



Into the Mess & Other Jesus Stories: Reflections on the Life of

Christ by Debi Thomas—

Week 1 Chapter 1-The God Bearer

Check in Question: Have you ever been in a religious play? If yes tell us about the experience.

Opening Prayer

Loving God,

As we ponder the mystery of Mary’s “yes,” open our hearts to hear your call anew.

Help us to trust your presence in our confusion and delight in your favor.

May faith and doubt together draw us closer to you,

And may your Spirit hover over us, creating something new within.

Amen.

Reflection questions:

1. How has Mary influenced or shaped your life?
2. Debi Thomas says there is *so much to comprehend* about Mary. What personal experience have you had with her? When you think about your own “yes” to God, what layers of meaning does it hold?
3. If the Angel Gabriel were to rename you today, what name might capture who you are becoming in God’s eyes?
4. God trusted Mary and Joseph with the life of Jesus. In what ways has God trusted *you* with something precious?
5. Do you believe that you, like Mary, are “highly favored”? Why or why not?
6. What would it feel like to stop striving—and instead allow divine joy, delight, and peace to be your foundation?
7. What do you think is *holy* about being bewildered?
8. Debi Thomas says that faith and doubt are not opposites. What does that truth mean for your own spiritual journey?
9. Debi Thomas contrasts a “two-dimensional faith” with one that is “vibrant and textured.” What does a vibrant, textured faith look like in your life? Mary bore many things in her heart—what do you carry in yours?

10. Have you ever said “yes” to something that felt like a sword, as Mary did? What was that experience like?
11. Debi Thomas writes that God’s Spirit hovers over us when we’re depleted, creating fresh wells of compassion and strength. When have you felt renewed in this way?
12. In this season of your life, do you feel ready for a mission? What might it be?
13. How are you being invited to “birth” Christ’s presence into the world around you?
14. What are you being called to lean into more deeply right now?

Closing Prayer

For who and what shall we pray...

Holy One,
Thank you for the gift of Mary’s courage and your trust in us.
Let our “yes” echo hers—with hope, humility, and love.
Renew our strength, deepen our compassion,
And send us forth to bring Christ’s light into the world.
Amen.

Next time Chapters 2 Into the Mess—6 A House Divided.
