YOUTH BECOMING
LEADERS
High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute



RESPONSE

LUKE 1:26-38, 46-55

YBL prayer stations have been adapted/rewritten for the youth institute context. All credit goes to the original creators.

THEOLOGICAL THEMES

1. Mary was fearful of her encounter—and that's OK. She was scared of the angel and she was equally scared of the enormity of the call.
2. Regardless of how much we fear, there is Good News that God knows us and gives us value. Gabriel offers Mary a unique challenge. He reminds Mary of her worth because of who God is.
3. God calls us – even when we have nothing to offer. Mary was from the wrong side of the tracks. As an unmarried woman, she had everything going against her. Despite all our limitations, God can make up for them. Mary is highly favored, not because of who she is, but because of God's sovereign grace offered to her.
4**. It's OK to have doubts about God's call on our lives.** "How will this be since I am a virgin?" Teens and their insecurities, the inability to name where God is at work in their lives.
5. God desires that we respond – working in tandem with him to meet those needs."May it be to me according to your word" and "For no word from God will ever fail." It is an issue of character & the paradox of the calling.
6. God is about turning things upside down from our human expectations. Who would have picked Mary for this? Our assumption is that God wants to use great people to do great things. Instead, God uses ordinary people to do great things.
7. In the end, God is always glorified – we need to celebrate God's work. Magnificat
8. The coming of the Christ child is about redemption— Spiritually, relationally, and economically.

LETTING GO

"As the angel had finished his explanation of what was to transpire
"Mary responded, 'I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true.' And then the angel left her."
— Luke 1:38

Her response was not to doubt or to ask for someone else to take this from her, but simply to accept the Lord's will for her life. Mary let go of the control of her own life. It is a scary thought for any person to accept a prospect as daunting as an unknown pregnancy, which will most likely result in great shame for the person and their entire family.

THINK for a moment about what you may be holding control of too hard in your life. Talk to God about why you feel that you cannot let go of that and let God be in control.

WRITE down that long-held thing, whatever it may be, on a scrap of paper. When you are ready to let go of this thing, use the lighter to burn the paper in the metal bowl, knowing that God's got this.



RESPONSE

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS

High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

A SERVANT'S HEART

"Mary's first response to the angel was to be troubled. She seems worried about what the angel was here for and what the angel might ask of her. Mary was confused and disturbed. Mary tried to think what the angel could mean."
— Luke 1:29

Mary, although she did not think that she was worthy of any of God's favor, was also thinking in the same moment of what she might be able to do for God. Just as Mary thought of serving the Lord, we are also called to serve.

Take some time to THINK back on the past few weeks.
Where have you served others?
In what ways have you been served?
Have there been times when you have ignored a call to serve?

TALK to God about all these times and LISTEN to what the Holy Spirit may have to say to you. Are there any new ways you may be called to serve people? WRITE the name of a person, a group, or a place of people you feel called to serve on the board in front of you.



RESPONSE

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS

High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

GOD'S WORD NEVER FAILS

Often in the New Testament, we find scriptures and events that fulfill Old Testament prophecies.

"For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life."
— Leviticus 17:11

"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."
— Matthew 26:28

It is because of this pattern of God's character that we can truly take to heart Mary's word in verse 37: "God's word never fails."

Communion is a time for Christians to symbolically envision their place in the body of Christ. Take some time and reflect on what Communion is and why you partake in it. When you are ready, take Communion and thank God for His sacrifice.



RESPONSE

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS

High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

While they were eating, Jesus took the bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.
— Matthew 26:26-28



RESPONSE

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS

High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

FEAR

"' Don't be afraid, Mary,' the angel told her."
— Luke 1:30a

Fear is a large part of our lives and often keeps us from doing what God may be calling us to. Mary had many things to fear in this moment: the angel, what the angel might tell her, and an impossible task God might want her to do. Take a moment to STEP INTO the box in front of you and reflect on the fears in your life. Perhaps take a moment to adopt a physical posture of fear, and after a few moments, STEP OUT of the box and continue.

