



the visual **faith** project

A Visual Faith Experience People Who Surprise Us

By Dr. Dick Hardel

Theme: People Who Surprise Us (Luke 2: 8-18)

Intended Audience

Small discussion group of youth or adults, or an intergenerational small group

Outcome of Experience

The participants learn that often God chooses to use the least likely people to express the good news of God's mercy and love. The participants discover the surprise of people God used in their lives to deliver good news and also that they might be God's surprising deliverer of good news to others.

Introduce Experience

In our present cultures in the USA people of all ages are searching for and longing for good news, signs of hope, motivation, a positive identity and purpose as they look to the future whether it be the economy, morality, ethics, faith, spirituality, family, retirement, or health and wellness. Throughout the Scriptures God's story of salvation, in the ups and downs of the lives of people, God surprises people with good news through unexpected ways and unexpected people.

Image Selection

Think about times you have been surprised by some good news. From all the images choose one or two that help tell of that event or display your response to the good news.

Facilitators Questions to Guide Group Discussion

1. How does the image(s) help tell of your experience?
2. Who or what delivered the good news you received?
3. How does the image(s) connect to emotions that you had in response to the good news?
4. What was surprising about the deliverer or delivery system that shared the good news?
5. Who has been a "least likely character" in your life to deliver good news?

Page 1



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People Who Surprise Us Experience continued...

Scripture: Luke 2: 8-18 (Included on page 3)

Connecting With Scripture

Look carefully at the image(s) you have chosen about being surprised by good news. How might your chosen image(s) of surprise good news connect to this story in Scripture? Find another image from the collection on the tables that connects to this story of good news in this selection of Scripture.

Questions to Connect Chosen Image with Scripture

1. What are the emotions or feelings that are presented in the image you have or have selected that connect with this story?
2. With whom in the story does the image connect? Does it connect to more than one person?
3. Who in this story do you think was most surprised by the good news?
4. Who might be the least likely character to receive or expect God's good news?

Application

- Have you ever had an experience of receiving good news that was so difficult to grasp that you just had to check it out and receive assurance?
- What is the most meaningful way for you to express praise to God when you have seen God's glory or felt the joy of God's good news to you?
- How might God have used you to proclaim good news to another person(s)? What method of communication did you use?
- As you consider your next week, how might you proclaim good news to others?

Prayer

As the facilitator, create a holy space, a joyous setting, for the individuals and group to engage in prayer. Invite the participant to each share one word to complete this prayer: *Gracious God: Father, Son, Holy Spirit, thank you for (name of person who shared good news to you) and filling my heart with (specific emotion). Amen.*





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People Who Surprise Us Experience continued...

Scripture Passages (Luke 2: 8-18)

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace among those he favors!”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.”

So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds had told them.

Image Packs

We recommend People Pack (set of 100 printed images) for use with this experience or other images that you may already have. You can find People Pack at: <https://vibrantfaith.org/shop/visualfaithcards>

