



Martha and Mary

Goal: To express gratitude for God's love by putting God first in our lives.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Luke 10:38-42

Scripture tells us that Martha was bothered that she was doing so much to prepare for Jesus' visit, to be hospitable, but Jesus says she is distracted from that which truly matters—listening to him, as Mary has chosen. Often the two sisters are portrayed as in a competition, with a winner declared by Jesus. This is not the case. Both are loved by Jesus. The tone of Jesus' voice is tender and familiar with Martha as he repeats her name, gently directing her attention to what is divine and not temporal. Jesus is not condemning Martha or her activity, or all those who serve, or hospitable people to follow, but he is commending Mary and her actions, and those who desire to hear the Word of God. Listening to Jesus is the good thing or the “better part” (Luke 10:42).

What is the grace moment in this story? There are two. One is when Jesus speaks to Martha with such affection. There is grace in his voice and demeanor. One can almost imagine Jesus gently taking the serving tray out of her hands, guiding her to the chair next to his. This is grace—a moment of pause and redirection, offering Martha the better part as well. The other revelation of grace is layered into this moment with Martha. It is the acknowledgment that taking time and paying attention to God's Word is worthy, and not just worthwhile, but to be praised. It is what gives sustenance to be able to serve in Christ's name. In this “grace upon grace” moment, both women are seen and valued by Jesus. Grace is given. Thanks be to God!

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Children today are busy, as are their parents. They are pulled in many directions with much to compete for their time and attention. Games, meets, lessons, practices, reports, and projects are all important. How does church or time with God not become just one more item on the agenda?

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

The children in your classroom, and the parents or caregivers who bring them there, are the ones who desire to sit at Jesus' feet or have felt the gentle hand upon their shoulder reminding them of the good thing, the better part. Affirm and encourage them. See and value them. Time with Jesus—on Sunday mornings and through our week—is what nourishes and sustains us as disciples of Christ.

O God, help me commit to putting you first each day. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 10, 19, 23

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

audio stories (optional)
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

white candle

white cloth

copies of **Grace Notes**
(GN) 1

Responding

Celebrating

snack items

Praying

copies of **GN 2**

Extra

copies of **GN 3** on card
stock

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Before the children arrive, post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule.” Cut out and glue the arrow marker on a clothespin. Use the schedule to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

“Celebrating God’s Grace” requires more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing LD

Play “Come into God’s Presence” as children arrive. Greet the children with the words “Christ is risen!” Prompt them to say, “He is risen indeed.” Welcome them to the fourth Sunday of the Easter season.

Invite the children to prepare the space for Easter worship, telling the children that Easter is not just a day; it’s a season. Wonder what the group could add to the worship table to signify the Easter season.

Ask them to include a Bible and a white cloth, the color for Easter. Place a white candle, representing the light of Christ.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities. Suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing.

Wonder together who has helped prepare today. Ask who prepared the worship space, today’s activities, singing, and or the Scripture reading. Suggest that there are many ways the children have shared their gifts. When they have finished, say, “Let us prepare to listen to what God has to say to us today.”

Singing

Help the children settle into praying time by quietly singing “Come into God’s Presence”—**SCM 19**.

Praying T C

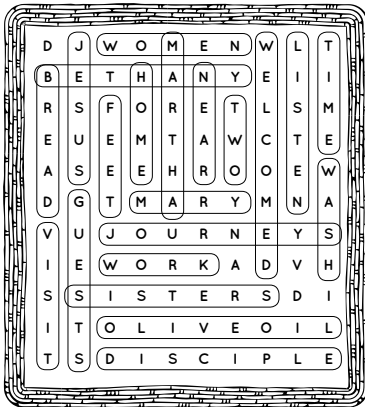
Turn on the candle on the worship table. Remind the group that candles were extinguished when we read about Jesus’ death. This candle is lit to remind us that Jesus lives and is with us always. Invite the children to repeat after you as you pray the following echo prayer.

Dear God, /
thank you for your presence with us. /
Thank you for seeing each of us /
as special and worthy. /
Help us pay attention to your Word to us today. /
Amen. /



T *The best way to cope with transitions is to be prepared and know what is coming. Help the children know the plan for the session and identify times of transition in advance.*

GN 1 Solution:



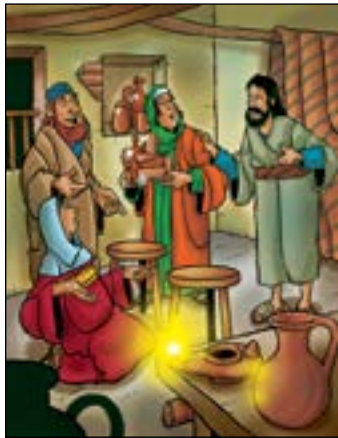
Preparing to Hear the Story

F B C LD

Give the children a copy of **GN 1** and invite them to complete the word search about today's story. As the children work, randomly distract and interrupt some of the children. Allow others to complete the puzzle. Making sure not all have completed the puzzle, end the activity and engage the children in conversation using the following questions.

- Who completed the word search puzzle? Why or why not?
- How did it feel to be distracted or interrupted?
- When are times in our lives when things get in the way of doing something important?
- What do you think Jesus would say is the most important thing to do?

Tell the children that they will hear about two sisters spending time with Jesus.



Today's story can be found in *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible* edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), www.pcusastore.com.

