



MARY AND MARTHA MEET JESUS

MEETING AIM

To explore the different ways people respond when meeting Jesus.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 10:38-42

BACKGROUND

In this series three people who met Jesus knew him well, while two probably only met him once. They all spoke to him and he to them. Each session, talk about the conversation the people had with Jesus, then talk about what we say to Jesus and how we say it.

Mary and Martha, with their brother, were Jesus' close friends. When Lazarus fell ill, they called for him immediately (John 11). Both sisters were clearly comfortable in Jesus' company.

STARTING OUT

5 MINS

Start your time together with some simple refreshments and chat about what it means to have a special friend. What special things can you do with them?

PLAY

10 MINS

You will need: a photograph album or your digital gallery

Ask what it's like to have brothers or sisters. These could be brothers or sisters in any part of your family. What are the good and bad things about being a sibling? Show photos of sisters in your family, alternatively you could use a celebrity family or one in the church with at least two sisters. What is their age difference? What's it like being an older or younger sister?

BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

You will need: a play kitchen set of saucepans, cups etc; bowl of water; beakers; ingredients for making a drink such as fruit, flavoured water, lemonade, ice-cubes; non-plastic straws

Arrange the kitchen set in front of you, so that you can make sound effects indicated – the whole family could make the sounds together. Tell this story: Jesus and his friends travelled around

the country meeting up with people and talking with them. Jesus did have a few special friends, people he could relax with, people who welcomed him into their home. Martha and Mary, with their brother Lazarus, were that sort of friend.

One day, there was a knock on the door. *Rat-a-tat-tat*. Martha ran to answer it and...it was Jesus! *"Wow! Mary! Mary! It's Jesus!"* She was so pleased to welcome him. He was her favourite guest. She made sure his feet were washed after walking on the dusty road. She did the same for his disciples. *Washing feet sound*. She made sure everyone was comfortable. *Busy sounds*.

"Let me get you something to drink," she said. By now, she was getting flustered. *Flustered breath sounds*. She was pleased to welcome Jesus, but he had come with all his disciples. They all needed to be looked after. There were so many of them.

Pause for children to mix a drink and drink it.

Martha's guests were hungry, so she had to cook them a meal. They had such big appetites. Martha began to panic. *Drop saucepan lids, cutlery etc making a clatter*.

Martha looked around for her sister. "Mary. Where's Mary? Why isn't she helping me? Surely she isn't with the Jesus and all his disciples!" Martha bustled into the room where Jesus was. There, sitting right in front of Jesus, was her sister Mary.

Martha tried to catch Mary's eye. *Waving arms, tapping foot*. But Mary was concentrating on Jesus.

"Mary!" Martha whispered. But Mary never heard. *Waving hands, whispering sounds*.

"Mary! Mary!" *Louder whispering sounds*. Martha frowned. She turned to Jesus and blurted out crossly: "Jesus, tell Mary to come and help me. Doesn't it bother you that she's left me with all this work to do!" *Tutting sounds*.

Everyone in the room looked at Martha, including Mary. Then everyone looked at Jesus to see what he would say. Would he be cross with Mary for being lazy? Would he be cross with Martha for interrupting him?

Jesus turned to Martha and smiled. "It's OK, Martha! I can see you're worried about many things. You've got lots to do and I'm grateful. But it's OK for Mary to listen to me. That's the right thing for her

to do now."

Martha knew Jesus had understood her. She didn't need to be anxious. Maybe she could stay to listen. She piled everything up in the kitchen. *Pile up kitchenware quietly so as not to disturb Jesus*.

CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Chat about the story using some of these questions:

- What tidying-up jobs need doing in your home?
- Choose one job and plan how you will do it: how long it will take, who will do what?
- How would you feel if you were doing this job and were working harder than anyone else?
- How might Martha have felt, with all the food and drink preparation, probably at short notice?

CREATIVE TIME

10 MINS

You will need: paper; card for an invitation; felt-tip pens

Plan for Jesus to visit your home. What would you want Jesus to do? Where would you want him to go? What would you give him to eat? Create a card inviting him to come to your home, or draw the meal you would make him. (You could create this meal on a paper plate, sticking shapes onto it.)

PRAYER

5 MINS

Comment that Jesus wasn't cross with Martha or Mary. He praised Mary for listening to him. He understood how worried Martha was. Talk with Jesus about things that worry you. Ask your family what Jesus might say to you?

