



Mary
HUMILITY



HUMILITY DEFINED

1. Willing obedience to God
2. Having a right view of ourselves
3. Surrendering our own rights for the benefit of others



KEY VERSE

And Mary said,
“Behold, I am the
servant of the Lord;
let it be to me
according to your
word.”

Luke 1:38

Mary

Humility



LIFE SUMMARY

Mary followed God with humility and reverence. She was raised in the small town of Nazareth and traveled to Bethlehem with Joseph where she gave birth to Jesus. Throughout her life, Mary responded to God’s call with a willing heart, humbly accepting his plan for her. As Jesus grew older and began his earthly ministry, Mary followed and learned from him. Even after Jesus’ death, Mary was an important part of the early church. “All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers” (Acts 1:14).

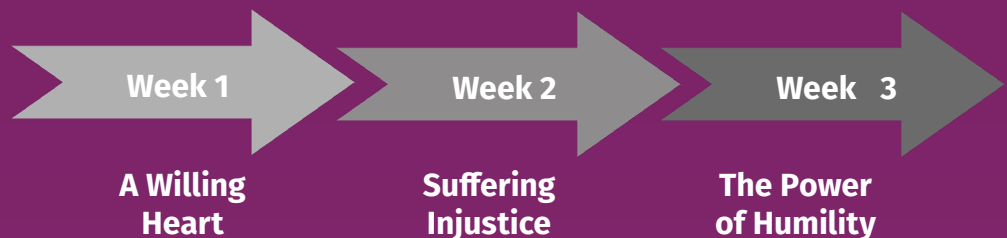


CHARACTER QUALITY

The goal of this unit is to cast a compelling vision of the power of humility for the kids. Humility is a central part of God’s character, and God loves to lift up those who are willing to humble themselves. In this unit we will highlight three aspects of humility: viewing yourself rightly, suffering injustice without retaliation, and laying down your own rights and plans for the benefit of others. Humility draws us closer to God’s heart and allows us to reflect his nature and character in the world. Mary’s hidden, unassuming life gives us an amazing picture of how we can follow Jesus’ perfect example of humility.



UNIT OVERVIEW



Isobel Kuhn

Humility



LIFE SUMMARY

Isobel Miller grew up going to church but began to wander during college. While in school, a failed relationship broke her heart and pushed her to the verge of suicide. The thought of her father's heartache, however, kept her from following through. In her desperation she prayed, "God, if there be a God, if you will prove to me that you are, and if you will give me peace, I will give you my whole life." Peace is exactly what she received. Her life began to change, and she soon decided to attend Moody Bible Institute. While there, God prepared her heart for future work among the Lisu people in China. God was her faithful Father and taught her the ways of humility and dependence. In 1929, Isobel finally made it to China where she married a fellow missionary, John Kuhn, and served for the next 24 years.

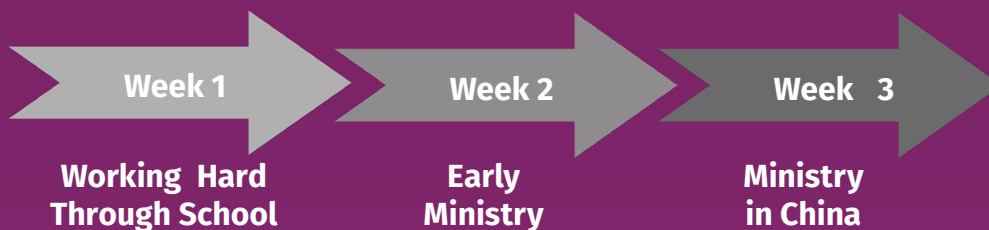


HUMILITY IN THE LIFE OF KUHN

Mary and Isobel Kuhn humbly obeyed God's call on their lives. Both women chose to follow God even when they were misunderstood and judged by others. They recognized that God had done great things for them, and they responded to his plans with joyful, surrendered obedience.



