more holy and her virginity is stressed more and more and her holiness throughout her whole life is stressed, so that she too becomes sinless. She is assumed into heaven rather than having to die, she herself gets born of an immaculate conception; so you get a development in the idea of the perpetual virginity, because she's begun a journey to becoming ever more holy, ever more pure which in the end can only end up with those concepts of perpetual virginity.

Origin of the virgin birth story

The virgin birth is a very powerful story which explains the theological truth that Jesus is the son of God - not just the son of God from his resurrection or from his baptism, as perhaps the gospel of Mark might suggest, but the son of God from the moment of his conception.

To what extent it's historical is much more difficult to analyse. One of the difficulties is that we hear nothing at all of a virgin birth tradition, until late in the first century. Only in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, which were probably written in the 80s or 90s of the first century, is there a mention of the virgin birth.

Another difficulty with the virgin birth idea is that the texts in Matthew and Luke are clearly overlaid with references to the Old Testament. They're evocative of the typical Old Testament annunciation narrative: the angel going down to one or two of the parents; the insurmountable problem, which usually in the Old Testament is the fact that the parents are elderly or barren; the angel proclaiming that the problem is going to be surmounted; and the birth ensues. It's very similar to the stories about the birth of Isaac or the birth of Samson or Samuel. Matthew and Luke are indebted to the Old Testament and they're drawing on these Old Testament ideas. The story of the birth of Jesus has to be even better. Mary can't be an elderly barren woman: instead she's a young girl who's also a virgin.

Miraculous birth

There were lots of stories of miraculous births in Greco-Roman society. Famous figures tended to attract these stories as people speculated on what it would have been like to be present at the birth of such a person. Astrology was also important, so it was felt that if a person was going to be very prominent their fate was already preordained, that in their horoscope one would see how wonderful they were going to be. It's not surprising they began to think that perhaps their birth was miraculous and wonderful.

In the Greek and Roman system of gods and goddesses, the goddesses themselves could be said to be virgin mothers. Athene and Artemis were regarded as virgins. They gave birth and then dipped themselves into the rivers so their virginity was renewed.

The Greek and Roman stories are not quite the same as the virgin birth stories in the gospels. They differ in that there's a male god and a human mother and the male god comes down to earth and impregnates the mother in a very graphic way. In the gospel

stories there's no mention of God or the Holy Spirit taking the form of a human being and actually coming down and impregnating Mary.

Rape

There was an ancient legend from the Jewish side that Mary was the victim of a rape. They even gave us the name of the Roman soldier who was supposed to have carried out this rape: a man called Panthera, which apparently was quite a common name for Roman soldiers.

Recently some scholars looked at this theory and decided it was simply an ancient slur, anti-Christian slander made up in the second century to try to prevent belief in Jesus. Some say that perhaps it isn't so impossible as previously we thought. There are certain clues in the New Testament to suggest that Mary was in quite a terrible state after the beginning of the pregnancy. The fact that she went in great haste to see Elizabeth. The fact that she talks about herself as a "lowly handmaid": why is she lowly? Some people believe the lowliness was because she was actually the victim of a crime.

The strength of the idea is that just as Jesus in his crucifixion identifies with those who suffer, Mary, as victim of rape, is somebody that women who suffer can identify with.

The problem of the theory is that Jesus could have been the son of a Roman soldier, which is even more unpalatable for people than the idea that Mary wasn't a virgin. The idea that Jesus was somehow genetically dependent upon a rapist is more difficult to swallow and it would take a tremendous radical leap of faith to accept that kind of theory.

Virginity throughout the birth

The book of James establishes that Mary was a virgin during the birth of Jesus - in other words she remained intact, physically, despite the birth, which is miraculous. It led to later speculation that Mary remained a virgin throughout her life, before her pregnancy, during the birth of Jesus, and after. The book of James begins to speculate on the birth of Jesus in quite graphic detail.

