

# Unexpected Plans

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as  
**STEP 1** 

**Lesson 3****Focus:**

Accept God's unexpected plans.

**Lesson 3****Bible Basis:**

Luke 1:26-35, 46-56

**Lesson 3****Memory Verse:**

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.  
—Galatians 4:4-5

**Students will watch a news story about a bride whose careful wedding plans changed unexpectedly.**

**Materials:**

Internet access

**Have you ever planned for something—and then everything changed at the last minute? Just when we think we're in complete control of our lives, something unexpected shifts our plans. Imagine what this bride must have felt when her most important day was not what she expected.**

Play the following video for your students [1:49]:

Billings Petroleum Club closes, leaves woman searching for last-minute wedding venue

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBvmnb7FU0k>

**While we can't be sure how this story ends, we can hope the couple found another wedding venue at the last minute so they could still celebrate with their family and friends.**

➤ **Have you ever freaked out when your carefully laid plans were changed at the last minute? Share a little bit about what happened.** (Students responses will vary.)

➤ **How much of our lives do we have complete control over? What are some of the things that we can't control at all? Should we try to exert control over anything?** (Students might acknowledge that our physical genetics, parents, birthplace, environmental factors, and so forth are completely out of our hands, yet disciplined planning and stewardship in other areas are still required of us.)

➤ **Control gives us the illusion of power. Why is it hard for people to acknowledge God's authority in the universe?** (Human beings are very self-absorbed; they see only the small boundaries of their little universe—not the eternal plan that God has set in motion.)

**The holiday season brings the story of Jesus' mother Mary into our conversations about the nativity. But today's lesson lets us examine how Mary must have felt when all the things she had planned for were suddenly changed—and how it turned out to be better.**

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

Lesson 3 / December 15, 2024

# Unexpected Plans

for use as  
**STEP 4** 

**Lesson 3****Focus:**

Accept God's unexpected plans.

**Lesson 3****Bible Basis:**

Luke 1:26-35, 46-56

**Lesson 3****Memory Verse:**

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.  
—Galatians 4:4-5

**Materials:**

- Balloon
- Permanent marker
- Index cards
- Pens/pencils

Give a student a permanent marker while you blow up a balloon in front of the class. Don't tie off the end, but while you're holding the opening tightly shut, have the student use the marker to write MY PLANS on the inflated balloon. (If your class is meeting online, invite a member of your household to help you with the illustration. Invite students to bring index cards and pens/pencils with them to class.)

Keep holding the end shut while you explain this illustration.

**How many of you are making plans for your future? It's always a good idea to make wise decisions in your life—and that includes planning ahead. I'm going to release this balloon in a few moments. I want each of you to stand in the location where you predict the balloon will land.**

Let students find a spot around the classroom where they predict the deflated balloon will eventually land. On the count of three, let go of the balloon and watch it make its unpredictable flyover. Afterward, gather everyone together to discuss the following questions.

- **How is the balloon a good metaphor for life?** (Just like life, the balloon's trajectory was hard to track with any dependability.)
- **Is it possible to predict life's unexpected changes? How can we approach the future with confidence rather than fear?** (Even though life's daily events can change rapidly, God is in control of everything. His goodness, justice, and sovereignty are unmistakable.)

➤ **Teenagers—especially those approaching high school graduation—are often prompted to take precise steps for their future. Where is the balance between being a “control freak” and being a slacker?** (Students’ responses will vary.)

➤ **What can we learn from Mary’s attitude toward her circumstances?** (Mary accepted God’s will. She adjusted her expectations and submitted to a higher purpose than her own.)

When you are finished with your discussion, distribute supplies (or invite students to have items ready at home). On one side, prompt them to write down three concrete plans they are making that show stewardship and wisdom. (Consider having leaders share one example from their own lives such as saving for a down payment on a house or taking classes for a future college degree).

Once your teens finish, have them turn the index card over. On the other side, tell them to write down three things that God has promised them for their future—regardless of what happens in life. These can be universal truths, such as the Gospel message of salvation, or more personal applications like promising to comfort them during a specific struggle.

If you have time, ask volunteers to share their index cards. Students will take their cards home with them. Remind them to take action by praying about and pursuing the plans they included on the front side and thanking God for the universal truths on the other side.

Close in prayer, thanking God for His sovereignty and mercy in all things.

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