

Why You Need a Mentor

Mary, the mother of Jesus is one of the most well-known women of all time. She was also a teen mom facing an unplanned pregnancy. This Christmas we will see evidence of Mary's story all around us. And as you hear it through Christmas songs and Christmas shows think of three things:

1. Mary was signed up for a big task she wasn't prepared for.
2. Mary no doubt faced criticism from people around her.
3. Mary found someone to turn to ... a friend who could help Mary to succeed in her new role. It was Mary's older cousin Elizabeth.

Elizabeth played an important part in Mary's life. We know this because the book of Luke begins by telling us Elizabeth's story first. Elizabeth was the wife of a priest. She was very old and had no children, but God blessed her in her old age by allowing her to get pregnant. After Elizabeth's story comes Mary's story ... another surprise pregnancy. Can you imagine what a shock that was to everyone who knew both women? (Yes! I'm sure you can!)

The cool thing is that the angel Gabriel told Mary about Elizabeth's surprise pregnancy. It's as if he was saying, "Look, there's someone in your same situation. Turn to her. She can help you."

Mary did go to Elizabeth. In fact, she lived with her older cousin for three months. Elizabeth was the first one who rejoiced over the child Mary held within her womb, and I imagine Elizabeth was there to encourage Mary as she coped with the idea of becoming a teen mom.

Like Mary, each of us should have people in our lives who we turn to for help, support and encouragement. Being a mom isn't an easy thing, and facing an unplanned pregnancy is even

tougher.

When I had my son Cory, I was 17 years old, and there were a group of women from my grandma's church who supported me. They were the first ones who showed me that the child that was growing inside me was a gift. They gave me a baby shower, and they fought over holding my son after he was born.

As my son grew, there were other women I looked to ... and most of the time they didn't even know I was watching. One of them was Cheryl. Cheryl was patient with her children, she gave them big hugs, she laughed with them and played with them and I modeled myself after her. The thing about finding mentors is sometimes we can observe them without them even knowing. And if we're really lucky they enjoy their role of giving us advice.

Later, when I had two kids, I met a friend named Cindy. She and I were the same age and we became quick friends. Cindy was a support to me because we traded babysitting, talked about parenting problems, and we encouraged each other. She was someone who was walking the same road as me, and her advice helped more times than I can count.

No matter who we are or where we live, each of us can look around and see the people we have in our lives. Some may cheer us on, some may guide our parenting, and others may just be there to walk along side us. If the mother of Jesus needed someone to look to for support, shouldn't we? Everyone needs mentoring, someone to provide a little help and support.

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