

Mary and Martha

Scripture Reference: [Luke 10:38-42](#)



Suggested Emphasis: Make hearing the words of Jesus a priority (reading the Bible, attending church, etc.)

Memory Verse: The thing you should want most is God's kingdom and doing what God wants. Then all these other things you need will be given to you. [Matthew 6:33, ICB](#)



Story Overview:

Jesus visited the home of his friends, Mary and Martha. While Martha was busy with meal preparations, her sister sat at the feet of Jesus listening to his teaching. When Martha got upset at her sister for not helping, Jesus told her that Mary was choosing to do what was better.

Background Study:

Only Luke records this event in the life of Jesus. It takes place in the village of Bethany. Bethany is on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives and is about two miles from Jerusalem.

Mary, Martha and their brother, Lazarus are good friends of Jesus ([John 11:5](#)). After today's story we read about

them again when Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead ([John 11:1-44](#)). He stopped to see them again, one last time, at the beginning of the last week before his crucifixion ([John 12:1-3](#)).

Your students will probably enjoy hearing about the fact that Jesus had special friends. Friendship is such an important part of a child's life and knowing Jesus had friends will help them better relate to him.

Martha was showing great hospitality when she opened her home to Jesus and the other disciples. This could have meant Jesus and the twelve apostles. It could have included some of the many others who travelled with Jesus. In Luke 10 Jesus sent out 72 people to travel ahead of him. These all returned to him ([Luke 10:17](#)). There were also women who traveled with Jesus ([Mark 15:40-41](#)).

[Proverbs 31:10-27](#) gives an outline of tasks that a woman would have been expected to perform in taking care of the household. The preparation of food would not have been easy. Each day women walked to a well to obtain water needed for food preparation and general household tasks. The woman of the house would have had to grind grain, bake bread, milk the goats and make cheese and curds. This was done first thing each morning. Animals would have to be slaughtered for meat. Extra trips to the market would have been required for extra guests.

Most of the food preparation would probably have been done in an outside courtyard. This would have been preferable to the darker interior of the house where smoke from a fire would accumulate. The baking would have probably been done in a large clay or stone oven in the courtyard.

In saying all of this it is easy to see how Martha must have gotten caught up in the preparations. Since it was her house she might have felt more responsible for the comfort of Jesus and his friends. Whatever the case, Martha began to resent the work she was doing instead of enjoying providing the service.

Preparing the food was not a bad thing to do. Jesus does not tell her that she should have been in with Mary listening to him. He does, however, comment on the fact that she is worried and upset about many things when she could be doing what Mary is doing.

Mary had probably been helping in the preparations at some point. But she made a choice to come and listen to Jesus speak. She knew that every word he said was precious. Choosing to listen to Jesus is always a good choice.

Sports and sleeping in on Sunday mornings are not bad things, in themselves, but choosing to be with other Christians and learn about Jesus is always a good choice.



Way to Introduce the Story:

Ask the children to imagine this: You are home one night, asleep in your bed. You awaken because you smell smoke. You call out to your Dad and Mum and they tell you to hurry and get out of the house. Dad says, "You have time to grab two things out of your room." Of course this is an imaginary story. In real life, you wouldn't stop to get anything. You would just want to get away from danger as fast as you could. But let's imagine you get to choose two things and everything else is going to burn up. What would you choose? (Let the children share their answers.)

A lot of things would be good to choose. But if you were only allowed to choose two things you would probably choose the two things that are most important to you. In today's story we are going to learn about two sisters. One chose to do a good thing and the other chose to do something more important.

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The Story:

Note: This is a short story in the bible. It might be a good day to read the verses straight from the bible instead of using a visual aid. For more active listening direct the children to stand up when someone in the story is choosing a good thing. They should sit down when someone in the story is not choosing a good thing. When Jesus is speaking the children should cup their hands by their ears to show they are really listening well.

(The Story, NIV) As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. (Martha was choosing a good thing- stand up)

She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. (Mary was choosing a good thing- keep standing)

But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" (Sit down, Martha was not choosing a good thing.)

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." (Cup your hands behind your ears because Jesus is speaking.)

Now, Mary and Martha both chose good things in the story. Who wants to guess which chose the BEST thing?
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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection, student interaction and/or emotion.
[Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)



The slideshow and set of illustrations at right cannot be viewed here on this website but can be downloaded directly from <http://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/lumo-mary-martha/>

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasize in this lesson.

Review Questions:

1. Which two sisters did Jesus eat a meal with? Mary and Martha
2. Which sister chose to prepare food and which sat and listened to Jesus? Martha-preparation, Mary-listened to Jesus
3. Who chose the better thing, Mary or Martha? Mary

Song Suggestions:

- [Oh, How I Love Jesus Song](#)
- [Potato Chip Song](#)
- [Booster Song](#)
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

Learning Activities and Crafts:

[\(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation\)](#)

Activities:

- Prepare food the way it was prepared in the time of Jesus. Grind some grain to make flour. Bake some bread. You could also buy a type of bread that has whole grains in it. Let the children look for the grains in the bread. Drink goat's milk or eat goat cheese. Try some curds (cottage cheese). Eat grapes, olives, raisins, nuts, fish, and other items Jesus might have eaten.
- Spend some time on the memory verse. Write the verse on the board. Have the whole class say the verse together. Then erase a few words and have everyone say the verse together again. Continue erasing a few more words each time and having everyone say the verse together. Soon you will have erased the whole verse but still be able to say it.
- Divide the class into two teams and have them line up. When you say "go" the first person from each team walks up to the chalkboard and writes the first word of the memory verse. They return to their teams and tag the next person. These team members then walk up to the board and write the next word of the verse before tagging the next person. First team to finish the whole verse wins.
- Play a simple word game. [Bible Wordz Game](#) is an adaptable game, children form words from letter tiles. The words relate to words found in the Bible lesson.

Check the [Teaching Ideas](#) page on this website for ideas that are adaptable to any lesson.



[Click here for "Mary and Martha" in A4 size paper](#)
[Click here for "Mary and Martha" in letter size paper \(USA\)](#)
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Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page and worksheets about Mary and Martha \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Colouring page \(Sermon 4 kids\)](#)
- [Printable worksheet to help children take notes during worship assembly \(Larissa Holland\)](#)
- [A number of activities \(Sermon 4 kids\)](#)

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