

## Angel Gazing!

- *Not navel gazing!!*
- Word association with the angel images on the screen:
  - for each image, what words come to mind?
- Once we have a big list of adjectives, use the **dramatic reading** words to tell the story
  - what does this story (**we'll read the full story later in the Bible**) tell us about angels?
  - **how did Zechariah feel when confronted by the angel Gabriel?**  
(confused, afraid...)
  - did we come up with anything of what Zechariah felt when we looked at the angel pictures? - **probably not!**
  - our picture of angels is often very different from the biblical view!
  - angels are nothing less than **messengers of Almighty God**
- Today we'll be exploring further this encounter between God's messenger Gabriel and Zechariah

## Surprises!

- Introduce theme of surprises
  - party popper in here somewhere? Or pop a balloon?
  - "This is your life"

### 1. Zechariah and Elizabeth were sad

- Surprised not to have had children - and sad
- *Was God surprised?*

### 2. The angel appear to Zechariah

- Doing special job in the Temple - not usually interrupted - surprised by the angel showing up!
  - are we surprised when God shows up?
- *Was God surprised?*

### 3. Gabriel told Zechariah the he and Elizabeth would have a child

- What did the angel tell Zechariah would happen?
  - was he expecting that?
  - surprised to be told expecting a baby - old!
  - (I heard of a colleague recently who is older than me expecting their first baby - I was surprised....)
- *Was God surprised?*

### 4. Zechariah didn't believe the angel's message

- God had been preparing this special surprise for Zechariah for ages
  - sent the angel on a special trip...
  - I wonder whether the angel was surprised that Zechariah didn't believe the news?
- *Was God surprised?*

### 5. The crowd outside the Temple realised Zechariah couldn't speak

- What happened when Zechariah got outside?
  - crowd were surprised because Zechariah couldn't speak!
- *Was God surprised?*

### 6. Elizabeth was pregnant!

- I think Elizabeth would have been surprised too! A wonderful surprise!
  - wonder if she wasn't really sure it was true - maybe that's why she stayed in seclusion?
- *Was God surprised?*

## Learning to Trust

- God had a plan to save people
  - he was putting it into action
  - it was a surprising plan!
  - and along the way he was teaching/encouraging people to trust him

## Responses

- *Do just before offering*
- Who would you trust with a secret?
- Who would you trust to help if you were in trouble?
  - (encourage twos and threes discussion)
- Who did God trust, in the Bible, with his secrets or to help him?
- God entrusted Zechariah with a secret, and to play his part in the plan to bring salvation to huamnity
  - it was a surprise to Zechariah - but not to God!
  - God entrusts us with playing our part in bringing his salvation plan to humanity, sometimes in surprising ways
- Trust him?