

“Mary and Her Papa:A Christmas Video Conversation”

by
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- What** In this duet, Mary has a video call with her father while her baby, Jesus, sleeps. Despite him feeling like she has disgraced the family name, Mary is able to convince her dad that Jesus is the Messiah.
- Themes: Christmas, Messiah, duet, virtual, Covid-Friendly
- Who** Papa- Age 35 and up
Mary- Age 15-25
- When** Biblical times with a bit of modern flair. Modern clothes are fine. There’s a bit of artistic license—was there videoconferencing in Bible times? Probably not. I haven’t checked. You can’t believe the history books.
- Costumes and Props** Papa and Daughter are both in front of their webcams, or on a cellphone camera. They are in their own separate homes, in separate towns.
- Why** Matthew 1:23
- How** For the first section of this piece, the lines are designed such that the final words of one performer are identical to the first words of the next. This is indicated in the script by underlining. Rehearsing this “overlap” is vital, so that the overlapped words are delivered in nearly perfect sync, so as to be clear to the audience. Throughout the remainder of the piece, the “together” lines should be rehearsed carefully as well. Each actor should give their own *inflection* on the line, but the cadence and pacing should be identical. This could be done so that only one actor is on camera most of the time, except when their lines overlap.
- Time** Approximately 6-7 minutes

Mary and Papa appear on their screens.

Together: Hello, Papa/Hello, Mary.

Papa: It’s been a little while. Did you get the picture I sent? The neighbor’s little girl brought us a loaf of bread this morning and I had to get a picture of her standing at the door offering it to us. She reminds me so much of you. I remember once...you were...six or seven. Your mother was next door when you decided it was dinner time. It’s a wonder you didn’t burn down the house! I got home just in time to see you covered in mess, standing on a chair stirring a pot of soup. My surprise turned to delight and we both started laughing.

Mary: We both started laughing! *(She laughs, then catches herself and speaks more quietly)* Your grandson is taking a nap. Joseph is at the shop. His skills are in such high demand. But I thought it would be a good time to call. I think of you every day about this time...it’s when you always came home for lunch. I remember running at you full tilt when you came through the door calling out, “Where’s my little girl?”

Papa: “Where’s my little girl?” Yes, I remember. You were always so smart, so hard-working and disciplined. We used to be so close. You were daddy’s little girl for so long. *(Pause)* I think that’s why I have such a hard time understanding how you could let this happen. When I looked toward your future...I had such high hopes.

Mary: I had such high hopes that you would have that same closeness with your grandson. It hurts my heart that you’ve never even seen Him in person. I guess that’s part of what happens when your father is convinced that you’ve disgraced our family name.

Papa: You’ve disgraced our family name! Surely you understand how your...situation...has affected your mother and me. I can barely show my face at the synagogue. I think it would be better if you at least ADMITTED you’d done something wrong. And that husband of yours—I refuse to call him my son-in-law. He had us fooled! Seemed like a man with potential, a future! But now he’s fallen in line with your ridiculous story. I can’t imagine why.

Mary: I can’t imagine why you think I would have lied about this. Don’t you think I KNOW how ridiculous it sounds? Of course I do! I don’t blame you for having doubts. But to flat out accuse me of lying? I thought you respected me more than that. Of all the childish things I may have done, I never once lied to either you or mother. I know Mama has her doubts as well, but at least she’s doing as I asked and waiting it out. Why can’t you?

Papa: Why can't you see things through my eyes? I've told your mother that this is the time for tough love. We can't let you get away with these outrageous stories, playing us for fools. This tall tale of yours. Nighttime visits from angels. A baby conceived by Yahweh Himself. It's completely unbelievable!

Mary: It's completely unbelievable that you think I would stand by a lie even to the point of breaking my relationship with you! I thought you knew me better than that...but I guess you don't know me at all. That's what bothers me most, I think.

Papa: What bothers me most, I think, is that I think you're fooling yourself. When I look into your eyes, I don't see deception. Fear, confusion, excitement even...but no deception. Have you really convinced yourself that this is true?

Mary: This is true!!! I know it is, no matter who doubts me.

Together: (You/I) gave birth to the Messiah(?/!)

Papa: My daughter?

Mary: Me!!

Papa: No...the Messiah would not have come in this way.

Mary: It was unexpected, but...

These two lines are delivered simultaneously – converging on “terrifying”.

Papa: It's nonsensical and blasphemous and ridiculous and unbelievable and

Mary: It's thrilling and exciting and amazing and astounding and

Together: Terrifying.

On “terrifying”, they look directly at each other through their lenses and hold each other's gaze for a long time.

Papa: I'm frightened for you, Mary.

Mary: Papa, come visit. Meet your grandson. You have to know that I would not invent a story like this.

Papa: *(softening)* If it is true...

Mary: It IS true, Papa...

Papa: If it is true...then nothing is as we have expected. Nothing is as we planned.

Mary: I can't explain it, Papa. I can't tell you how it will all work out. But...

Together: This changes everything.

Mary: It *does*, Papa. The God you have served so faithfully all your life is doing a *new* thing...and you get a front row seat! I don't want you to miss it.

Papa: But if the Messiah is not a conqueror...if that is different...then I have this suspicion that this road will not be an easy one for you...or your child.

Mary: I know that it won't be easy, Papa. But Joseph is beside me and God is leading us.

Papa: Joseph...he really does believe you, doesn't he?

Mary: He does, Papa. *(Chuckles)* He has an advantage, though. God sent an angel to Him too.

Papa: *(to the heavens with a touch of humor)* Is it too much to ask that God might have done the same for me?

Mary: *(with a smile)* I'll see if I can put in a good word. *(Pause)* Papa...

Papa: Daughter...

Mary: Don't miss out. You've prayed all your life for a Messiah. You've taught me to expect the unexpected from the God of our Fathers. You've instructed me in the FAITH of our fathers. All I'm asking is that you look to the heavens and ask for God to give you faith in this plan you weren't expecting. Trust me...

Papa: My daughter, the mother of the Messiah? Can it really be true?

Mary: Yes, Papa.

Papa: *(a pause, then softer)* Alright, Mary.

Mary: We've had plenty of guests since the baby came—shepherds and some very wise men from far away, even. I've had lots to ponder, and Joseph has been so wonderful. But Papa, I want YOU to see Him, to hold Him...our little baby, Jesus.

Papa: *(with wonder and approval)* Jesus? You named the baby “God saves.”

Mary: *(smiling)* Yes Papa. It's the name the angels gave us.

Papa: Jesus. My daughter's baby.

Mary: Yes, Papa.

Papa: Jesus, God's son?

Mary: *(fervently)* Yes, Papa.

Papa: So, I suppose I must accept that after all the prayers, and all these years...

Mary: Papa, we should be celebrating because...

Together: God is with us.

Long silence as they look at each other and subtly smile one last time.

Together: I love you, (Mary/Papa).

Mary: *(looking offscreen)* The baby is awake. I've got to go. See you soon? *(She ends the call)*

Papa: *(his camera is still on. He thinks for a moment, then, as he stands up)* Sweetheart, let's get packed. We're going to go meet the Messiah!!