



A FRIEND LOVES AT ALL TIMES

MARY AND ELIZABETH

Read: Luke 1:26-45

Mary's story begins when she is just a teenager. The angel Gabriel appears to her, telling her that she will be the mother of the Son of God. Put yourself in Mary's sandals. She was an ordinary girl from a small town. She wasn't well known. Her family wasn't wealthy. There was nothing significant about her.

Yet God chose Mary to carry the Savior of the world. Can you imagine being visited by an angel who *speaks* to you, telling you the most unbelievable news—that you would become the mother of the Messiah?

- How do you think Mary felt?
- How would you have responded to Gabriel?
- Would you have believed him?
- Would you have been speechless? Would you have laughed?
- Who would you have told? Your parents? Your friends?
- Would they have believed you?
- What if they didn't? How would that feel?

God knew Mary's heart, and He knew she would need a friend who understood, someone who was carrying her own miracle child. That friend was Mary's cousin, Elizabeth. Elizabeth had waited years and years for a child. She was old and well past the age of child-bearing. Mary traveled to visit Elizabeth and before she said a word in greeting, the child Elizabeth was carrying leaped for joy inside her (Luke 1:41-44).

Elizabeth and Mary's friendship went beyond words. They were experiencing someone others might never understand. However, they could fully understand each other in the extraordinary friendship God granted (or gifted) them.

DAVID AND JONATHAN

Read: 1 Samuel 20:32-42

David and Jonathan were great friends who experienced difficult circumstances. God had chosen David to be the next king, even

though Jonathan should have inherited the crown from his father, King Saul. The king was so angry, he decided to have David killed.

Jonathan could have been jealous of David, but he wasn't. He could have been angry with God, but he wasn't. Jonathan loved his friend David so much that he stood up to his father. This made King Saul so angry that he threw his spear at Jonathan. That's when Jonathan knew his father was going to have David killed, so he risked his own life to warn his friend.

- How would you feel if you were destined to be king, but God chose your best friend instead?
- Would you be jealous? Would you be angry?
- Would you stand up for your friend, even if it meant risking your own life?
- Do you have a best friend—someone who gets you?
- Are you a good friend? Do you get jealous when a friend is recognized as a good student, athlete, or person?

NOTES FOR FRIENDS

It's always the right time to tell your friends how much they mean to you. Why not pick up a pen and start today? If you need a little jump start, we've got you covered!

- You get me! How amazing is that!
- Remember when we ...
- They say laughter is the best medicine. If that's true, we'll be friends forever!
- What I admire most about you is ...
- What's better than bacon and bubble wrap? *You are!*
- You are one of the bravest people I know.
- No matter where we are or what we're doing, you always bring the sunshine.
- You are one-of-a-kind, which means: together, *we're quite a pair!*
- You are the friend I didn't know I needed and couldn't live without.
- Thank you for being such an amazing friend!
- There are cruise ships, steamships, and liberty ships, but we have the best ship—*friendship!*
- You make the hard days easier. Thank you for always being there!
- God blessed me with the very best friend—*you!*

A true friend loves regardless of the situation, and a real brother exists to share the tough times. (Proverbs 17:17)