



Martha and Mary

(based on Luke 10:38–42)

Jesus and his disciples had traveled for many days. As they visited town after town, they told stories, healed the sick, and talked about God.

When they reached the village of Bethany, they were tired and dusty. Jesus was looking forward to visiting with his friends Martha and Mary. The two women were sisters. Martha, an important woman in the small community, welcomed them into her home. She washed their feet and fed them warm bread dipped in olive oil, along with wine, fresh fish, figs, and cheese. Mary asked them about their journeys, who they had met, and what they had done.

Martha loved to have guests. She liked to prepare things. She liked to make people feel welcome. She liked to visit with them. She had a gift for meeting the needs of other people.

Mary loved having guests too, but she didn't like preparing things. Mary had a different gift. She made a person feel welcome by her warmth and presence. She could sit, listen, and have lively conversations.

The sisters especially liked it when Jesus visited, as he did whenever he was nearby.

Usually, Martha liked to sit with Jesus and his friends. This time, Martha was still busy making sure everyone was cared for. As usual, Mary sat with Jesus.

Martha became tired, hot, and frustrated that she was the only one working while everyone else was enjoying the conversation. She couldn't help herself. Martha said, "Jesus, don't you care that my sister has left all of this work for me to do by myself?"

Jesus gently replied,

Martha, my dear Martha, thank you for the welcome you have given us. You worry about so many things. I do not visit you because of the wonderful food you make or even the chance to rest from a journey. I come here to spend time with you and talk about things that are closest to our hearts. Tonight, Mary has chosen a good thing to do with our time together.

Martha smiled. She knew Jesus was right. There was a time to be busy, and there was a time to be together. She sat down with Jesus and Mary, and they talked together until the first stars began to appear in the night sky.



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your child—imagine and wonder.
- Watch a YouTube video about the story of Mary and Martha: “God’s Story: Mary and Martha” (goo.gl/ufzDQS). Consider how you can spend time with Jesus this week.
- Read *Three Hens and a Peacock* by Lester L. Laminack and consider how important each person’s gifts are to the community. Talk about what special gifts each person brings to your family.



Responding to God's Grace

- Jesus told Martha that it was important to spend time with him. Putting God first in our lives isn’t always easy when we have so many things to do. Try an experiment that illustrates the importance of putting God first. Get a clear jar and, in this order, put in three large stones that will fit in the jar, smaller pebbles or pea gravel, and sand to fill the jar. Observe how everything fits in the jar. Then empty the contents into a bowl. Pick out the large and small stones and set them aside. Fill the jar in this order: sand, small stones, three large stones. What happened this time? Why? Pour the contents into the bowl again and refill the jar in the first order: three large stones, small stones, sand. Wonder how the jar is like our lives and the three large stones represent those things which should be the first things, the most important things in our lives—God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. If we put them first, then everything else fits just fine. The small stones represent those things like family and friends, which come next. The sand is all the little stuff that we fill our lives with. If we start with that, then the other things don’t fit. Consider ideas to put God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit first in your life.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Celebrate Martha and Mary’s gifts. Make a meal together. Tell stories about Jesus together.
- Pray this prayer each day this week:

Dear God, thank you for your presence with us. Thank you for seeing each of us as special and worthy. Help us spend time with you each and every day. Amen.

Note: goo.gl web addresses are case sensitive.