



## BIBLE STORY

Based on Luke 1:26–57

Hello, my name is Abe. I am a donkey, but not just any donkey. I am Mary's donkey. "Who is Mary?" you ask. She is one of my most favorite people in the whole world. She is often the one who brushes me, and sometimes she brings a treat of something to eat. Sometimes she puts a rope around my neck and a pack on my back and we go traveling. I wanted to tell you the most amazing story that has ever happened to me.

One day, Mary was brushing me when suddenly a very bright light appeared. There seemed to be someone standing in this light who spoke to Mary, saying, "Greetings, favored one, the Lord is with you."

I'm sure Mary was just as surprised as I was. Nothing like this had ever happened to either of us!

The person in the light must have seen that Mary was afraid, as was I. They said, "Don't be afraid, you are going to have a baby from God." (OK, they were talking to Mary, not to me!) They continued, "You will name the baby Jesus. He will be great and be called the Son of God. He will rule over the people like David, the king, except Jesus' kingdom will never end." (Now I'm thinking this person is an angel, a messenger sent from God.)

Mary was confused, as well she should be, because she wasn't even married yet, even though she was engaged to Joseph. She asked the angel just how this was supposed to happen, and the angel told her that nothing was impossible with God! The angel said that her cousin, Elizabeth, was also going to have a baby, and Mary should go spend time with her. Then the angel went away.

Mary went into the house and packed a bag. She got the rope down from where it was hanging, tied it around my neck, and we went to Elizabeth's house. Elizabeth saw Mary and made a funny little happy sound. She said that it felt like her baby did a somersault in her tummy as Mary approached. Elizabeth said, "Blessed are you, Mary, and blessed is the baby you will have."

Mary was so happy that she sang a song of praise to God and about the baby she would be caring for. I remember this song because she sang of all the hope God would bring into the world through this baby Jesus.



To find the hidden word, color all of the even-numbered squares one color and the odd-numbered squares another color.

1	3	9	7	3	5	9	1	7	3	7	5	5	9	1	7	3	1	1	9	5	3	7	3	1
8	4	3	6	2	3	3	1	2	6	2	9	7	3	8	6	8	4	7	1	6	2	8	4	2
2	6	9	4	8	1	7	8	4	2	6	2	3	1	8	2	6	4	2	1	2	4	2	6	8
4	8	1	2	8	1	6	4	1	3	9	2	6	7	2	4	7	8	6	9	4	2	3	1	7
8	6	3	4	6	5	4	8	9	5	1	4	8	3	4	2	7	8	6	5	2	6	5	7	9
2	8	4	6	8	1	6	2	5	1	3	8	6	5	8	6	3	2	4	3	8	8	6	4	7
4	4	6	2	8	3	4	8	9	5	7	2	4	9	2	6	8	4	6	7	6	2	4	8	5
8	2	5	6	2	7	8	6	7	5	3	6	2	1	4	2	4	6	1	3	4	8	1	9	7
6	6	1	4	8	3	1	4	2	8	2	4	1	3	8	4	9	1	7	3	2	6	4	2	8
2	4	3	4	6	7	9	1	4	6	4	3	7	9	4	2	7	3	5	1	8	4	2	8	6
7	3	9	1	7	3	5	5	1	3	9	5	1	7	5	3	7	9	1	3	5	7	1	9	7



## 2 See Hope



### WAYS TO PRACTICE SEEING HOPE AT HOME

- Signs of hope can be seen if we pay attention. Make an anagram of the word *HOPE*. Write each letter down the side of a piece of paper in large bubble or outline letters, then write words or phrases that begin with each letter that can remind you of hope in God. Color the letters and decorate the page as you choose. Hang the picture somewhere you will see hope each day.
- See hope in acts of kindness that others do for you and you can do for others. Wonder together how one act of kindness creates a ripple effect to others. Do an internet image search for “random acts of kindness kids” or “random acts of kindness kids Christmas.” Choose an image or two and make a poster of actions you would like to take so that others may see hope.
- Hope is often seen in the planting of seeds. Wonder together why seeds are a symbol of hope. Go to [bit.ly/MSeedIdeas](http://bit.ly/MSeedIdeas) for ten creative ways to start seeds. Plant some seeds and see what happens!
- Advent is a time of waiting, expectation, and hope as we prepare for the coming of Jesus. Look around your home, church, and neighborhood for signs of hope during the Advent season. This might be banners, Advent wreaths, Advent calendars, and so forth. Talk together about how waiting and hope go hand in hand.
- God of hope, open our eyes that we may see the surprises of hope all around us. Help us to wonder each day where we have seen you, and give thanks. Amen.