Mary might have sung the song 'Who I am' by Awesome Cutlery. The first line of the chorus addressed to God is: "I want to know who I am, So I'll listen to you!"

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For the rest of this month's sessions go to youthandchildrens.work/together.



THE FOREIGNER MEETS JESUS

MEETING AIM

To hear about the faith of the woman who shouted at Jesus to heal her daughter and think about how we can actually talk with Jesus.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 15:21-28

BACKGROUND

Jews at the time of Jesus looked down on those who lived to the north of Israel. They were foreigners who did not worship the true God. Yet Jesus spoke with this woman, a mother with an embarrassing daughter. The daughter may have been demon-possessed, had a mental illness or personality disorder. The woman's faith is remarkable.

STARTING OUT

5 MINS

Start your time together with some simple refreshments. Ask the family to lie down very still to think about a recent journey they took. How did they travel? What vehicles or places did they pass? What did they take with them? Who did they people they go with?

Encourage them to breath smoothly, through their nose, out through their mouth. No one should speak. Sit up and ask what it was like not to speak at all. Did they want to speak, or did they even think of speaking? What other times are they silent?

PLAY

10 MINS

Play a simple version of Chinese whispers. The family should stand in a line and whisper a message from one person to the next. How different is the message by the end of the line?

BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

You will need: volunteers help act out this story

Appoint someone in your family to be Jesus and someone else to be the foreign woman. Everyone else can be the disciples. Tell this story: Jesus was heading towards the cities on the coast, where lots of foreigners lived. Suddenly

a woman stood there, shouting out loudly: "Lord, Son of David, help me! My daughter's very sick. She keeps shouting out rubbishy words. Help her!" *Jesus and friends walk around the room and are suddenly stopped by the member of your family playing the woman, shouting from the other side of the room.*

Jesus was silent. He didn't say anything but kept on walking. The woman began to follow Jesus and his disciples. She kept on shouting loudly: "Lord, Son of David, help me! My daughter's very sick. She's keeps shouting out rubbishy words. Help her!" *The woman should carry on shouting as the others walk away.*

Jesus was silent and didn't say anything. His disciples began to crossly and loudly tell Jesus to send her away. She was a nuisance. What's more, she was one of these foreigners. *Your family should act this out.*

Jesus said: "I haven't really come to help people like this woman." Notice, Jesus didn't send her away.

The woman knelt in front of Jesus. "Please help me, Lord," she said quietly.

Jesus looked at her and said: "I haven't really come for people like you. You are not one of God's people – a Jew."

"But," the woman replied, "no one feeds stray dogs. Yet they find and eat enough scraps and crumbs to stop them being hungry."

Jesus was amazed that the woman had answered him like that. She was saying that even the crumbs of Jesus' power would be enough to heal her daughter. She was a foreigner, not a Jew, but she really believed in Jesus. She had more faith than most of the people who listened to Jesus.

Immediately her daughter was better. She no longer shouted out rubbishy words. Jesus had healed her.

CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Chat about the story using some of these questions:

- In the story who was silent, who shouted loudly, who spoke quietly?
- Why do you think that Jesus wanted to help her?
- How can we speak with Jesus? What different ways can we use?

When might we use all these different ways?

CREATIVE TIME

10 MINS

You will need: a packet of biscuits, sheets of paper towel, wool, plate, teaspoons

Give each child a sheet of paper towel and wool. Crush the packet of biscuits and empty onto the plate. With a teaspoon, your family members should scoop up broken biscuits, place in the centre of the paper, then gather up the four corners to make a little bag and tie around the 'neck' with wool. Talk about scraps and remind the children that if Jesus just touched someone, that was enough for them to be healed. This mother really had understood that.

As you work together, chat more about the story and what the children think of what happened. The way Jesus acts might appear surprising to some – wonder together about what is happening.

PRAYER

5 MINS

Talk with Jesus in different ways – eg children stand either side of the room and, in turn, loudly call out their thanks to Jesus; curl up in a little ball and whisper to him, so no one else but Jesus can hear; kneel in a circle, passing an object round so each child, when holding it, can make a request to Jesus in an ordinary voice – see what children suggest.

Conclude by singing a prayerful song.

