

Expect the Unexpected

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as
STEP 1 

Lesson 2**Focus:**

Expect the unexpected from God.

Lesson 2**Bible Basis:**

Isaiah 7:14; 9:1b, 6-7; Luke 1:26-27; Matthew 1:18-23

Lesson 2**Memory Verse:**

The virgin will conceive and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.
— Isaiah 7:14b

Students will use a video clip to play a guessing game about how things grow and begin discussing how they feel about the unexpected.

Materials:

- Internet access

Welcome your students as they enter and begin a casual discussion on big surprises that have happened in their lives. Maybe an unexpected gift they received or a grade they were surprised they had achieved—maybe a surprise trip, etc. Share a surprise from your life too.

Surprises and unexpected things aren't limited to gifts, relationship, and other good news. We can also be surprised by unexpected things in the world around us, including nature. A great example of something surprising in nature is the way that cashews grow.

- **Would anyone like to guess how they grow?** (Accept all reasonable responses.)

Those are all good guesses! Let's check out this surprising growth method.

Play this video for your students [1:59; if pressed for time, stop at 0:29]:

Five Foods That Grow in Unbelievable Ways

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFRHxlfCnrE>

- **What was surprising to you about the way cashews are grown?** (Answers will vary.)
- **Did you have any wrong ideas of how they grew?** (Answers will vary.)
- **Finding out how a plant grows is a small surprise. How do you handle a big surprise in life? What if something really turns your previous ideas upside down and you have to change the way you do things as a result?** (It takes me a while to accept it when my ideas have to change. I get angry at first. I try to take it in stride, etc.)

It can be hard for us to adjust when things or ideas in our lives change, but we're not alone. When God started setting things in motion to send His Son to earth, a lot of people were in for some big, unexpected changes. Let's read about some people in the Bible who had a huge surprise.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

Expect the Unexpected

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STEP 4 

Lesson 2

Focus:

Expect the unexpected from God.

Lesson 2

Bible Basis:

Isaiah 7:14; 9:1b, 6-7; Luke 1:26-27; Matthew 1:18-23

Lesson 2

Memory Verse:

The virgin will conceive and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.
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Materials:

- Whiteboard and markers (or screenshared document)
- Index cards
- Pens/pencils
- Optional: Markers/colored pencils

If your class is meeting online, invite students to bring index cards, pens/pencils, and markers/colored pencils to class.

Ask a volunteer to read the memory verse (Isaiah 7:14b).

➤ **Earlier, we talked about how Mary and Joseph might have felt when they found out Mary was pregnant with God’s Son. Beyond just their feelings, what kind of consequences could Mary and Joseph’s obedience to God have?** (Accept all reasonable answers. These could include both positive and negative: God is happy with them, they get the privilege of being around God’s Son, their community shuns them, they lose friends, etc.)

When we are open to expecting the unexpected from God, just like Mary and Joseph were, it will have consequences in our lives too. Let’s brainstorm some of the consequences (positive and negative) our actions could have when we’re open to God working in our lives.

Choose a volunteer to stand at the board and record answers from the class during your discussion. (If your class is meeting online, you can take notes on a screenshared document.) First, brainstorm some actions your students might take when they’re open to God’s unexpected work in their lives. Some answers might include: Sitting next to the new kid, helping my parents with chores, choosing not to complain about dinner, sharing my video games with my younger sibling, etc.

Once you’ve brainstormed a list of possible actions, brainstorm some of the possible consequences, both positive and negative. Some answers might include: I gain a new friend, I lose old friends. My parents are grateful for my help, I lose out on some “me time.” I make my sibling happy; I get annoyed by my sibling; I have a broken video game.

➤ **Imagine Mary and Joseph sitting down and making a similar list of the consequences of being open to God's unexpected movement. Do you think they would have decided it was worth following God? Why?** (Yes, even though they probably faced some negative consequences, being a part of God's unexpected entrance into the world would have been worth it.)

➤ **And you? Do you think it's worth it to be open to God's unexpected movement in your life?** (Yes, being on God's side is always the best answer, even though there might be some negative consequences.)

This week commit to being open to watching for ways God is working in the world around you. Remain open and willing to do God's will, even though He might ask you to do something unexpected. Remember that even though it might not make sense to you at the time, God's plan is always the best and will always work out for the best.

Challenge your students to pray daily for God to remind them to be on the lookout for how He might be at work in their lives. Hand each student an index card (or invite students to have items ready at home) and ask them to write the word OPEN on one side.

Give them time to embellish their card if you have time. Ask them to carry around their index card for the week and write down at least one time during the week that they could see God at work in an unexpected way. Ask them to write how they responded as well. Challenge them to bring the card back next week to share God's unexpected work with the class.

End with prayer, asking God to help you all stay open to His unexpected work in the world.

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