The idea that Mary is intact comes from the idea that she suffers no pain. This is theologically important to the early Christians because of the curse, mentioned in Genesis, of the two human beings who are responsible for the fall. Adam's curse is to work in sweat in the fields and Eve's curse is to bear children in pain. The idea that Mary and Jesus are free of sin, that they are immaculate, leads us to think that Mary wouldn't suffer the pain of Eve, that she would have a painless birth.

Some would argue that this makes her rather distant from the ordinary woman. The way that the tradition has dealt with that is to say she had a painless birth but she wasn't without pain because she saw her son die on the cross.

The great tradition of Mary as the "Mother of Sorrows" comes into being and there are often depictions of Mary as a woman in tears, of a woman laid low by grief. John's gospel refers to the crucifixion as a laborious birth, so if Mary does have a painful birth in the Christian tradition she has it at the crucifixion.

Second hand merchandise

The word virgin developed in western culture has become a synonym for purity and good behaviour. But virginity in Jewish society at the time that we are talking about was about ensuring that the new husband wasn't getting second hand merchandise. Virginity was only important for the moment of the first marriage.

The first marriage was more important; for example, in the Jewish marriage contract for a first marriage they paid twice as much as for a second marriage. Virgins went out on the wedding procession with their hair open and flowing so that everyone could see and it would then be remembered that she had been a virgin when she entered her husband's house at that event.

In fact after a while, instead of being a prize, virginity became a burden. We know this from several Jewish burial inscriptions where women were buried and the messages of mourning on their tomb say how sad it was that she died a virgin.

Jesus's siblings

From the first century to the present day there has been a debate about Jesus having brothers and sisters. According to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus had at least four brothers who survived into the time when he was an adult. In Mark's Gospel, when Jesus goes to Nazareth to speak in the Synagogue the people in the crowd say to him, "Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon?". They also say, "Are not his sisters here with us?" So there are at least two sisters and possibly more.

Regularly mentioned by Paul and sometimes mentioned by other early Christian writers, was Jesus's brother James. James seems to have had a very important role in running the church from very early on in Jerusalem but it's a role that's become forgotten in later Christian tradition.

Later Christian traditions have redefined these brothers and sisters, either as cousins or as Joseph's children by an earlier marriage, in order to preserve the idea of Mary's perpetual virginity...

BBC. "Mary." BBC. Last modified August 2, 2011.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/history/virginmary_1.shtml.

Source

1. Who wrote this document?

Document

2. According to this document, was Mary a virgin at birth or afterward?

3. What evidence do they provide to support their claims?

Secondary Source B:

Many people are familiar with the stories in the New Testament gospels of Luke and Matthew about Jesus' conception and birth. But what is less well known is how common such stories are when the lives of great men are told. From the initial announcement of an impending conception (to Mary in Luke, to Joseph in Matthew) to the signs and portents signalling the birth of the miraculous child, ancient Greek and Roman writings share a lot with the gospel accounts.

The gospels claim that Jesus' birth was foretold in advance. Matthew quotes from the prophet Isaiah to establish Jesus' birth as a divine promise that would usher in a time of peace and justice.

Virgil, writing in the early first century AD, wrote about a promised child, the offspring of the gods, who would bring a golden age of peace and prosperity to the Roman Empire – in other words, the emperor. Augustus Caesar's birth was foretold by portents, according to the Roman historian Suetonius. Unusual astronomical occurrences were understood as divine omens in Roman culture, so it is no wonder that Jesus's birth – like Augustus's – was depicted as important using a miraculous star.

Alexander the Great's birth also had meteorological omens surrounding it. Plutarch tells us that both Philip and Olympias, Alexander's parents, were sent dreams from the gods announcing Alexander's birth. Olympias dreamed that her womb was struck by lightning, while Philip dreamed that he put a seal on his wife's womb in the image of a lion. Most significant, though, is the report that Philip spied a divine serpent sleeping next to his wife, which he took as a sign that he should avoid sleeping with her himself, since it was clear that she was to conceive from a divine rather than human source.