Author Rigel J. Dawson says, "Fear makes us imagine boundaries and pretend they are real." These fears are the invisible lines that can sometimes provide needed structure, but often our fears can cripple us from doing what we may be called to do.

Think about your fears, and if you are ready, RELEASE them to the Lord. Perhaps let your physical body know you are releasing them to the Lord by opening your palms out to the Lord, etc. Let them go from your body and relax, knowing that God will take care of you no matter what path you take. (You may have to do this many times in your life; it's ok, fear does not leave easily.)



RESPONSE

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS

High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

IMAGE OF GOD

At the beginning of this passage from Luke, Mary is greeted by the angel Gabriel, who says,
"Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."
— Luke 1:28b

Mary, despite being approached by an angel (a messenger of God sent from heaven), was upset by the visit.
"Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean."
— Luke 1:29

Mary does not, in this moment, see why the angel is here to see her or why she is favored by God; her image of herself in this moment does not meet the perceived standard she thinks God has for her. But the truth is, Mary was a woman who was about to be entrusted with bearing the Son of God.



RESPONSE

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS

High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

Often, we think the same as Mary; with anxiety, worrying about self-image, imposter syndrome, and the like, we do not think that we live up to God's perceived standard of good Christian behavior.

Take a moment to LOOK into the broken mirror in front of you. Reflect on the feelings you may have of insufficiency in the eyes of God and even more so in our own eyes.

While those feelings may not leave you, remember that God does not need you to be perfect for the King of Creation to love you and to favor you. The God of love takes us just as we are, among all our failings, and embraces us as His child.

Take a moment and look at yourself in the whole mirror. Read and PRAY these words over yourself.

“Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.”
— Romans 15:7



RESPONSE

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS

High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

THE ANGEL GABRIEL

The angel Gabriel is often depicted in historical artwork as a human figure, bathed in a holy glow, with soft, gentle features. However, from what little we know about angels, that is not how angels appear.

WATCH THE VIDEO about Biblically accurate angels to learn a bit more:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40KcrrfbJ6o

There are only a few descriptions of angels in the Bible, and little knowledge in other religious texts, but what we do know is that they were TERRIFYING. We know because before every interaction, one of the first things the angels say is, “Do not be afraid.”

The angel Gabriel says the very same phrase to Mary when he comes to tell her she is pregnant. Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.” — Luke 1:29-30



RESPONSE

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS

High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

We can only imagine what this quite frightening encounter felt like to her, but take a moment to explore this scenario in your mind. As you look at the figure in front of you, imagine that you are Mary, and this angel has come to tell you this incredible and terrifying news.

How do you think Mary felt?
What do you think Mary was thinking?
How would you feel before the angel spoke?
During the delivery of the news?
After the angel had left?

Take a picture of the angel and write some of these thoughts on the back of the Picture. Take this picture with you to remind you of Mary's REAL-LIFE experience with the angel Gabriel.



RESPONSE

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS

High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

MOSAIC WORK OF ART

When we read Mary's song of Response (Luke 1:46-55), it is clear that Mary and her people have experienced and witnessed injustice. She speaks about unjust rulers, people who are proud in thought, and the poor and hungry. What are some global injustices we are facing today?

Sometimes it can feel overwhelming. Sometimes it can feel like life, our world, our culture... all are out of control. We need Jesus to help us... We need to know that Jesus is in control. Mary understood and knew that.

READ the Passage.

All Things Hold Together in Jesus... He was supreme in the beginning and—leading the resurrection parade—he is supreme in the end. From beginning to end, he's there, towering far above everything, everyone. So spacious is he, so roomy, that everything of God finds its proper place in him without crowding. Not only that, but all the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe—people and things, animals and atoms—get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies, all because of his death, his blood that poured down from the cross.