UNIT OVERVIEW



NOTABLE QUOTE

"Life contains adventure, but these times are interspersed with long periods of plain, unvarnished hard work. The real things in life are attained at these monotonous level periods"



SERVED IN

China
1901 - 1957



Mary

HUMILITY



KEY CONCEPT

God uses the humble to accomplish his plans.



SCRIPTURE

- » **Luke 1:26-38** – An angel appears to Mary
- » **Luke 1:47** – Mary views herself as servant
- » **1 Corinthians 1:26-29** – God uses the lowly as his instruments
- » **James 4:6** – God opposes the proud but gives favor to the humble



Background to Today's Lesson

God sent his Son into the world in the humblest of circumstances. He chose an unlikely teenager named Mary who was engaged to a man named Joseph. Mary was from Nazareth, one of the last places God's people would have expected their Messiah to be born. Although Mary knew that others wouldn't understand what God was doing in her life, she responded with a willing heart. As we explore Mary's response to the angel Gabriel this week, we'll see her humility and trust in God, as well as her willingness to be used by him.



Today's Lesson

At Grace Church, we've learned that our response to surprising situations tends to reveal what is truly in our hearts: good or bad. When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and explained that she would give birth to the promised Messiah, it was a complete surprise to her. Mary's response was indicative of her relationship with God. Mary didn't understand how she could possibly conceive and give birth to a son, but her first reaction wasn't doubt or disbelief. When the angel explained how the Holy Spirit would cause this to happen, Mary exemplified a heart of humility when she uttered the words, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38).



Programming Notes

We want the kids to see that God chooses to use the humble to carry out his plans. When God was ready to send Jesus into the world, he chose to use a young girl who was willing to say 'yes' to his plan. Mary had a right view of herself as a servant of the Lord. She didn't hold herself in high esteem. Her humble heart was pleasing to God, and he was delighted to use her as his willing servant. We need to view ourselves and our plans the same as Mary so that we are ready and willing to do whatever God asks. Help the kids see that God is ready to use and to bless those whose hearts are humble. Though humility isn't easy, it is worth it!

For the younger kids, teach them that we miss out on God's best for our lives when we allow what we want to be more important than what God wants. We need to have a humble attitude like Mary, ready to do what God asks.



Working Hard Through School

Isobel Kuhn attended school at Moody Bible Institute. To pay for school, she worked as a waitress and was often humbled as she watched wealthier students enjoy their free time while she worked. Ruth was one such girl. She was wealthy and had a sharp mind but didn't have a relationship with the Lord. Isobel Kuhn felt a burden to pray for and reach out to Ruth. She was amazed as God blessed her efforts and opened a door for friendship with Ruth. The two friends cherished their conversations, but Isobel's work schedule greatly restricted her ability to spend time with Ruth. Ruth had a hard time understanding why Isobel spent so much time doing menial work. God used Isobel Kuhn's humble witness to plant seeds of the gospel in Ruth's heart. Though it was not until much later, Ruth eventually came to know Christ.



For the Workers

For Isobel Kuhn, following God meant embracing a life of humble status. Read Chapter 10 of *"By Searching"* and reflect on the ways that God used Isobel's small choices to serve as a waitress and to refuse "unconsecrated money" to forge humility in her. Reflect on the small choices God is asking you to make in order to humble yourself before him and before others so that he will be glorified.



Resources in Action

Use the resources this week to emphasize the importance of humble work. For Isobel Kuhn, it was studying and serving in a restaurant. The story of Isobel's friendship with Ruth can be found in chapter 10 of *"By Searching."* Help the kids dream of ways that their humble service can be used to carry out God's amazing plans.



Isobel Kuhn
HUMILITY



KEY CONNECTION

Mary and Isobel Kuhn willingly followed God's leading in their lives, even when it was difficult.



RESOURCES

[By Searching: Chapter 10](#)
[Restaraunts in the 1920s](#)
[School History](#)
[Moody Bible Institute](#)



Mary

HUMILITY



KEY CONCEPT

God defends the humble.



