

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 11
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Luke 10:38-42

Even on a sultry summer day, the wind of the Spirit hovers — almost imperceptibly. Our lives rarely accommodate a slower pace for the summer. Yet, we are invited to notice, again, the priorities that drive us. We are invited to stop, however briefly, the manic activity and consider options Jesus offers us.

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

Of course, the dishes must be washed and the bills paid, but will we take a deep breath and just ‘BE’? The static of distractions drowns out the music of the cosmos. Don't just DO something; sit here, Jesus invites.

Theme: Choosing the better part

Before: A few props will help the children stage this story: A plastic dishes, drinking glasses, some spoons and forks, and a dishtowel, a feather duster (or dust cloth), an apron, and perhaps a broom. You will need to make enough copies of the Mary/Martha page below so that each child will have one (and maybe a few extra in case a child wants to start over.)

Beginning: Ask the children what jobs they have at home to help out around the house. Does any one set the table, load the dishwasher, or help with the dusting, feed the dog? Tell them we have a story about a person who was spending so much time on jobs there wasn't time to hear Jesus' stories.

Praying: Thank you, God, for times to hear stories about Jesus. Help us remember to stop and be with you no matter how much we have to do. Amen.

The Story: Martha and Mary were sisters. They were very good friends of Jesus. One day, Martha invited Jesus to come to their house. When Jesus got there, they both said, "Come in! We are so glad you have come to our house." Mary sat right down beside Jesus and asked him about his trip and listened to everything he was saying. Martha went right to the kitchen to fix a really nice dinner for Jesus. And she raced around setting the table. Then she started to dust things in the living room. She was angry that she had to do all the work. So Martha said to Jesus: "Tell Mary to come help me with all this work." Jesus said, "Martha, Martha, calm down. You are getting too carried away with all this housework. Mary is doing the more important thing: Mary is listening to me."

Activity: Show the props you have brought and ask the children to choose who will be Martha, fussing around cleaning up the house; who will be Mary, sitting and listening to Jesus; and who will be Jesus talking with Mary. Let them take turns playing the different parts until each child gets to enact the character they want to portray.

After everyone has had a chance to try being “Mary” and “Martha,” invite them to share what the experience was like. What did they like about being Mary? What didn’t they like? What did they like about being Martha? What didn’t they like? I wonder if it is important to have people doing both? I wonder how we can do both?

Option: Invite the children to brainstorm with you. What are ways we can be more like Mary? What are ways we can be more like Martha? (make sure and take note of each of their responses) Hand out the sheets of paper you have copied for them and invite them to draw the ways they can be like Mary and the ways they can be like Martha.

Getting Closure: Bring the children into a circle to share what they have created.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for the stories you give us. Help us to be like Martha and help those around us and like Mary who stopped to listen to your teaching. Amen.

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I can be like Mary!

I can be like Martha!

Lesson Plans that Work
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Lesson Plans for Older Children

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Theme: Choosing our priorities

Before Class: You will need copies of the Bible for the children.

Beginning: Tell the children to be listening for choices in the story for today. Who makes what choice and why?

Opening Prayer: Loving God, we thank you for trusting us so much that you give us choices. Help us to make choices that serve you and the world around us. Amen.

The Story: Luke 10: 38-42 Invite three children to read the parts of the narrator, Martha, and Jesus. You will find a script at the end of this lesson.

Questions:

I wonder what Martha thought was the important thing to do with Jesus in their house? (Be a generous host by fixing a really nice meal for Jesus and making sure everything as perfect for his visit.)

I wonder what Mary thought was the important thing to do? (Be a gracious hostess to Jesus by listening to him and learning what he had to teach her.)

I wonder what Jesus thought was the more important task? (Listening to what he had to teach.)

Do you think Jesus thought the housework was a waste of time? (Probably not.)

I wonder what Jesus was trying to teach them about choosing priorities? (A fancy dinner was not what Jesus had come for — but to be with these two women who were very good friends of Jesus.)

Option: Invite the children to imagine different endings for the story.

How could Martha still have seen that they had a nice dinner, which was important to her, and still have had time to hear what Jesus had to say?

How could Mary have made her sister feel less worried about the dinner? (Note, they probably had servants who would have prepared and served the dinner.)

Women were not considered equal to men in Jesus' time. What if Jesus was telling Mary that her discipleship and learning was just as important as a man's? Could that have been why Mary was so interested in what Jesus was saying?

Getting Closure: Most of us do not have servants. I wonder how we could act like Mary in our own lives? (A younger sibling who needs someone to play with? An older sibling who needs someone to help with a homework project? A grandparent who wants to tell one of his/her stories, again? Doing our very best in school to learn all that we can learn?)