RESPONSE

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS

High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

Read Colossians 1:18-20 (The Message).

HOLD A PUZZLE PIECE in your HAND. Think about the pieces of your own life— the good pieces, the bad pieces, the broken pieces. Because of Jesus' death on the cross, the pieces of our lives have a purpose.
God works them all out for good, even when we cannot see that or understand that.

God uses all the pieces to create A Work of ART... a mosaic of puzzle pieces that only Jesus can fit together in just the right order and in just the right way. ARE YOU WILLING TO LET JESUS HOLD THE PIECES OF YOUR LIFE TODAY? Talk to Jesus about this!

THINK ABOUT THE BROKEN PIECES OF OUR WORLD. Are you willing to let Jesus carry and hold the broken pieces of our world? Are you willing to allow Jesus to hold the pieces of injustice, pain, suffering, and loss? TALK TO JESUS ABOUT THIS.

TAKE HOME A PUZZLE PIECE.
Let this be A REMINDER that JESUS IS IN CONTROL, and He is holding all things together. HE IS HOLDING OUR WORLD AND YOU TOO!



RESPONSE

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS

High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

POEM OF RESPONSE

In our Luke scripture, we hear Mary's response to God in verses 46-55. Take a moment to read her words.

"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on, all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me — holy is his name.
His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.
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."
—Luke 1:46-55

Think about a time when you were thankful for all God had given you or how you felt when God called you to do something you had never done before. How did you feel? What would you say to God?
Take a moment to write your own poem to God in reflection of these thoughts and feelings.



RESPONSE

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS

High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

MARY'S RESPONSE SONG

Let us put ourselves in Mary's shoes. Mary was a young Jewish girl in Nazareth, a small, insignificant town. Most of the people there would have been considered lower class. To add to that, Mary was a girl, so she was essentially seen as property rather than as someone with rights. Mary would have been about 14 or 15 at the time of this story. To summarize, Mary was not a leader, lacked power, and was unable to make an impact or change for her family or her people. And yet God chose her. Reread Luke 1:46-55. See how she responded.

Take a moment to listen to this song. As you do think about the areas in your life you feel God has called you to or that you feel intimidated by. How are you responding to the Lord?

"Yet, O LORD, you are our Father.
We are the clay, you are the potter;
we are all the work of your hand."
— Isaiah 64:8

What is God shaping you into? Make a clay symbol that represents your response to God. Feel free to take the clay with you as a reminder of what God is doing in your life or leave it as a prayer before the Lord.



RESPONSE

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS

High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

VISIO DIVINA

- PREPARATION
  - Make yourself comfortable in a place that is as free from interruptions as possible. Position the image where you can see it clearly. Begin with silence for a few minutes, humbly asking the Father to quiet your heart and make you aware that you are in His loving presence. When you are ready, begin looking and praying through the four movements described below. With time and practice, these movements will become simple and natural as they flow from one to the next.
  - 1. VISIO (SEE)
    - Simply open yourself to the presence of God as you look at the image.
    - Gaze slowly and attentively. Let your eyes move gently across the artwork—its colors, shapes, figures, light, and shadow. Take in the whole before focusing on the details. Do not rush. Allow moments of silence as you look. You are not analyzing yet; you are simply receiving what is before you. Let the image speak in its own way.
  - 2. MEDITATIO (RECEIVE)
    - On the second movement, continue to look, but now attend to what draws your attention.
    - A particular detail, color, gesture, or figure may stand out to you. This is your “received” focus. Stay with it. Reflect quietly: Why might this be drawing my attention? What might the Father be showing me through this detail?
    - Allow questions, thoughts, and impressions to arise. Do not force meaning—simply remain attentive and receptive.



