

**Chapter 6**  
**Lesson Plan Enrichment Ideas**  
**Misery Wants Company**  
***Jesus and Martha***

***Warm Up***

Can you think of a time when you were busy serving and felt the sting of a lack of appreciation? What were the circumstances? How did you react?

—or—

To which sister did you relate best? Why do you think you resonated with that woman?

***Things to teach for enrichment***

1. Jesus did not accept the standard first century attitudes toward and treatment of women. In first century Israel:

- Women were not disciples, did not participate in theological discussions, or even hang out with the men. They kept to their place in the kitchen, serving quietly. How is Mary's place at Jesus' feet a radical departure from the norm?
- One first century rabbi wrote the Scriptures should be burned rather than entrusted to a woman. Read Luke 8:1-3. What was unusual about this?
- Jesus had a practice of challenging women to think more deeply about God. He went to extraordinary measures to ensure that women heard and understood theology.
  - He taught where women might conveniently and discreetly overhear, visiting places where women commonly gathered.
  - He taught them openly about the Law on the same matters as He did His male disciples.
  - He used metaphors taken from a woman's experience to draw them in (Luke 5:36, 15:8-11, Matthew 13:33, 25:1-13, etc.).
  - He engaged women on serious theological conversations (John 11:20-27, John 4:7-26).
  - His passion for all of His disciples was that they would enjoy an intimate and meaningful relationship with God (John 17:3).

2. The story of Martha underscores the futility of works when done in their own merit. It is all about motivation and where we have fixed our gaze.

When we serve in response to our passion for Him, it won't matter if we don't receive recognition. We won't compare our service to others, because we aren't doing it to be the best. We won't complain when it gets hard, because our goal is not success. Everything changes when we love God first. When that is our foundation, service will never be a burden. It is merely an outflow of the relationship.

Do you ever evaluate your spirituality on the basis of accomplishment? How does this story help you reprioritize your aspirations? What really matters to God? How can we reflect this even as we serve?

3. Read John 15:1-11. What do you think Jesus meant by abiding in Him? How does that look on a practical level? If He is the Vine, is He dependent on us for anything? If we are the branches, can we produce fruit apart from Him? How would obedience to this command spare us from the misery Martha experienced that day? In her zeal to serve Jesus, Martha was actually hindering His sustenance in her life. How can we avoid that trap? Read Ephesians 3:16-20 and Philippians 4:13.

4. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-7. Why are our spiritual gifts given to us? (Hint: they are not for our own benefit!) Why then is it important not to look to our service for a sense of significance? From where should our sense of significance come? Read Ephesians 1:12-21.

5. Compare the progression of faith as exhibited in both Mary (mother of Jesus) at Cana and Martha at Lazarus's funeral.

<p>Wedding at Cana</p> <p>John 2:1-11</p>	<p>Resurrection of Lazarus</p> <p>John 11:5-6, 11-27</p>
<p>Open-ended suggestion made: out of wine</p> <p>Expression of faith: “Whatever he says, do it.” (Hope implied Jesus will act despite the hopelessness of the situation.)</p> <p>Glory: v. 11 the miracle “manifested his glory”</p> <p>Jesus can only act as the Father wills v.4</p> <p>Jesus seems to reject the request v. 4</p> <p>Jesus then does the miracle as if he had not rejected the suggestion v. 7-9</p>	<p>If you had been here, my brother would not have died</p> <p>“Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.”</p> <p>v. 4 “that the Son of God may be glorified by it.”</p> <p>Jesus delayed out of obedience (v. 5,6 delayed even though he loved them)</p> <p>v.6 Jesus delays coming—rejecting the request</p> <p>Jesus raises Lazarus v. 41-44</p>

Both narratives involve women whom John portrays as being in the process of learning Jesus’ true nature and becoming His true disciples.