Massacre of the Infants

Just as Matthew records Herod's attempts to stop the prophesied child by killing all newborn babies, Suetonius tells a similar account of Roman leaders attempting to prevent Augustus's rise to power by ordering that no male child be reared. In Matthew, Jesus and his family escape the "Massacre of the Infants" by fleeing to Egypt – whereas in Suetonius (like in the Moses story) fathers- and mothers-to-be thwart the murderous plans, in the Roman case, by preventing the decree from being officially registered with the treasury.

Son of a god

Although both Matthew and Luke trace Jesus's lineage through his non-biological father Joseph, Jesus is depicted as God's own offspring.

Augustus Caesar was also adopted by his father, Julius Caesar, and likewise considered himself the descendent of a god – Venus Genetrix. Augustus traced his lineage to Venus through his ancestor Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome. Romulus, and his twin brother Remus, were conceived by the virgin priestess after the god Mars impregnated her. This priestess, as Virgil reports, was herself descended from Venus through her ancestor Aeneas, Venus's beloved son.

Alexander the Great's divine parentage was reinforced he grew up. Just as the adult Jesus was publicly claimed by God as his son in all four gospel accounts, Alexander's father, Zeus Ammon, confirmed his son's divine identity. Plutarch tells us that when Alexander approached an Egyptian oracle to ask whether he had avenged his father's murder, the priest made him rephrase his request, since his father was not a mortal man, and addressed Alexander in oracular speech as "O son of Zeus".

Jesus the hero

One of the most common places to find stories of miraculous births is in the life of heroes, often born of a union between a god and a human being. Hercules, perhaps the most famous of the Greek heroes, is the son of Zeus and the mortal woman Alcmene, for example. Zeus disguised himself as Alcmene's husband in order to trick her into bed with him. The divine parentage that Hercules enjoyed enabled him to do many wondrous feats.

Likewise, Asclepius, son of Apollo, rescued from the womb of Coronis, was gifted with miraculous healing abilities and was later considered divine in his own right.

Since Matthew and Luke don't agree with each other about what happened when Jesus was born, it's especially interesting that they both relate something miraculous in their narratives. The idea of Jesus's own miraculous birth may have supported the Gospel's claims about Jesus' miracle working ability, including healings and other wondrous feats.

Warren, MJC. "What child is this?" *The Conversation*. Last modified December 23, 2016. <https://theconversation.com/what-child-is-this-miraculous-births-and-divine-parents-in-the-time-of-jesus-70109>.

Source

1. Who wrote this document?

2Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;

3And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram;

4And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon;

5And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;

6And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias;

7And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa;

8And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias;

9And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias;

10And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias;

11And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon:

12And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel;

13And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor;

14And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud;

15And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob;

16And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

17So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

18Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

19Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

20But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

22Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

24Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

25And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

Chapter 2

1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

2Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

3When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

4And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

5And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet,

6And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

7Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

9When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

10When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

12And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

13And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

14When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

15And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

16Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.

17Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

18In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

19But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

20Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

21And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel...

Document

1. Why do you think Matthews account differs from Marks?

2. What mystical things happen during and after conception and birth?

Primary Source C: The Gospel of Luke

Scholars hypothesize that the Gospel of Luke was written in 85CE. Luke's account differs from Matthews in important ways.

26And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

27To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

28And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

29And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

30And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

31And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

32He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

34Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

35And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

36And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

37For with God nothing shall be impossible.

38And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

39And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda;

40And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.

41And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

42And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

43And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

46And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,

47And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

48For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

49For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

50And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

51He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

53He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

54He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;

55As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

56And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

57Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

58And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

59And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

60And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John.

61And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

62And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

63And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

64And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.

65And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea.

66And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

67And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

68Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,

69And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

70As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:

71That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

72To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;

Analysis:

1. What were the biggest differences you saw in the primary sources?
2. After reading from these sources, do you think Mary was a virgin? Defend your answer.
3. Does it matter if Mary was a virgin? Defend your answer.
4. In religious faith, does textual evidence matter? Explain.