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ZACCHAEUS MEETS JESUS

MEETING AIM

To discover how talking with Jesus changes the way we see other people. He helps us to help others and put wrong relationships right.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 19:1-19

BACKGROUND

Tax collectors really were despised. Try to explain something of Zacchaeus' lostness and what it's like to be lost. But meeting Jesus was transformative for him and talking with him changed his attitude to others. He wanted to put things right.

STARTING OUT

5 MINS

Start your time together with some simple refreshments. Talk about what it is like to lose something, especially if it is special to you. How do you feel as you search for it? What about if anyone has ever been lost?

PLAY

10 MINS

You will need: 16 coins

Hide the coins around the room and tell the children you've lost them. Can they find them? Once all the coins have been found, play again if the children are interested.

BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

You will need: 16 coins from 'Play'; a pile of cutlery (or household possessions) that can be divided equally in half
Pile up the coins in front of you and tell the story:

In the town called Jericho there was a man no one liked. This was not because he was short and not because his name sounds funny: Zack-ee-us. Try saying it slowly, then quickly, in a sing-song way, then four times quickly! No, it was because he was a cheat and took people's money, which made him richer than most people. Count together how much money you've got in coins. Also, he worked for the Roman authorities

and no one liked them.

One day he heard Jesus was coming to town. But how was he going to see Jesus if he had to stand among people in the crowd who hated him? Climbing a tree might be the answer!

Being short, Zacchaeus couldn't see anything from the back of the crowd. But close by there was a sycamore-fig tree. It had low-down branches to help Zacchaeus climb up higher.

He could hear Jesus coming closer. The crowd were making such a noise. Zacchaeus scrambled up the tree as high as he could. *Jingle the coins in his pocket, talk about skills needed to climb a tree.* He looked down on the crowd below. He could see Jesus coming closer. Then Jesus stopped...just underneath the tree. Zacchaeus held his breath. Jesus looked up into the tree. All the crowd looked up into the tree.

"Zacchaeus, come down immediately!" Jesus called up. "I want to come to your house today!"

Zacchaeus scrambled down as quickly as he could. *Talk about the challenges of coming down a tree and not falling out.* The crowd loudly grumbled that Jesus had invited himself to Zacchaeus' home. But Zacchaeus never heard their muttering. He was only listening to Jesus.

He gave Jesus plenty to eat and drink. After their long conversation, Zacchaeus knew he had to change the way he lived. He realised God didn't like the way he cheated and told lies. God didn't like how he treated people badly. Instead, Zacchaeus wanted to put things right. He wanted to be like Jesus.

"Look, Jesus," he said. "From now on anyone I've cheated I'm going to give back four times as much as I took from them. And I am going to give half of my possessions to the poor, people who really need it." *Do some sums by dividing the coins into four piles and the cutlery into half.*

When Jesus heard what Zacchaeus intended to do, he said something extraordinary. "Today this man has been saved. The Son of Man (that was how Jesus sometimes described himself) has come to seek and save (rescue) people who are lost."

CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Chat about the story using some of these questions:

- What would the people have thought when they heard Zacchaeus was going to share his wealth?
- What would the people have thought when they heard he was going to put right the wrong things he'd said and done. Would you believe it was possible?
- After talking with Jesus, Zacchaeus could see he'd lived like a lost person. But now he knew he belonged to Jesus, he wanted to be like him. He thought about other people instead of himself. Maybe talk about Jesus' story of the lost sheep and what Jesus meant about people being lost, faraway from God.

CREATIVE TIME

10 MINS

You will need: little round coin-shaped biscuits; water icing; edible decorations

Make some edible 'coins' using small round biscuits, decorated elaborately with coloured water icing and edible decorations. Children can share these afterwards, as Zacchaeus did.

PRAYER

5 MINS

You will need: 'Father you are King of Heaven' by Awesome Cutlery

When we follow Jesus, we are no longer lost. Think of people who need someone to help them, then talk with Jesus about what the children can do to help them.

After meeting Jesus, Zacchaeus could have said about himself the words in the chorus: "So I'll stop trusting in myself and pray to God instead." Listen to or sing this song, asking God to help us pray and trust him because we can't do things on our own. Zacchaeus discovered how true this is.