Hearing the Story

M L T

Invite a child to find Luke 10 in the Bible and place the open Bible on the worship table. Read **SCM 10** or use the story audio. Conclude by saying, "Word of wisdom, Word of grace," and prompt the children to say, "Thanks be to God."

Invite the children to be like Martha and pantomime actions preparing for Jesus' visit—scurrying about sweeping, preparing food, cleaning, and so forth—as they listen to you read the story again or replay the story audio. When you get to Jesus' words, "Martha, my dear Martha," invite the children to come sit by you for the rest of the story.

Reflecting on God's Grace

C

After the story, encourage conversation using the following questions.

- Was it difficult to pay attention to the story while you were moving about?
- What are things that you can do to pay attention to Jesus?

Brainstorm ways that they can spend time with God, particularly other than church time. Jot the ideas on newsprint.

Singing

Play, listen, clap, and dance to "I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me"—**SCM 23**.

Turn off the candle.



RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and for the time available.

Claiming God's Grace



Remind the children that 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. Tell the children that they are going to do an experiment that illustrates the importance of putting God first. Use the following directions to make yarn pom-poms.

- ▼ Give each child a length of yarn and a fork.
- ▼ Have them place the end of the yarn near the handle. Tell them to wind the yarn around the tines of the fork twenty times. Count to twenty together.
- ▼ Have them cut the remaining yarn and fold over an end to keep it from unraveling. Thread the fold through the center tine.
- ▼ Tie each child's piece tightly around the wraps and remove it from the fork.
- ▼ Then help the children cut through all of the loops.
- ▼ Finally, have the children fluff out the pom-pom and snip the long ends.

Borrow one of the children's pom-poms and tell the children that the pom-pom will represent God. Place the pom-pom on a table and cover it with a cup. Tell the children to pay attention to where "God" is. Move the cup from hand to hand and ask if they know where "God" is. Add a second cup on the table and explain that it could represent the time you spend with friends. Now shuffle the cups and pose the question again. Remark that it is a little more difficult to find God when something else is added. Add a third cup and say that this represents time spent watching television or playing video games. Shuffle the cups again and ask the question. Now it is even more difficult. Let the children form pairs and try the activity.

Tell the children that when we pay attention to God, we put God first. Ask:

- ▼ What ideas do you have to put God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit first in your life?

Encourage the children to take home their pom-pom and show their families how important it is to put God first in our lives.

T *Transition times vary, so plan accordingly. Clean up may only require a short warning, while hand washing may require more warning and time. Use a song or short activity to signal the change.*





Celebrating God's Grace

F LG B MS C FA

Remind the children that Martha and Mary both loved Jesus and showed their devotion to him in different ways. Tell the children that they will have an opportunity to serve one another. Invite the children to choose if they would like to prepare a snack for the group or prepare a skit or puppet show retelling the story for the group.

After allowing time to prepare the snack and skit, bring the group together. Have the children share their skit and enjoy the snack that was prepared. Celebrate the importance of sharing all our gifts with God and one another.

Praying God's Grace

L C

Acknowledge that we all have busy days. Ask the children to name the kinds of things they do each day (*sleeping, eating, doing sports, doing homework, spending time with family or friends, and so forth*).

Hand out large sheets of construction paper. Invite the children to place the construction paper horizontally and draw a sun in the upper left corner of the paper and a moon in the upper right corner of the paper to represent a day. Provide copies of **GN 2** and look at the different activities together. Ask them to choose six of the activities that they typically do each day and color those pictures. After they have colored their pictures, have them cut them apart and glue them to their "day" (construction paper).

Invite the children to share their "day." If it is not mentioned, remind the children that spending time with God each day is important. Ask them how they can spend time with God and have them add a picture or draw one of their own. Suggest that they could talk with God each morning and evening, or even at times throughout the day, by saying a prayer at those times.

Extra Activity

Talk with the children about ideas for spending time with God. Look back at the ideas on the newsprint form "Reflecting on God's Grace." Suggest that it is often easier to have time for God on Sundays at church and harder to find time during the weekdays.

Invite the children to make door hangers for their family members that both remind them to make time for God and give them permission to ask not to be disturbed for a time while they do so.

Hand out copies of **GN 3** on card stock and have the children color and decorate the door hangers. Instruct them to fold along the dotted line and glue the halves together. Then cut out the door hangers. Assist younger children with cutting as needed. Encourage them to make one for each family member.



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so that you can provide them with the link to www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads, where they can download coloring pages, *Grace Sightings*, audio stories, and songs (see p. vii).

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

Invite the children to gather and lead them in cleaning up the worship space.

Sing “I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me”—**SCM 23**. Invite the children to come up with movements for live, work, pray, and sing. Ask: What other things related to the story can we do so that God can use us in God’s work? Try to add stanzas to the song using the words that the children come up with. Some words could be “listen” and “serve.”

Encourage the children to find times to listen to God’s Word and to do God’s work during the week.

Send each child with a blessing: “(Name), God has given you amazing gifts. Be blessed, and be a blessing to others.”

Word Bank

BETHANY
BREAD
DISCIPLE
FEET
GUESTS
HOME
JESUS

JOURNEYS
LISTEN
MARTHA
MARY
NEAR
OLIVE OIL
SISTERS

TIME
TWO
VISIT
WASH
WELCOMED
WOMEN
WORK

