

GABRIEL'S QUEST

Promises

Lesson Link: God gave His Chosen People clues to remind them about His promises to send a Savior. These promises and reminders are in the Bible.

"Something special is going to happen before the end of the day," Sister Teresa told the class one morning.

The students looked at one another. There was whispering all over the room. *What was the surprise?*

In the middle of the morning, Mr. Norm arrived. "It's show-and-tell," he said happily. He pushed in a green lawn mower.

Mr. Norm showed the class how a lawn mower engine works. "The starter cord turns a flying wheel and rotates a crankshaft, and a piston moves in and out of a cylinder," he explained. "Fuel and air mix together to trigger the spark plug. The spark plug keeps the blade spinning." He finished by telling them how engines make cars and trucks work, and farm equipment that harvests crops we use for food.

"Was that the special thing?" the kids asked Sister Teresa after Mr. Norm left.

She smiled at them. "No. But Mr. Norm gave you a clue about what the surprise will be."

Just before lunch, Deacon Chuck visited the class. He told them a story about a bean that had been taken to Spain from South America in the 1500s. It was bitter to taste. Then Dominican friars learned how to make the bean taste wonderful in a drink and as food. No one else in Europe knew how they did it. But they shared the secret. They had added sugar, vanilla, nutmeg, allspice, and cinnamon to the bean. "It was a *cacao* bean," Deacon Chuck said. "That's where we get chocolate!"

The kids enjoyed the story. But they wondered what a lawn mower had to do with chocolate. "Is that the special thing?" they asked Sister Teresa.



"No," she said. "But it's all connected. Trust me."

After lunch, the students returned to class. Small plastic bags sat on their desks. Inside each bag was a napkin and a note. The notes said, "It's coming."

Father Cliff came to the class in the middle of the afternoon. He talked about fire. "Fire changed the history of mankind. It also became an important symbol in the Bible of God's power and judgment," he said. "Remember Moses and the burning bush? A pillar of fire led the Israelites in the desert. Tongues of fire appeared above the disciples on Pentecost."

The surprise became a game to the kids. They guessed and guessed how a lawn mower, chocolate, and fire connected to a surprise. "You'll have to trust me," Sister Teresa told them.

When there were only fifteen minutes left for class, Sister Teresa taught how God had made a promise to the people of Israel. She said, "God told His people that something special was going to happen. For hundreds of years, He sent special men and women to remind them of His promise."

"Just like our special guests came?" asked a boy named John.

"Yes," said Sister Teresa. "God told His people over and over to trust Him. Just like I've been telling you to trust me. I even wrote you notes, just like the Bible is God's note to us to remind us of His promises. And now it is time for our surprise."

Sister Teresa nodded to Gabriel. Gabriel smiled as he went to the back of the classroom. He brought out the surprise hidden in the storage closet.

Sister Teresa said, "Mr. Norm talked about how engines make it possible to harvest grain. Grain makes flour. Deacon Chuck talked about chocolate. Father Cliff talked about fire. Well, we needed all those things to make our surprise . . ."

Gabriel moved down a row of desks with a big box of cupcakes.

"These cupcakes were made by Gabriel's aunt," Sister Teresa said.

The kids applauded. Sister Teresa passed out paper plates. "Don't forget the napkins I gave you after lunch," she said.

The students ate their cupcakes. Sister Teresa explained how God gave His people all the clues for their surprise. But the surprise was not what they expected. "Jesus came as a poor baby, not a great king. He died on a Cross. He rose from the dead. He meets us in the sacraments. God surprises us in wonderful ways."

Gabriel told his aunt Belle about the day. She said she was glad the class enjoyed the surprise.

Gabriel thought, *It was even more fun being part of the surprise.*

Questions:

1. **How were the clues (lawn mower, cacao bean, and fire) connected to the cupcakes?** *(The lawn mower has an engine like that used to harvest wheat, which is ground into flour. Cacao beans make the chocolate that is in the cupcakes. Fire, or heat, bakes the batter.)*
2. It wasn't easy for the class to put the clues together and guess the surprise. **What did they have to do when they couldn't figure it out?** *(Trust in their teacher.)*
3. **Can you think of some of the clues and reminders that God gives in the Bible to remind us of His love and promises?** *(Answers may include God's promise to Adam and Eve, His rescue of Noah and his family, the promise He made to Abraham, the sacrifice of Isaac, rescuing His people from Egypt, and David's kingdom.)*
4. God promised to give us a way to be holy again. It took a long time for the promise to be fulfilled. **How did God keep His promise?** *(By sending His Son, Jesus.)*