

YOU ARE THERE MARTHA & MARY

Introduction, through the eyes of someone who was there

You are Martha, sister of Mary and Lazarus. All three of you are good friends with Jesus, and He has come to visit you. Although you're good friends, you also realize how great a man Jesus is, and it is a high honor to be given the chance to serve Him a meal. So you dive into all the preparations for a meal, along with your sister Mary ... but Mary isn't helping; she's just sitting with Jesus. Mary knows good and well that she should be helping you get ready, but she isn't lifting a hand, so you finally ask Jesus to tell her what she ought to be doing ...

Original illustration
(also available in
full-color card sets)



Basic verses and other related passages

THE BASIC STORY

Luke 10:38-42 (Jesus visits Martha and Mary)

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE ...

John 12:1-7 (Jesus visits them again)

Luke 7:36-50 (Mark 14:3-9) (Jesus visits Simon and a woman washes His feet)

1 Timothy 5:10 (Good works of hospitality)

More depth and detail

Let's look at the same story from a different perspective, now. You are Mary, and Jesus has come to visit. You know that you should be helping Martha prepare a meal, but you decide to sit and listen to Jesus, instead. Later, on another visit, rather than helping serve the meal, you take a bottle of very expensive perfume and rub it into Jesus' feet. As before, you've made a choice — the perfume could have been sold to feed a lot of poor people, but you used it on Jesus instead. Did you make the right choice?

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MARTHA AND MARY?

1)

2)

3)

"Summing up" time (if needed)

DID YOU KNOW? HOSPITALITY

During Old Testament times traveling is dangerous. Bandits and wild animals roam the areas between villages, roads are dangerous between, and food sources uncertain.

Related facts about Bible life & times

Inns do not develop until the time of the Roman Empire (near the end of the Old Testament) and many inns are gathering spots for dangerous people. (That can help explain Jesus' command for the disciples to stay in private homes when traveling, Matthew 10:11.) Therefore, it is not only tradition, but a matter of personal honor, to show hospitality to a stranger.

Strangers to a city or town wait by the front gate or by the town's well until someone offers them a place to stay. When the stranger enters your house or tent, he becomes under your protection. He greets you with some form of "Peace be with you" or "Peace be unto this house." Then you kiss, first on the right cheek and then on the left. Or, if you want to give great honor, you bow to your guest. Then the stranger removes his shoes as a sign of respect to the host. The feet of the stranger are washed as a gesture of friendship. (Simon the Pharisee was criticized for not kissing Jesus or having His feet washed in Luke 7:45.)

Bible hospitality differs from our hospitality in other ways. For one thing, it is considered discourteous for a guest to sleep alone; someone always sleeps in the room with him to keep him company. A feast is prepared with all the neighborhood invited. To eat with someone is to be at peace with him, so if the stranger has an errand that his host might not approve of, he should tell the host before they eat any meal together. (Genesis 24:33)

1 Is Martha doing the right thing by cooking the meal? If she had decided to sit with Mary, what would they have eaten for supper?

2 Is Jesus telling Martha never to worry about getting material things done, but only to worry about spiritual things? Why do you think so?

The heart of the lesson:
What can we learn from Martha?
How can we use her experiences to make us better?

When you've got two important things to do, how do you decide which is more important?

3 Should you spend money to buy nice, expensive things for your church's building? Why do you say so?

Should you spend money to buy nice clothes to wear when you worship? Why do you say so?

Are there better things to spend your money on? (Give examples, if you think so.)

4 What can you learn from Martha and Mary?

A second "summing up" time

Teacher notes with ways to discuss and develop each question are available (at no cost)

JESUS IS MEDIATOR & ADVOCATE

"For He [God] is not a man as I am that I may answer Him, That we may go to court together. There is no umpire between us, who may lay his hand upon us both." (Job 9:32-33)

Sidebar for each lesson, on a related theme

... there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus ... (1 Timothy 2:5) ... see Hebrews 8:6, 9:15, 12:24 & context)

... anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous ... (1 John 2:1)

When Job is deeply troubled and doesn't know why, he begs for an umpire, a mediator who can explain his situation to God. Jesus Christ is that mediator, that advocate for us with God.

But Jesus doesn't just speak for us; He has given His blood so that we can have a new covenant (a new contract) with God. This covenant is better than the law that God gives Moses, because it is based on a perfect sacrifice — Christ Himself. And now that Christ has executed that contract, established that covenant, He stands before God the Father to mediate for us. He knows what it's like to live in this world and to be tempted, and He takes away our sins when we obey Him.

Map with notes on the places in the lesson

