

Mary and Martha



Scripture Reference:

[Luke 10:38-42](#)

Suggested Emphasis:

Jesus loves when we spend time with Him and His Father. Make it a priority to spend time with and listen to Him.

Memory Verse: “So faith comes from hearing the Good News. And people hear the Good News when someone tells them about Christ.” [Romans 10:17, 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, were good friends of Jesus ([John 11:5](#)). After today’s story, we will 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](#)).

The children you teach 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 chapter 10, Jesus sent out 72 people to travel ahead of Him. These all returned to Him ([Luke 10:17](#)). In addition to men, there were also women who travelled 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 food preparation would probably have been done outside the 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 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 escape danger as fast as possible. 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 most important things 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 raise their hands or put their thumbs up when someone in the story chooses a good thing. They could then cross their arms or put their thumbs down when someone in the story is not choosing a good thing. When Jesus is speaking, the children can cup their hands by their ears to show they are really listening well.

"While Jesus and his followers were traveling, Jesus went into a town. A woman named Martha let Jesus stay at her house. Martha had a sister named Mary. Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to him teach. Martha became angry because she had so much work to do. She went in and said, 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me alone to do all the work? Tell her to help me!'

But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are getting worried and upset about too many things. Only one thing is important. Mary has chosen the right thing, and it will never be taken away from her.'" Luke 10:38-42, ICB

Martha learned that choosing to listen to Jesus is always the right choice.

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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 or other group participation.



[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 emphasise in this lesson.

Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story, while reflection questions encourage them to internalize its meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child's spiritual development and help them connect to God. [Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.](#)

Review:

1. Who invited Jesus to come to her home? (Martha)
2. Who was Martha's sister? (Mary)
3. What did Jesus do besides while at Martha's house? (Taught)
4. Which sister chose to get everything prepared for Jesus, and which sat and listened to Jesus? (Martha prepared. Mary listened to Jesus)
5. Who chose the better thing, Mary or Martha? (Mary)
6. What did Jesus teach Martha?
7. What did you learn about Jesus from this story?

Reflection:

1. What do you think Martha's home looked like inside?
2. What do you think Martha was preparing while Mary listened to Jesus?
3. Why do you think Martha was worried?
4. How do you think Martha was feeling when she asked Jesus, "Don't you care that my sister has left me alone to do all the work?" Did Jesus care about this?
5. Why do you think Jesus didn't tell Mary to help Martha?
6. How do you think Mary felt when Jesus said she had chosen the better thing by spending time listening to him?
7. Do you worry? How often do you worry?
8. What can we do when we're worried?
9. Mary spent time just sitting with Jesus, listening to him speak. How can we listen to Jesus and spend time with him like Mary?
10. What is something you wonder about in this story?

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a life-long friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. [A variety of prayer methods are found here.](#)

Song Suggestions:

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

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 group 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 have everyone say the verse together. Soon you will have erased the whole verse but still be able to say it.
- Divide the group 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. The first team to finish the whole verse wins.
- Play a simple word game. [Bible Wordz Game](#) is an adaptable game where children form words from letter tiles. The words relate to words found in the Bible lesson.



Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable "God's Story" printable

reflection page. [Free printables for this story.](#)

Crafts:



Print bookmarks, trading cards or timelines ([printable pages](#)).

- Visit the [Teaching Ideas](#) page for additional activities and crafts.

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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