

Bible Study: “Just Listening” by Kaely Miller

MATERIALS AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

Contact students prior to class to portray the following characters, and ask them to prepare to present the drama.

CHARACTERS

Martha – (sister of Mary & Lazarus)

Mary – (sister of Martha & Lazarus)

Disciple – Male

Modern day person – Female

SESSION OUTLINE

FOCUS

Divide the class into pairs. Ask one in each pair to do the talking, and the other one to do the listening. At your signal, each pair does their thing—one person talking, the other listening. If the “talkers” need something to talk about, here are some suggestions:

“This is what I did today.”

“Let me tell you about my family...”

“Let me tell you about my school...”

When the pairs are done, ask the class: Who would make a better leader, a talker or a listener?

CONNECT WITH THE BIBLE

Present the drama based on Luke 10:38-42.

REFLECT

Discuss:

- 1 Why was it so radical for Mary to sit by the feet of Jesus?

(think about why it was so radical for any woman to sit by the feet of any rabbi)

- 2 What did Jesus mean by “only one thing is needed.” (when talking to Martha)
- 3 Why was Martha so upset that Mary wasn’t helping her?
- 4 If you were Martha, how would you have responded to Mary?
- 5 If you were a rabbi, how would you have responded to Mary?
- 6 What did Mary know that allowed her to be still in the presence of Jesus?
- 7 How does Jesus’ response to Mary’s decision give us direction for our lives?
- 8 How is listening part of the role of a leader?

RESPOND

Share this with the class: Whether or not you view yourself as a leader, there are people in your life who need your listening ear. Think about who those people are. Are you a good listener for them? Are you willing to work on your “listening ear”?

How do you listen to Jesus? Would you rather stay busy than to sit quietly with Jesus?

Challenge: For those youth who are willing to commit to it, offer this challenge: Spend 10 minutes every day for the next week listening to Jesus. Find a quiet place, still your heart and mind, and listen to what Jesus might say to you. Lectio divina is a good way to practice this listening discipline. (You can Google “Lectio Divina” for more information on this spiritual discipline.)

Close with a prayer.

DRAMA BASED ON LUKE 10:38-42

Martha – (exasperated and stressed)

He was here. In our house. And there was so much to be done. The food had to be prepared and the men had to be served. I was doing as much as I could - by myself, that is. Where was my sister when I needed her? She was over there, by his *feet*. His feet! The place reserved for men, the place only for his disciples. And there she was, just sitting and listening. As if she didn’t even care that there were things to be done. As if she didn’t even *care* that that wasn’t where she belonged.

Mary – (enthralled, fascinated)

He was here. In our house. And there was so much to be heard. His words were so...real. Hearing him speak was like something I’d never heard before. It was almost frightening, hearing the intensity of his truth. As if he knew something we didn’t. As if he could see something we couldn’t. And yet...and yet his voice was so full of love, so full of goodness. How could I ignore that?

Disciple – (disbelief)

We were there. In their house. And there was so much to be learned. As a disciple, traveling with Jesus, hearing his words, seeing his actions, and then being told to do the same - it was all so much. We stopped in Bethany where these women - Martha and Mary - lived. And they opened their home to us and we stayed with them. Martha was a good Jewish woman - she was preparing the food and making the home ready for us. But Mary - *Mary* - she was there, at the Lord's feet, listening to him as we were listening. Acting as she was a *disciple*. Imagine that, a woman being a disciple. *A woman*. Women aren't allowed to study the Scriptures, or have public discussions with men. But this woman was listening at the feet of Jesus.

Martha – (reflective)

I wondered what Jesus was going to say. I wondered if he was going to rebuke her - if he was going to tell her to help me, like a good woman would. But when he didn't say a thing - when he almost *approved* her decision to go against tradition - I became frustrated. Why did I have to do all the preparations without even a glance from Mary? So I asked him, I said - "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself?" And I told him to have her help me.

Mary – (reflective)

As I sat at the feet of Jesus, I was so absorbed with his words. I didn't realize Martha was still preparing everything, I didn't know she was running around frantically, trying to get everything done. Maybe I should have helped, but his words were so honest and pure. How could I ignore his teaching, how could I pretend like there was anything else to do but listen? But then Martha said to him, "Tell her to help me!"

Disciple – (reflective)

The other disciples and I were wondering what Mary was doing. I mean, we'd seen Jesus talk to women before, women no one else would ever even look at. We knew he loved everyone. But still, tradition is tradition, and women were not disciples. Then we saw Martha, who almost seemed exasperated, and she asked the Lord to have Mary help her. And we thought surely, *surely* Mary would be put in her place.

Martha – (confused)

But Jesus said "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed."

Mary – (pondering)

But then Jesus said, "Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Disciple – (disbelief)

But then Jesus said, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Martha – (awe)

He affirmed her. He affirmed her for being still - and just listening.

Mary – (awe)

He affirmed me. He affirmed me sitting there - and just listening.

Disciple – (awe)

He affirmed her. He affirmed her being at his feet - and just listening.

(pause) Martha, Mary and the Disciple step aside, then the modern day person steps forward

Modern day person

This woman who sat at the feet of Jesus and just listened to his teachings—she was quiet in the presence of Christ, when she was supposed to be preparing food, when she was supposed to be serving men. She just sat by Jesus and listened to him. And I wondered why - why would this woman just sit there? Why would she chose to go against tradition? What was so important to her?

(pause)

I guess I still wonder...

(pause)

Maybe...maybe she knew something I don't.