

**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**

38 Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. <sup>39</sup>She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. <sup>40</sup>But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.' <sup>41</sup>But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; <sup>42</sup>there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.'

*Printed by the Office for Formation and Vocation Ministries of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.*

*© 2012 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. All rights reserved.*