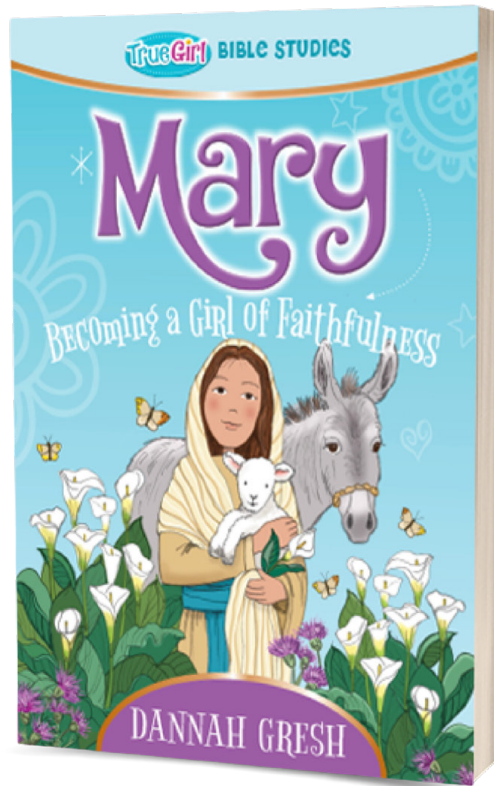


How does

Mary: BECOMING A GIRL OF FAITHFULNESS
address the topic of virginity



Glad ya asked! And we totally get it. It took a lot of thought and prayer for us to reference this in a way that protected the readiness of each reader. We believe we succeeded in writing about it truthfully. Check it out in the following sample pages.

We recognize that this could be the catalyst that causes your girl to be curious. If that's the case, we believe it's because she is ready and you are fully equipped to handle it. But rest assured, we won't introduce anything that some girls may not be ready to learn about. We have a strong conviction that you, Mom, should be in the driver's seat of your daughter's sex education.

Sooooo, let's review! An angel showed up to talk to Mary, and she felt *confused*, *disturbed*, and *afraid*. (To be honest, I would feel those things if an angel showed up to have a chat with me!) But the angel told her *not* to be afraid because God wanted her to be part of His special plan. Mary had to decide if she would trust her feelings *or* be faithful to what she knew about God and His super-ginormous plan to rescue the world.

Let's just consider how difficult this decision was for Mary. I mean, think about how shocking all of this must have been. Mary was just a teenager.

PAUSE!

Does it sound a little strange that God picked someone so young to be the mother of Jesus? Let me clear one thing up. During the time that Mary lived, a teenager had reached adulthood. Twelve-year-old boys were considered men and had full-time jobs, while the girls were fully trained and prepared to start a family and care for a household. People typically didn't live as long in those days because they didn't have the medicine and knowledge that we have today. So, if someone lived to be 60, they were considered suuper old. For this reason, adulthood started a lot younger!

Does that make sense?

OK. UN-PAUSE!

How did Mary respond to her dilemma? Did she trust her feelings? Or did she trust the truth the angel told her? **Write your answer below. You might need to look back at Luke 1:38.**



Mary faithfully said, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you say come true" (Luke 1:38). Today, we might just say, "Yes, Lord!"

Looking back, that seems like the obvious choice, right?! Mary had seen an angel with her own eyes, would get to be the mother of the long-awaited Savior, *and* was highly favored by God. But I don't think her choice was *that* easy. You see, Mary had part of her life already planned out!

MARY'S SPECIAL plan

Mary was engaged. She was planning to marry Joseph. They probably wanted to settle down in Nazareth, where they most likely would live the rest of their lives. Joseph would continue his work as a carpenter—building tables and chairs and boxes! And Mary would take care of the household. Eventually, after they were married, they would have children together.

But now, God was inviting her to be part of His super-ginormous plan. The angelic messenger invited her to become the mother of the Savior that the Israelites had been waiting for. God was going to use her to do something He hadn't done since the beginning of the universe. He was going to create life in a unique and unfamiliar way!

How did the angel tell Mary God intended to create this baby? Write your answer below. You might look at Luke 1:35, which we read earlier.



Just like Adam and Eve weren't created by a mother and a father, Jesus was not created by a mom *and* a dad! The Bible tells us that God intended to place life inside Mary's womb through His own supernatural powers. The Savior needed to be born this way so He would be fully God *and* fully man. Being fully God gave Him the power to defeat sin and death. Being fully man allowed Him to die in place of all men and women who ever sinned.

Mary accepted the invitation to be part of God's super-ginormous plan. **She changed her plan to faithfully follow God's plan!**

All of this made it suuuuper awkward for Joseph. It was hard for him to believe what the angel had told Mary because he'd never seen God do something like this before! So, God sent an angel to Joseph in a dream to explain the situation and to tell him it was all exactly as Mary had said. He wanted Joseph to marry the girl and be an earthly father to the baby. (Kind of like an adoptive dad!)

In the verse below, underline what Joseph did after the angel spoke to him in a dream.