RESPONSE

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS

High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

VISIO DIVINA CONT'D

- 3. ORATIO (RESPOND)
  - On the third movement, listen for the Father's invitation and respond from your heart.
  - Through the image and your reflection, the Father may be inviting you—to trust, to repent, to receive, to act, to rest, or to see something anew. Speak honestly in prayer, silently or out loud.
  - Respond with gratitude, confession, longing, or surrender. Let your response flow naturally from what you have seen and received.
- 4. CONTEMPLATIO (REST)
  - In the final movement, release the need to analyze or respond. Simply rest in the Father's love as you continue to gaze gently at the image. Let it wash over you. Allow the Spirit to draw you into stillness, filling you with His love, grace, and peace. Linger here. You are being formed, renewed, and refreshed.

- CARRYING THE IMAGE WITH YOU
  - Take with you the detail, image, or impression that was given to you.
  - Return to it throughout the day. Let it serve as a reminder of the Father's presence and the particular way He met you in this time of sacred seeing.



RESPONSE

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS

High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

PRAYING GLOBALLY

Check out each of the maps.

Consider all of the issues facing the nations and peoples represented by these maps.

As you look at each Map, pray for these places. For the leaders, aid workers, missionaries, etc.

Are you willing to STAND IN THE GAP for the Nations?
(Stand on the Map on the floor.)

PRAY FOR COUNTRIES AND CONTINENTS.

Stand in the Gap for the people trapped in poverty and injustice.

Stand in the Gap for folks attempting to live out the Kingdom of God.



RESPONSE

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS

High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

Pray for Reconciliation.
Pray for Peace.

Pray for Healing.

Pray for the Needs of Poverty and Hunger.
Pray for the Leaders in these nations.

Pray against Injustice and Oppression.
Pray against Consumerism and Blindness to the needs of others.

Pray for more Compassion and Understanding.

PRAY FOR OUR ENEMIES.

“I looked for someone who might rebuild the wall of righteousness that guards the land. I searched for someone to stand in the gap in the wall, so I wouldn’t have to destroy the land, but I found no one.”
— Ezekiel 22:30 (New Living Translation)



RESPONSE

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS

High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

PRAYER JOURNAL

What is Jesus saying to you today?

At this station, you will find a prayer journal. You may respond to God by writing your own thoughts here if you would like. You can write a word, write a prayer, describe an event from today, draw a picture....whatever you wish to do.

This is your space to speak to God.



RESPONSE

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS

High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

FREE CREATIVE

Create your prayers with the supplies provided.

Feel free to display your work so others can worship with you.





RESPONSE

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS

High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

SUPPLIES NEEDED

Miscellaneous:

1. Some prayer stations are more reflective and do not require many supplies. Make sure students have their Bibles or place at least one Bible per prayer station.
2. Have plenty of writing utensils and paper available if students desire to jot things down.
3. Also consider having throw pillows, rugs, or blankets available for students to sit/find comfortable postures.

- Letting Go
  - Scrap Paper
  - Lighter
  - Metal Bowl
  - See Misc.
- A Servant's Heart
  - Markers
  - Posterboard
- God's Word Never Fails
  - A Little Cross
  - Communion cups & a small trash can
- Fear
  - A very large box
- Image of God
  - Two mirrors: one broken, one whole
- The Angel Gabriel
  - iPad
  - Headphones
  - Angel Picture
- Mosaic Work of Art
  - Various puzzle pieces
  - See Misc.



RESPONSE

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS

High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- Poem of Response
  - See Misc.
- Mary's Response Song
  - Clay
- Visio Divina
  - Image
  - See Misc.
- Praying Globally
  - Various maps of different countries/communites
  - One Bigger floor Global Map
- Prayer Journal
  - A college-ruled journal
- Free Creative
  - Beads
  - String
  - Scissors (Both normal cut and different patterns)
  - Playdoh/ Clay
  - Scrapbook Paper
  - Markers/ Colorful Pens
  - Glue Sticks
  - Stickers
  - Anything you can think of that would allow students to express themselves creatively.



RESPONSE

YOUTH BECOMING LEADERS

High School Christian Leadership and Global Transformation Institute