SCRIPTURE

- » **Matthew 1:19-25** – The angel appeared to Joseph, Mary was vindicated by God
- » **1 Peter 2:19-20, 23** – We can entrust ourselves to God when suffering injustice
- » **Psalms 91:9-11** – God will protect us when we make him our refuge
- » **Luke 1:38, 46-55** – Mary visited Elizabeth



Background to Today's Lesson

The angel Gabriel had just appeared to Mary to announce that she was chosen by God to give birth to the Messiah (Luke 1:26-38). God had seen the humility of Mary's heart and had chosen her to be a main player in his plan of salvation. After hearing from Gabriel, Mary's first priority was to see the miracle of Elizabeth's pregnancy (Luke 1:39-41). Following this visit, Mary returned to her hometown where her obedience to God's will was taken to another level.



Today's Lesson

Three months after the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, she began to face the costly reality of following God. Her pregnancy had been discovered and it was assumed that she had been unfaithful to Joseph, her fiance. When Joseph found out about her pregnancy, he decided to break off their engagement quietly (Matthew 1:19). But God came through for Mary and sent an angel to Joseph to defend her humble obedience to God's plan. The angel encouraged Joseph to stay engaged to Mary, to take her as his wife, and revealed to him that the child was indeed from the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20).



Programming Notes

This week we want to give the kids a vision of what it looks like to humbly suffer injustice. Mary's obedience to God required humility at the start, but it took an even deeper level of humility to stay faithful when the situation became more difficult (Luke 1:38, 46-55). Even when Mary's personal reputation was on the line with her fiance, she did not try to defend her own cause. Instead, she "endured sorrow while suffering unjustly" (1 Peter 2:19). Help the kids identify the ways that we try to defend our own cause when we are falsely accused or when others don't believe us. God did come through for Mary, and we can trust him to be our defender too.

For the younger kids, help them consider the ways that they respond when someone treats them unfairly or when their parents don't believe them. Compare their response to Mary's, who patiently waited for God to reveal himself to Joseph (Matthew 1:19-25).



Early Ministry

Upon graduating from Moody Bible Institute, Isobel Kuhn applied to China Inland Mission (CIM) to become a missionary. When she met with the mission council, they told her they had received a negative reference describing her as a proud, disobedient troublemaker. The council informed her that she would be on probation in Canada for an extended observation period. Isobel was incensed. She didn't think of herself as proud or disobedient. A good friend challenged her to reconsider her indignant attitude and to recall that, truly, everyone is a troublemaker and sinner. The exhortation struck Isobel Kuhn deeply, and in the midst of her disappointment she humbled herself before God. Shortly afterward, she discovered the source of her accusations to be false. Rather than justify herself to the mission council, she trusted God for his justice and timing. Her humble attitude in this time resulted in fruitful ministry in the Vancouver Girl's Club.



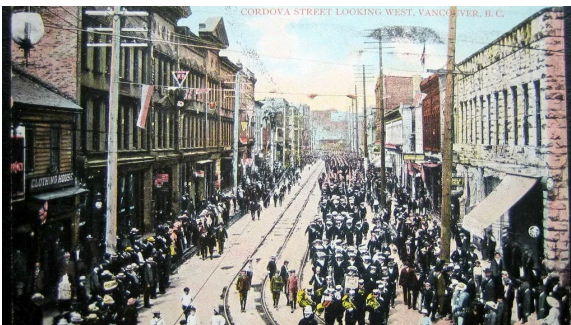
For the Workers

Read chapter 11 of *By Searching* which tells of the loving rebuke given by Isobel's friend. She was humbled by this exhortation and confessed her negative attitude to the Lord. God responded to her humility and opened the door for her ministry. How is God calling you to trust him to work things out for you?



Resources in Action

Use the story of Isobel Kuhn's application to the CIM to encourage the kids to humbly rejoice in God's plan above their own agenda. Isobel Kuhn joyfully remained faithful to God in Vancouver while she waited to go to China. Use the resources to give kids an idea of what the city would have looked like in the 1920s.



