**Live in Community**

 Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**Honor God**

With all my heart I will praise you, O Lord my God. I will give glory to your name forever. ([Psalm 86:12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ps86.12))

*Most people think of worship as exclusively songs and music. We think worship is something we do in a service on Sunday mornings. But the Bible calls us to give our entire life as worship. We honor God with our songs and praise, but all of life is an opportunity to show God honor. We worship best when we make it a lifestyle, expressing our gratitude, prioritizing our time with Him, purifying our heart and actions, and generously sharing with others. We worship as we honor God with our whole life.*

**Session Overview**

**Choose Your Priority**

**Biblical Encounter:** Mary and Martha Host Jesus ([Luke 10:38–42](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk10.38-42))

**Outcome:** Prioritize God over the busyness of life.

*In this session, we’ll look at the idea of prioritizing time with God over the busyness of life. It’s easy to get distracted in our fast-paced world. When people are asked how they are doing, more and more they respond by noting how busy they are. The daily hustle and bustle of life can often take away from our time with God. As a result, we aren’t left with much in our spiritual tank to navigate the issues we face.*

*When it comes to our relationship with God, too many of us get caught up in fulfilling the expectations of people rather than choosing what God sees as best. We will see this mindset in our Bible story. Martha invited Jesus into her home and was joined by her sister, Mary. We will see that Martha was busy with preparations for Jesus’ visit. Mary, on the other hand, chose to take a different route. As the sisters encountered Jesus, He left us with insight into how the busyness of our life can interfere with our relationship with God.*

|  |
| --- |
| ***You Will Need*** *• Large paper plates, one per team* *• Foods that roll (orange, grape, cherry tomato, raisin, meatball, malted milk ball, gumball, doughnut hole, etc.). Each team of five students will need the same five items.* *• Paper towels or white napkins, one per team****Getting Ready*** • ***First time leading* Live *for Youth? Look here for the*** [**Facilitator Guide**](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf)**.** |

*To access session content and videos from a computer, visit:* [***BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads***](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

**Welcome**

*Take this time to welcome everyone, introduce new students, learn names, and thank everyone for coming. Your friendliness here can create a comfort level that encourages student participation later.*

**Opening Prayer**

*Prayer thoughts: Take time to thank God for His presence. Ask that He will open hearts to the discussion and that everyone will feel free to contribute with questions and insights they have surrounding the Bible story.*

**Introduction**

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What’s your favorite thing to do for fun? |

We all have favorite things to do, but often, we don’t get enough opportunities to do them. The busyness of life has a way of interfering with the things we enjoy. In today’s Bible story, we meet two sisters who took very different approaches to life. They both connected with the special Guest, but they did that in completely different ways. Sometimes, people allow things that aren’t quite as important to get in the way of what truly is important. Let’s see if we can spot this in our story. But first, let’s have a little bit of fun.

**Group Activity**

**Service with a Smile Relay**

|  |
| --- |
| ***You Will Need*** *• Large paper plates, one per team* *• Foods that roll (orange, grape, cherry tomato, raisin, meatball, malted milk ball, gumball, doughnut hole, etc.). Each team of 5 students will need the same 5 items.* *• Paper towels or white napkins, one per team**No prep is needed for this activity.* |

Our Bible story is about serving a special Guest, so we’re going to have fun with a food serving relay. Each team will be given one paper plate, food items, and a paper towel. One at a time, each player will place the towel over their arm, like a waiter at a nice restaurant. Then they will take the plate and place one food item on it.

Balancing the plate on the palm of one hand, the student will then walk quickly to the other side of the room without dropping the food item or letting the paper towel fall from their arm. If a food item drops or the paper towel falls, they must stop and reset before they can begin walking again.

When they return, the next person will take the towel and plate from the first player. They will add a second food item to the plate and walk to the other side of the room. We’ll keep going until all players have had a turn.

The first team to finish the race with all the food items on their plate will be the winner. You can’t touch any food item except when it falls. Only then can you pick up the food item and place it back on your plate.

• *Have the teams line up and start the relay.*

We’ve just learned who our best servers are! Today we’re going to discuss a story centered around someone who was preparing to serve a meal to Jesus and His disciples. She was busy running here and there to make sure everything was just right. Hopefully, she didn’t drop any food. Before we dive into the Bible story, let’s watch this video.

**Watch**

**Consider What the Bible Says**

*Ensure each student has access to a Bible, preferably the same version.*

Have you ever read a story in the Bible and wondered what you should learn from it? Some stories have simple messages, while others are more complex. Although the message of our story today is pretty easy to understand, it can be much more difficult to live out that message in our daily life.

**Martha Welcomed Jesus**

Read [Luke 10:38–39](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk10.38-39).

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What do we learn about sisters Martha and Mary from these two verses? |

There’s a lot for only two verses! Martha and Mary were sisters. While both women were very interested in connecting with Jesus, the Bible lists Martha as the one who received Him into “her home.” Those are clues that Martha was most likely either the current head of this household or at least in charge at that time. That would probably make her feel responsible for the hospitality.

Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and listened to Him. She wasn’t just sitting close to a friend. Sitting at Jesus’ feet meant that Mary was in a position to learn from Him. This is what disciples of that time did.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**If you had been hosting that day, which person would you have been more like? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What may it look like for people to sit at the feet of Jesus today? |

Mary is a picture of doing what is needed to hear Jesus speak. He still speaks to us today through His Word—the Bible. He also speaks to us through His Holy Spirit in our life. But both of those require that we listen. If we leave no room in our schedule to listen, we may miss out on what He is saying to us.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What are some ways we position ourself to listen to Jesus today? |

As followers of Jesus, we are called to have a growing relationship with Him. Sometimes, life can get in the way of that relationship. This can be true even when we are doing things that are good, like serving others—and we’ll see that in the next verse. It’s important that we continually focus on our relationship with God rather than the busyness of life. Let’s take a look.

**Did You Know?**

|  |
| --- |
| In the biblical worlds of both the Old and New Testaments, hospitality was a core part of culture. Society elevated one’s desire to be hospitable to the point that not being a good host could even affect one’s social class. |

**Martha Became Upset**

Read [Luke 10:40](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk10.40).

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Why was Martha upset? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Do you think she was justified in being upset? Why or why not? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Was it wrong for Mary to sit at Jesus’ feet and leave Martha to prepare the meal for all the guests? Why or why not? |

Martha was busy preparing a meal for Jesus. That shouldn’t surprise us since, as we talked about earlier, she was the one who invited Jesus into her home. Being a good hostess was exactly what her culture would have expected, and Martha seemed to be frustrated that Mary wasn’t doing the same. Mary didn’t seem to be working at all. But Jesus was a very special Guest. Mary decided that hearing what this Guest had to say was more important than doing what others may have expected—including her sister.

**Jesus Responded to Martha**

Read [Luke 10:41–42](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk10.41-42).

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What did Jesus tell Martha? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**How do we balance the daily activities of life with spending time with Jesus? |

Making Jesus our first priority doesn’t mean we neglect the things or people around us. What it does mean is that we learn to prioritize our relationship with God above all else. We should be careful that we don’t allow the things of this world to get in the way of our relationship with God. He should be our highest priority. This may take sacrifices, like getting up earlier or saying no to something else. But the result is growing in our relationship with the One we’ll spend eternity with. Could there be anything more important than that?

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What’s the difference between having devotions and being devoted to God? |

Putting this idea into action is much easier to talk about than to do. Our relationship with God matters more than anything else, but sometimes our schedule doesn’t look like He’s very important. When this happens, we’re not making our relationship with Him the priority it should or could be.

One thing we can all learn from this Bible story and how Jesus handled this encounter is that He wants a closer relationship with us more than the stuff we can give Him. His priority is spending time with us. It should be our priority to spend time with Him, too.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What have you learned from today’s story regarding your relationship with God? |

**Reflect**

**Prioritize God over the busyness of life.**

Martha and Mary showed us two very different responses when it comes to our relationship with Jesus. Martha played the part of hostess while Mary sat at the feet of Jesus. It’s true that both are needed. Knowing which response is right for the situation is a characteristic of someone growing in their relationship with God. Learning to make time for Jesus is a true reflection of our heart for Him. This is one reason Jesus told Martha that Mary had discovered the right priority. We can learn to do the same.

**Listen to God**

Let’s take time to consider how our life demonstrates a real trust in the Bible. These questions are meant to serve as a conversation between you and God. Sharing your responses with the group is completely voluntary.

• *Pause for a few moments of silent reflection after reading the questions. Then ask students if they want to share. Sharing your personal response may also be helpful to the students.*

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Do you find it easier to do things for Jesus or to be alone with Jesus? Explain. |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Do you have a regular time that you spend with Jesus? What does that look like? |

**Activate**

Let’s choose to prioritize being with Jesus over the busyness of life this week. Each day, I want to challenge you to sit in the presence of Jesus without doing anything else. What that means is, carve more time out of your schedule to quietly listen for Him to speak to you. For example, at the end of each daily devotion provided on the app, take time simply to be with Jesus.

**Conclusion**

Although this is a very short Bible story, only five verses long, there is so much for us to learn. Prioritizing Jesus over everyone and everything else in life helps us grow in our relationship with Him. It means a great deal to Jesus. He wants to be with us. He didn’t seem bothered that Mary sat while Martha served. As a matter of fact, Jesus celebrated Mary and told Martha there was much for her to learn from her sister’s example. Let’s all learn from these five verses and make Jesus number one in our life.

|  |
| --- |
| ***Salvation Opportunity****Include this if you think there may be some in the group who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus.*Making Jesus number one begins by surrendering your life to Him. Maybe you’ve never prayed and asked Jesus to forgive you and come into your life as your Savior. For some, you may have prayed at some point in your life, but you’ve stopped prioritizing Jesus and drifted far from Him. Today’s a chance to renew that relationship with Him.**Is anyone here that we can pray for who doesn’t have a relationship with Jesus or wants to renew their relationship with Him?***Take a moment to acknowledge those who respond, and thank them for their desire to make things right between themselves and God. Pray with them as you close in prayer or after the group time is over. Following group time, talk more about where they are in their walk with God and how you might be able to help.* |

**Prayer**

Thank You, Jesus, for being patient with us as we learn to prioritize our relationship with You. Forgive us for neglecting You or not having You as number one in our life. Thank You for challenging us with this example of Martha and Mary and encouraging us to discover what is truly most important. We love You. In Your name, we pray. Amen.

**Dismissal**

Let’s prioritize time with Jesus this week. One great way to do this is by spending time with Him and listening to Him through the devotions provided on the app. It’s not just about having devotions. It’s about being devoted. See you next time.