I wonder how could we help the person who is "Martha" in our homes? (Are there chores we could offer to do to help? One night a week maybe the family simply heats up leftovers so the person who cooks would have more time with the family.)

I wonder what this story has said to you about setting priorities? How do we balance our everyday lives and the tasks that we have to do as well as spend time with Jesus?

Closing Prayer: Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to *you*, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly *yours*, utterly dedicated to *you*; and then use us, we pray, as you will, and always to *your* glory and the welfare of *your* people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

-A Prayer of Self-Dedication (Adapted from The Book of Common Prayer, page 832)

Luke 10:38-42

Narrator: Now as Jesus and the disciples went on their way, they entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home.³⁹ She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying.⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked,

Martha: 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.'

Narrator: ⁴¹But the Lord answered her,

Jesus: 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things;⁴² there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.'

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 11
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Luke 10:38-42

Even on a sultry summer day, the wind of the Spirit hovers — almost imperceptibly. Our lives rarely accommodate a slower pace for the summer. Yet, we are invited to notice, again, the priorities that drive us. We are invited to stop, however briefly, the manic activity and consider options Jesus offers us.

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

Of course, the dishes must be washed and the bills paid, but will we take a deep breath and just ‘BE’? The static of distractions drowns out the music of the cosmos. Don't just DO something; sit here, Jesus invites.

Theme: Choosing the Better Part

Before Class: An option is to spend a portion of the time you have in silence, so people can have an experience of not being distracted by many tasks. Your group's experience with silence will help you decide whether just a couple of minutes is good or whether they would like a longer time. You will need copies of the Bible or the scripture for the group.

Beginning: Ask the group to think of two times they have been invited to someone's home for dinner. One time when the host or hostess was working so hard to get it all right that the evening was a strain for everyone. Then, think of a time when the host or hostess was available and the party seemed relaxed and enjoyable.

Opening Prayer: Loving God, we thank you for trusting us so much that you give us choices. Help us to make choices that serve you and the world around us. Amen.

The Scripture: Luke 10: 38-42 Invite a reader to read through the passage and have a few moments of quiet.

Questions:

- I wonder what stood out for you in today’s reading?
- From our reading, do you remember who welcomed Jesus into their home? (Martha)
- I wonder why Martha got so distracted with the many tasks? (Perhaps she just wanted to be sure the dinner for their beloved Jesus was as excellent as she could make it.)
- I wonder what Jesus might have been saying to Mary? (We don't know, but we do know that Jesus was teaching that women were as valuable as men a new idea in that culture.)
- Try to put yourself in Martha's shoes: her frustration that Mary was not pitching in; her fear of risking believing that she was as valued a person as a man in their culture. I wonder what you would do in this situation.

- Try to identify with Mary, the risk she might have been taking in believing that her voice could be heard, and the excitement she felt at hearing this message. I wonder what you would have done in this situation.
- Do you think Jesus was saying that housework has no value? (Probably not. Jesus was probably choosing to be clear about priorities.)
- As we think about the "Marthas" in our community, brainstorm ways we might be able to honor the work they do and help them risk growing.
- As we think about the "Marys" in our community, brainstorm ways we might be able to honor the work they do and be sure their voices are heard.

Options: Two options are offered. Choose the one that best fits your group.

Option One: Tell the group we will hear the passage again, in its entirety, and then keep a few moments of silence to listen for any new insights. Ask for a volunteer to read the passage and then maintain a silence. At the end of the silence, ask if anyone wants to offer anything new they noticed this time.

Option Two: Mary appears to have the gift of ignoring distractions. Invite the group into a few moments of silence. Explain that the purpose is to sit quietly and stay as free of distractions as possible. It is helpful to focus on a simple word or image to free yourself of distractions. (A word like, Jesus, Abba, or Spirit, for example). When a distraction floats by, just watch it float on by and expect, again, the silence. At the conclusion of the time of silence, simply say, "Amen," and give the group a minute to return fully. Then ask for feedback about the experience. Invite the group to consider providing times of silence in subsequent times the group meets and throughout their daily lives.

Getting Closure: Invite the group to notice as they leave today the Mary's and Martha's we find in ourselves and those in our community and how we can support and encourage them.

Closing Prayer: Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to *you*, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly *yours*, utterly dedicated to *you*; and then use us, we pray, as you will, and always to *your* glory and the welfare of *your* people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen*.

-A Prayer of Self-Dedication (Adapted from The Book of Common Prayer, page 832)

Luke 10:38-42

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