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MARY MAGDALENE MEETS JESUS

MEETING AIM

To watch grieving Mary Magdalene in the garden where, to her amazement, she meets Jesus. He speaks to her. She speaks to him.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 28:1-10; John 20:1-18

BACKGROUND

You will need lots of greenery, flowers, twigs (especially forked twigs), grass cuttings etc. Images from the internet could be a substitute. John is the only Gospel to record that Jesus' burial was in a garden tomb and Mary mistook him for a gardener. (John may be comparing Jesus with the first Adam.)

STARTING OUT

5 MINS

Start your time together with some simple refreshments and chat about the parks, gardens, countryside, outdoor space children have been in over the last few weeks, especially what trees, flowers and vegetation they've seen and touched. What gardening tools does a gardener use? If you could only have one tool, what would it be?

PLAY

10 MINS

You will need: a wild flower or tree book, or internet images or lots of greenery (see 'Background'); bowls or buckets

Before the session, place greenery all around your space, give the children a bowl of some sort for them to collect it all, then sort it into leaves, twigs etc ready for the story. If the children are interested, play this game once or twice more.

BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

You will need: greenery from 'Play'; flowers; a large flat stone or stone-shaped card; a tray; two pieces of cloth; Playmobil or Duplo figures

Layout the greenery on a tray. As you tell the first part of the story help the children to create a cave with greenery on the tray. Place a card 'stone' over the entrance,

with two pieces of cloth inside, close together. Move the Playmobil or Duplo figures around as you tell this story:

On Friday, Jesus had died on the cross. As it was getting dark some of his friends hurriedly took his body down from the cross, wrapped it in cloth and laid it in a cave in a garden. A huge stone was rolled over the entrance. No one could get in and nothing could get out. The friends were terribly afraid and sad. They hurried home.

Early on the Sunday morning, just as light began to creep across the sky, Mary Magdalene crept into the garden. Mary loved Jesus. He'd made her well again. She brought sweet-smelling perfumes to anoint his body. But when she got to the entrance of the tomb, she saw the huge stone had been rolled away. Jesus' body must have been stolen! Move the stone.

Mary panicked. She ran to find Jesus' disciples. "They've taken Jesus away!" she told them breathlessly.

Two of the disciples ran to find out what had happened. The cave was empty. Just flat cloths lying there, the ones that had been wrapped around his body. They rushed back to tell the others.

But Mary returned to the garden. She was crying. Jesus had gone. She wanted to show him once more how much she loved him by leaving the sweet-smelling perfumes. She stooped to look inside the cave. Wow! Two bright angels sat where Jesus' body had been – not side by side, but one where his head had been, one by his feet. They asked: "Why are you crying?"

Hearing footsteps behind her, she turned round. Through her tear-filled eyes she saw a man standing there. It must be the gardener, she thought. This man asked her the same question. "Why are you crying?"

Mary said: "If you have taken away Jesus' body, tell me where you have put him so that I can go and get him."

The gardener paused just a moment, then simply said: "Mary!" Mary's eyes opened wide. Her mouth opened wider. Only one person said her name like that. This was Jesus!

"Teacher!" Mary gasped. Mary was so excited and shocked at the same time. She raced to tell the other disciples all she had seen, and all Jesus had said. Jesus was alive!

CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Chat about the story using some of these questions:

- What was it about the man that made Mary think he was a gardener?
- Why didn't she immediately recognise Jesus?
- If you'd been Mary, what would you have thought and felt when you thought Jesus' body had gone and then when you knew it was Jesus, alive again? What would you have said to Jesus?
- What question do you want to ask Jesus?

CREATIVE RESPONSE

10 MINS

You will need: twigs with a fork; leaves; flowers; feathers; wool; ribbons; tissue paper; an empty bottle for each child

Wrap or weave the wool loosely around the 'fork prongs', then insert flowers, leaves, feathers to hang from the wool to make a wild-garden work of art. Stand the twig in a bottle. As you work, chat about Mary's story, continuing the discussion from 'Chatting together'.

PRAYER

5 MINS

You will need: greenery

Mary knew it was Jesus when he said her name. He knows everyone of us by name.

Stand in a circle, give each child a piece of greenery to hold. Imagine you are all in a garden and Jesus is standing in the middle of the circle. He calls each one of us by name and tells us he loves us. Just listen: call out the name of each child, not necessarily in the order that they are standing, and say for example: "Sam, Jesus loves you!"

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