

## Take-home sheet for Unit 4 – Session one:

# God's boundless invitation

*We want you to find ways to share the boundlessness of God with your friends, family and congregation. What happened here today should be shared, and we hope that the lesson doesn't end here, that it continues in conversations on the car ride home, with families around the dinner table, at school tomorrow... that this multiplies and becomes boundless!*

We talked about God's boundless invitation through the story of Mary in the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke. The story of Mary is a particularly good example of how God's invitation is truly boundless, as Mary was a poor, unwed teenager when she first heard God's invitation. Instead of seeking out the high and mighty, God chose to appear among the least of all people, which shows us that God invites everyone to be part of God's story.

Share what you remember. Try to retell our story from today, Luke 1:26-55, or look it up in your Bible app (we were using the CEV: Common English Version).



### Different lens:

- Another lens to understanding Mary's response to God's boundless invitation, called the Magnificat, is one of few hymns appearing in the Bible. Along with Hannah's song (1 Samuel 2:1-10) and the psalms, the Magnificat shows us how people responded to God's invitation through music. Throughout the past two millennia, these songs have inspired countless Christians to respond to God's boundless invitation.
- For an example of a contemporary hymn based on the words of the Magnificat, see "Canticle of the Turning" (ELW 723), <https://youtu.be/F9QeTmRCpW4>.

### Wondering questions

#### (discuss these questions with someone at home):

- How did this passage help you understand God's boundless invitation?
- What would we consider the "bounds" of our world? I wonder how God's invitation might break those bounds?
- I wonder how we can tell about God's boundless invitation to someone in our lives this week?



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Think about the leaders of your congregation. These leaders could include pastors and deacons, members of your congregation’s council or leaders of other ministries.

Once you think of a leader, find time to talk with them before or after worship. Tell them about what you learned about God’s boundless invitation and ask them how they got invited into leadership in your congregation. After hearing their story, ask them where they notice God’s boundless invitation in your congregation.

What does God’s boundless invitation mean to you? Post your answers to this question on social media with the hashtags **#ELCAYG2022** and **#boundlessinvitation**.



### Prayer

God of boundless invitation, we thank you for our conversations, our questions and our friendships. We are further grateful for your boundless invitation, which welcomes all of us into your story in our communities, church and world. Through the example of Mary, teach us that you invite all of us — even the most unlikely and unexpected — to follow you. We pray that Christ Jesus and the church will forever bring praise to God. God’s power at work in us can do far more than we dare ask or imagine. In your name we pray. Amen.

### Dismissal/blessing — Call and response:

- God’s love is (place hand over heart) boundless.
- God’s creation is (open arms wide) boundless.
- God’s forgiveness is (cross wrists) boundless.
- God’s invitation is (uncross wrists, cradle open palms outstretched) boundless.
- God’s promise is (make the sign of the cross on another’s forehead or hand) boundless.



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## Take-home sheet for Unit 4 – Session two:

# God's boundless invitation

*We want you to find ways to share the boundlessness of God with your friends, family and congregation. What happened here today should be shared, and we hope that the lesson doesn't end here, that it continues in conversations on the car ride home, with families around the dinner table, at school tomorrow... that this multiplies and becomes boundless!*

We talked about God's boundless invitation through the story of Mary in the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke. The story of Mary is a particularly good example of how God's invitation is truly boundless, as Mary was a poor, unwed teenager when she first heard God's invitation. Instead of seeking out the high and mighty, God chose to appear among the least of all people, which shows us that God invites everyone to be a part of God's story.



Share what you remember. Try to retell our story from today, Luke 10:1-11, or look it up in your Bible app (we were using the CEV: Common English Version).

### Different lens:

Another lens to understand the role of community in responding to God's boundless invitation is the South African philosophy of ubuntu. Archbishop Desmond Tutu defines ubuntu as "... the very essence of being human. ... it is not, 'I think, therefore I am.' It says rather, 'I am because I belong, I participate, I share'" (No Future Without Forgiveness, New York: Doubleday, 1999). In the theology of ubuntu, God boundlessly invites us to see God at work in our neighbors. Hear Archbishop Desmond Tutu explain the concept himself in the following YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/GaiKX5VdfVE>

### Wondering questions

#### (discuss these questions with someone at home):

- How did this passage help you understand God's boundless invitation?
- How would a theology of ubuntu differ from the way we might otherwise respond to God's boundless invitation?
- How might we embody a theology of ubuntu in our responses to God's boundless invitation?



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**Think about how your congregation reflects God’s boundless invitation.** There are many ways your congregation could respond to God’s boundless invitation, which include using its facilities to the benefit of neighbors or supporting different ministries. You might also notice a reflection of God’s boundless invitation in your congregation’s mission statement.

Take a few minutes to think about this, and try to identify a few ways in which your congregation lives out God’s boundless invitation. You are also invited to think about additional ways in which your congregation could live out God’s boundless invitation.

After reflecting on this, share with a leader of your congregation (such as a pastor, deacon or personal faith mentor) your thoughts about how your congregation responds to God’s boundless invitation.

**Prayer:**

God of invitation, we are grateful for your presence in our lives and for how your Spirit moves us and our communities to follow you. We ask that you continue to inspire us, invite us and accompany us as we hear and respond to your call. Empower us with the courage of Mary and the love of the disciples to respond to what you invite us into now. We pray that Christ Jesus and the church will forever bring praise to God. God’s power at work in us can do far more than we dare ask or imagine. Amen.

**Dismissal/blessing — Call and response:**

- God’s love is (place hand over heart) boundless.
- God’s creation is (open arms wide) boundless.
- God’s forgiveness is (cross wrists) boundless.
- God’s invitation is (uncross wrists, cradle open palms outstretched) boundless.
- God’s promise is (make the sign of the cross on another’s forehead or hand) boundless.

How does your congregation reflect God’s boundless invitation? How are you responding to God’s boundless invitation? Post an image with your answers to either of these questions on social media, using the hashtags **#ELCAYG2022** and **#boundlessinvitation**.



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