When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. (Matthew 1:24)

Wow! Immediately after God came to Joseph in a dream and told him the truth about this special child, he woke up and obeyed what God said—just like that! **Joseph changed his plan to faithfully follow God's plans.**

And this brings us to our very first lesson in faithfulness. Both Mary and Joseph had plans, but they knew that God's plans could be trusted more than their own.

FAITHFULNESS LESSON #1: A faithful girl trusts in God's plan.

Fill in the blanks!
Faithfulness Lesson #1:

A faithful girl _____ in _____.

Now turn back to the beginning of the book. Find the two pages that say "Faithfulness Lessons" at the top of the page. Beside #1, rewrite the sentence above.

Whenever I read Mary's and Joseph's stories, I'm inspired by how quickly they responded in *faithful* obedience to God's plan. But I don't think it was any easier for Mary to be faithful than it is for you or me to be. So, *how* did Mary (and Joseph) trust God and obey *immediately*?

Well, here is an important fact: *THEY* didn't do it alone! Let's look back, once more, to the story of the angel appearing to Mary.

Find the first words the angel spoke to Mary. They not only include the truth that she is **avored** but another reallllly big piece of good news for Mary. Where was God when all this was happening?



The angel greets Mary by saying, “Greetings, favored woman! **The Lord is with you!**” (Luke 1:28). Mary was able to trust God’s plan because He helped her do it!

On our own, we cannot make good choices. Our sin impacts EVERYTHING—including our ability to make good decisions. In Romans 7, Paul, a strong man of God, wrote about how hard it was for him to make good decisions in his own strength. He wrote:



I want to do what is right, but I can’t. I want to do what is good, but I don’t. I don’t want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. (Romans 7:18b–19)

Have you ever felt like this? I know I have!

Maybe there was a time when you knew the right decision to make, but inside you, there was a tug-of-war battle trying to pull you toward the wrong decision. **Think of a time like that in your life and write about it below:**



All of us would fail at faithfulness if we didn’t rely on God to be with us! I’m so thankful that God was with Mary and that He was equipping her to make a faithful decision to trust His plan!



Whew! That was a ton of zooming! Now it's time to *zero in* and apply all of that info to *your* life, sweet girl.



ZERO IN: What does it mean?

Let's take a moment to think about the plans you have for your life. Maybe they are plans for next week's big birthday party or next year's soccer team. They could be plans to go to college one day or to marry a man and become a mother. **In the box below, write or draw out your biggest dreams, goals, or hopes for the future! Include all the details!**

Now, I'm going to ask you a question. It may be a little difficult to think about, so take a deep breath. Are you ready? Here it is . . .

What happens when the plans in your heart are not the same as God's plans?

Ugh! That's not very fun to think about, and honestly, the thought can be kinda scary. It's super easy to *talk* about saying "yes" to God and letting Him guide our path. But it's way harder to turn that belief into *action* when it means your plans will change.

Let's look to the Bible and hear the truth about God's plans for you. **With a red pencil or marker, circle three good things about God's plan for you.**



"For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD.

"They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you
a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11)

Based on those three good things, what can you believe when God's plan for your life isn't what you had hoped?



God's very words promise that He has good plans for you, and when God makes a promise, He keeps it! After all, He *is* perfectly faithful!

But I bet there are still times when you're disappointed that your plans don't work out, aren't there? **You're not alone!** Every person in the whole wide world feels that way when their plans need to change to fit into God's plans. And sometimes we don't say, "Yes, Lord," like Mary did. I think one of the reasons we don't always respond well is because we don't really understand how big God is (and we think we're pretty smart). It's harder to trust God when we forget how good, powerful, and smart He really is. Here's a little brain picture that has helped me to trust God!



Puzzling pieces

Have you ever tried to do a puzzle? Let me ask that again: Have you ever tried to do a puzzle without seeing the cover picture on the box? I haven't! Putting together a puzzle without knowing how it should turn out would be soooo frustrating.

Our lives are kind of like 10,000-piece puzzles, and we don't have the cover picture to know how they should end up looking. We stare at the table of life's messy pieces and try to put our lives together the way we think is best. But really, we have no idea how our lives *should* be put together. Thankfully, God does! He knows all things because He *designed* the puzzle. God knows precisely what the finished product should look like.

Proverbs 3:5–6 tells us what to do when our plans get changed. **Underline the action words below that tell you how to respond to God's plan.**



Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. (Proverbs 3:5–6)

God won't ever ask you to be the mother of His Son. There is only one Savior of the world, and He has already been born. But He *will* invite you to **trust** His plan. In fact, He wants you to **seek** it!

You aren't only supposed to trust God for the BIG things, though. God wants you to seek His way in **"ALL YOU DO"** (Proverbs 3:6). God knew that Mary and Joseph could be relied upon to do one of the most important missions ever assigned to humans—to take care of the Savior of the world when He was born and as He grew up. That was a BIG thing! How did God know this?

Well, besides the fact that He is God and knows everything, it's possible that He observed their lives. Of course, we don't know exactly what their lives were like before the angels came to tell them about their special role in God's plan. But we can guess that they were probably practicing faithfulness in the little things before God showed up with this big thing!

