

There was a young girl who was engaged to a man named Joseph. (Joseph was the great-great-great-great-great grandson of King David.)

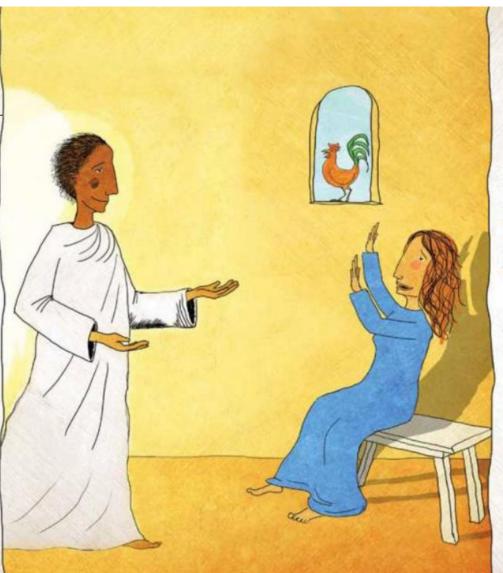
One morning, this girl was minding her own business when, suddenly, a great warrior of light appeared — right there, in her bedroom. He was Gabriel and he was an angel, a special messenger from heaven.

When she saw the tall shining man standing there, Mary was frightened.

"You don't need to be scared," Gabriel said. "God is very happy with you!"

Mary looked around to see if perhaps he was talking to someone else.

"Mary," Gabriel said, and he laughed with such gladness that Mary's eyes filled with sudden tears.



"Mary, you're going to have a baby. A little boy. You will call him Jesus. He is God's own Son. He's the One! He's the Rescuer!"

The God who flung planets into space and kept them whirling around and around, the God who made the universe with just a word, the one who could do any thing at all — was making himself small. And coming down . . . as a baby.

Wait. God was sending a baby to rescue the world?

"But it's too wonderful!" Mary said and felt her heart beating hard. "How can it be true?"

"Is anything too wonderful for God?" Gabriel asked.

So Mary trusted God more than what her eyes could see. And she believed. "I am God's servant," she said. "Whatever God says, I will do." Sure enough, it was just as the angel had said. Nine months later, Mary was almost ready to have her baby.

Now, Mary and Joseph had to take a trip to Bethlehem, the town King David was from. But when they reached the little town, they found every room was full. Every bed was taken. "Go away!" the innkeepers told them. "There isn't any place for you."

Where would they stay? Soon Mary's baby would come. They couldn't find anywhere except an old, tumbledown stable. So they stayed where the cows and the donkeys and the horses stayed.

