

Blessed are you

 **Luke 1.39-45,(46-55)**

Mary travels to see her cousin Elizabeth during a time of both their pregnancies. As Elizabeth hears Mary's greeting, Elizabeth feels her baby leap for joy. She feels blessed by Mary's visit, and is surprised that she has been chosen in this way. Elizabeth also reassures Mary that it is because she believed in the word of the Lord that she too has been blessed.

Now read **Luke 1.39-45,(46-55)** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

Any pregnancy is miraculous, but for Elizabeth who thought she could not conceive and Mary who was a virgin, they understandably felt very blessed! Sometimes, when someone is kind or over generous to us, we can become overwhelmed and possibly even feel not worthy enough to have received such a blessing. This passage reminds us that God loves us all – with overwhelming blessings – and we too can be blessings to the people that we meet.



Ask yourself: If we could see the signs of greeting we exchange, what would that look like?



LISTEN

Alongside the carols and Christmas number ones, start each day this week by listening to the song '10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)', Matt Redman on *Spirit & Song*, when you wake up, to focus your mind on the blessings around you. Try to also write down 10 reasons why you feel blessed each day. Or 10,000 reasons, if you have the time!



The week before Christmas can be a busy time. Can you guess how many people you might come into contact with in some way, e.g. on a bus, in the supermarket or at a school nativity? This week, challenge yourself to treat every greeting as a chance to bless someone new, wish them a Merry Christmas, share a smile or offer to help when needed.

WELCOME

How do you feel when you are reunited with friends and family after being distant for a while? Do you travel to see loved ones at Christmas, or do they come to you? If you are hosting in any way this year, make a 'Welcome' poster to greet your guests. Make it as bright and large as possible!

Sing

Singing can bring great joy and blessing for those leading and listening. This week, safely organise a carol singing event at your local church, care home or even door to door. Be sure to include hymns of love, blessing and greeting.



When you count your blessings, how many of those are family and friends? Spend some time looking through photographs of past Christmases remembering all the blessed times which you have had with your loved ones. Perhaps you could get one or two of the photos framed or printed out, if you only have digital copies. Can you remember what made you smile, what were you doing, and how were you feeling?

Blessed are you Luke 1.39-45,(46-55)

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.



Mary set off, as quickly as she could, to a town in the hills where her cousin Elizabeth lived with her husband Zechariah. When Mary arrived, she entered the house and greeted Elizabeth. As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, she felt the baby inside her kick, and she was filled with the Holy Spirit. Elizabeth cried out, 'Mary, blessed are you among women, and blessed is the baby inside you. Why has this happened to me – that I am honoured by a visit from the mother of my Lord? For as soon as I heard you arrive, the baby inside me leapt for joy.'

Mary, you are blessed, for you believed God's promise.'

Mary said:

'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord!
My spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour,
because I, an unworthy servant, have been chosen.
From now on, I will be known as one blessed by God.
The Almighty has done great things for me.
Holy is his name! God's mercy is for all,
and for ever.

The strength of the Lord is shown for all to see.
The powerful are brought down,
and the humble are lifted up;
the hungry are filled with good things,
and the rich are sent away empty.
God promised Abraham and his descendants
that he would come to their help,
and that help is here!'

Luke 1.39-45,(46-55)

Did you know?

- Blessed here means that Mary has received God's favour.
- To 'proclaim' means to shout out for all to hear.

Luke 1.39-45,(46-55) (NRSV)

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the

mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."