

**100 people**  
you should know

## Mary, Mother of Jesus

### Saying Yes to God

Mary received the greatest honor God can pay: He chose her to mother his son. Probably a teenager at the time, Mary had done nothing to deserve such favor. Yet her simple response spoke deeply of her humble faith. "I am the Lord's servant . . . May it be to me as you have said" (Luke 1:38). Without hesitation, Mary said yes to God's plan to take over her life.

Saying yes to God usually involves sacrifice. It did for Mary, who endured the doubts of her fiancé and the scorn of neighbors who saw her pregnant before marriage. Saying yes meant bearing the pain of childbirth. It meant fleeing to far-off Egypt to protect her baby from Herod's soldiers. It meant raising a child she did not completely understand. (Once during his ministry she came to take charge of Jesus, thinking him out of his mind [Mark 3:21].) Most of all, it meant watching her son die on the cross.

Our last glimpse of Mary, though, shows her among the disciples after the resurrection, praying for the Holy Spirit Jesus had promised (Acts 1:14). Mary had begun her relationship with Jesus by holding his tiny form in her arms. In the end she realized she must let Jesus hold her. He was not only her child; he was her Lord. To that, too, Mary said yes.

#### Life Questions

*To what is God asking you to say yes? What sacrifice may be involved?*

**100 people**  
you should know

## Joseph

### Stepfather

Stepparents take on one of the hardest tasks in life—raising a child who isn't biologically theirs. When Joseph first learned that his fiancée Mary was bearing someone else's child, he must have felt deep heartache. By law, he had the right to accuse Mary of adultery and have her executed. Then an angel brought instructions in a dream: Joseph was to stay with Mary, for her child was from God (1:18-25).

Three times Joseph received angelic messages in dreams, and each time they called for moves he had not planned and could hardly wish. First he was called to care for a wife he had never slept with and a child who was not his. Then he was ordered to flee as a refugee to far-off Egypt. Finally an angel told him to return home, where skeptical neighbors probably remembered that Mary had been pregnant before her marriage.

We know one thing about Joseph: He obeyed, following the angel's orders in each difficult case. A dutiful stepfather, he treated his son as his own, raising him according to the Jewish law. As a carpenter, he taught Jesus to hammer and saw. As a righteous man, he modeled for him an obedient life.

We last hear of Joseph when Jesus was 12. After that, the Bible only mentions Jesus' mother, Mary, and Jesus' brothers. (Joseph probably died before Jesus began his ministry. From the cross, Jesus committed the care of his mother to one of his disciples [John 19:25-27].) Through his faithfulness as a stepfather, however, Joseph made a lasting contribution to the world.

#### Life Questions

*Has God asked you to do any thankless tasks? What were they, and how did they turn out?*