Isobel Kuhn

HUMILITY



KEY CONNECTION

Both Mary and Isobel Kuhn faced the pain of a damaged reputation as they sought to follow God.



RESOURCES

[Vancouver in the 1920's](#)
[Kuhn's City of Vancouver](#)
[By Searching: Ch. 11](#)
[Getting involved with OMF \(CIM\)](#)



Mary

HUMILITY



KEY CONCEPT

Jesus humbled himself to save us.



SCRIPTURE

- » **Luke 2:1-7** – The birth of Jesus
- » **Luke 2:8-14** – An angel tells the shepherds that the Savior is born
- » **Philippians 2:7-8** – Jesus lowers himself to become like us
- » **Luke 1:46-55** – Mary considers herself a humble servant



Background to Today's Lesson

For the last two weeks, we have looked at Mary's humble heart and the outcome of her surrendered life. Mary viewed herself rightly as a "servant of the Lord" (Luke 1:38, 48), and God chose her to be a key player in his plan of salvation. For this final week of our study of Mary, we will see how Jesus identified himself with Mary (and with us!) in order to bring salvation to the world.



Today's Lesson

Mary and Joseph made the long and difficult journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem in obedience to Emperor Caesar Augustus' decree. While in Bethlehem, Mary gave birth to Jesus in a stable (Luke 2:7). In a field nearby, an angel appeared to some shepherds and instructed them to find the savior lying in a manger, wrapped in swaddling cloths. The shepherds immediately went to search for him. They found him, just as the angel had described. The shepherds proclaimed the words of the angel to Mary and Joseph. Later, Mary "treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart" (Luke 2:19).



Programming Notes

Humility happens when we surrender our own "rights" and put our trust in God. This is exactly what Jesus did for us by coming to earth in human form. Help the kids make connections between the humble circumstances of Mary and Jesus' lives in Luke 2:1-21 with the description of Jesus' humble example in Philippians 2:5-11. This Christmas, we want the kids to see God's tender love for us demonstrated in the lowly baby Jesus, who gave up all of his rights as God in order to bless and exalt us. This draws us ever nearer to God, and it compels us to live like Jesus, surrendering our rights for the glory of God.

For the younger kids, compare Mary's humility with Jesus' humility. Help them see that Jesus was the humblest of them all, letting go of his status as the King of kings in order to save us. We can be like him when we choose to serve others too!



Ministry in China

When Isobel Kuhn first arrived in China, she experienced a culture shock. Personal space and privacy were uncommon and the native women would unashamedly crowd around her windows to catch glimpses of their strange white neighbor. The fleas, lice, and rats were another unsettling part of her new life in China. Eager to show hospitality, Isobel Kuhn invited her new friends over, and was quite surprised as they blew their noses on her blankets and let their babies soil her rugs. She began to realize she could not let her comforts and possessions keep her from loving the people around her. She cried out to God and asked for his help to love the Lisu people the way he did. He answered her prayers and she grew to love the people deeply.



For the Workers

Read the fourth paragraph from “Isobel’s Struggle.” Isobel felt convicted for valuing her own possessions and comfort over the precious souls in front of her. Think of your own life and the things you prioritize. How might they keep you from reaching out to those around you? How has God been calling you to get a little more uncomfortable in order to reach others with the gospel?



Resources in Action

Use the resources to give the kids a taste of the Lisu culture that surrounded Isobel Kuhn. Let their clothing, celebrations, and language inspire your crafts and activities. Remind the kids that setting aside our own traditions and preferences for the sake of others is exactly what Jesus did when he came to the earth.



*Isobel
Kuhn*

HUMILITY



KEY CONNECTION

Isobel Kuhn wrestled with the unappealing conditions she found in China, but she humbled herself and followed the example of Jesus so that many could be saved.



RESOURCES

[Joshua Project - Lisu](#)

[Lisu Photographs](#)

[Lisu Celebrations](#)

[Lisu Celebration Dance](#)

[Isobel's Struggle](#)