

Mary and Martha

for toddlers



Mary and Martha

Here are some ideas for your toddler group based on the story of Mary and Martha. Busy parents of young children are used to prioritising! This session brings out the importance of making time for God.

Ready:

Put out any play-kitchen or household toys for the children to pretend they are getting ready for a special visitor. Alternatively, bring cake mixture for them to dollop into cup cases to be baked during the story and decorated afterwards. Your church minister might make the point that, however busy we are, we need to nurture our spiritual lives and those of our children. You could use two girl dolls as props in the story and the letter 'M' written on card. If available, bring a teaching clock for the prayer.

Teddy:

Dress Teddy in a child's apron and give him a wooden spoon as if he is busy baking! You could also display some tried and tested recipes for cooking with toddlers or cookbooks of toddler meals to help parents.

Go:

Your aim is to show that God wants us to make time to speak and listen to him every day.

Storytelling tips:

As a way in to the story, play 'Busy Bees'. Everyone moves around the room to music, flapping their elbows and saying "Buzz, buzz!" When the music stops, ask them to mime sweeping the floor, stirring a pan, hanging the washing, etc, ending with saying a prayer. Engage the adults by asking them to practice the responses in the story and to listen out for the cues.

You can find the Bible story in Luke 10:38–42



The story: Make time for Jesus!

Leader:

It's story time, everybody! Today's Bible story is all about two sisters ... (*show dolls*). Their names both began with an 'M'. Does anyone here have a name that begins with 'M'?

Well, these two sisters were called Mary and Martha. But they were as different as could be! Mary never seemed to be in a hurry. She always found time to say "hello" to a friend ... (*invite everyone to do so*).

All:

Hello, hello!

Leader:

... and she always found time to smell the flowers... (*sniff*) oh, lovely... or to sit and watch a cloud float across the sky.

But Martha was much too busy for that! She was always sweeping the floor, or hanging up the washing, or cooking the supper. Everyone said, "Martha is *as busy as a bee*."

All:

Buzz, buzz!

Leader:

She never stops!

One day, Mary looked out of the window and saw their friend Jesus coming along the road towards their house.

"Martha!" she cried. "Here comes Jesus! I wonder if he's going to tell us a story!"

"What? Did you say Jesus is coming?" asked Martha. "Quick! Fetch some water, Mary. I'd better make a special supper."

Well, Mary got on with her work quietly. But Martha dashed about the house, *as busy as a bee*.

All:

Buzz, buzz!

Leader:

She lit the lamps, and chopped the vegetables and brought out all her *pots and pans* ...

All:

Crash, bang, wallop!

Leader:

"Where's Martha?" asked Jesus when he arrived.

"Oh, she's cooking the supper," said Mary. "You know Martha. She's always *as busy as a bee*."

All:

Buzz, buzz!

Leader:

Jesus washed his hands and his face in some water. Then he sat down for a rest. "Would you like to hear a story?" he asked Mary. What do you think she said?

All:

Yes, please!

Leader:

That's right! Mary sat at Jesus' feet and listened to his story all about how much God loved her.

In the kitchen, Martha was stirring the saucepans over the fire. She could hear Jesus talking, but the fire *crackled* so loudly...

All:

Crackle, crackle!

Leader:

And the stew *bubbled* so noisily...

All:

Bubble, bubble!

Leader:

... that she couldn't hear the story at all.

Martha's face grew redder and redder as she bent over her cooking. Suddenly, the stew in one of the pans boiled right up, splashing over the sides and into the fire!

Then Martha did something very unusual. She stopped work and she marched over to where Jesus was sitting.

"Jesus!" she said. "I'm doing all the work while Mary sits listening to a story. It's not fair! Tell her to come and help me!"

"Oh, Martha, Martha," said Jesus kindly, taking her hand. "You are always *as busy as a bee*."

All:

Buzz, buzz!

Leader:

"Don't worry about cooking me a special supper. Leave the *crackling* fire..."

All:

Crackle, crackle!

Leader:

Leave the *bubbling* stew...

All:

Bubble, bubble!

Leader:

Leave all those *pots and pans*...

All:

Crash, bang, wallop!

Leader:

"They'll be plenty of time for all that tomorrow, when I've gone. Right now, it's much more important to come and sit down with Mary and listen to my story," Jesus said.

So that's what Martha did. And everyone said, "Jesus must be a very special person. Even Martha stops work to listen when he tells a story!"

Prayer:

You could lead into the prayer by using a teaching clock to talk about the different times of day and by singing *Hickory, dickory, dock*. (Adults might be amused by the fact that some people say they are too busy not to pray!)

Dear God,

Thank you for all the different times of day:

For playtime and story time;

For breakfast, lunch and teatime;

For waking-up time, bath time and **bed time**.

When we are busy, please help us to remember prayer time.

Thank you that we can talk to you and listen to you at any time!

Amen

Party bag:

Give parents the 'What's the time?' activity sheet to take home if you would like to encourage them to start a regular prayer time with their toddlers.

What's the time?



When your toddler has coloured the clock face, help them to cut out the hands and to fix them in place with a split pin.

At bedtime, encourage them to tell God the story of their day. "At eight o'clock, I ate my breakfast," etc. Remind them how much God loves his children to talk to them. Have a moment of quiet to listen to God, too!

It's prayer time!





Playtime



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