

WEEK 1 LESSON GUIDE

BLAST OFF

BIG IDEA

We can spend time with God.

BIBLE

Jesus Visits Mary and Martha:
Luke 10:38–42; Colossians 4:2–6

ABOUT THIS WEEK

Before every mission in space, the crew spends a lot of time together to train, build friendships, and focus on the mission. This week, we'll take a look at the time Jesus visited Mary and Martha's home for a meal.

Instead of squeezing in time with Jesus once things settled down, Mary chose to focus on what was important and sit with Jesus, showing us how **we can spend time with God**.

LARGE GROUP TIME

Hey, space cadets! We're heading to outer space today! That's because we're talking about how to "launch" our faith in Jesus to new heights. Today, we'll talk about how we can know God more. Are you ready? Three ... two ... one ... *blast off!*

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY | Paper Rocket Races

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you'll need masking tape, paper, and markers or crayons. Before your program, tape at least four parallel lines on the floor, each about three feet apart, to create a "launch site." When kids arrive, give them each a sheet of paper and markers or crayons, and help them make (and color) their own "rockets" (paper airplanes). When they're done, let each kid stand at the starting line and toss their rocket as far as they can. Give them points based on how far their rocket flew.
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Turn this activity into a tournament by creating multiple "launch sites," dividing your preteens into pairs, and using a bracket to create a tournament with multiple rounds and only one winner.
 - ✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** If you haven't already, make sure you have a sensory bin available to help kids stay calm and focused. This week's games and activities get kids moving around and making noise, which can be overstimulating. Learn how to build a sensory bin [here](#).
- Your rockets went pretty far into space! Today we're talking about how what we can do to go farther in our spiritual voyage with God.

ACTIVITY | Asteroid Toss

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you'll need aluminum foil and two baskets that are small enough for a kid to hold. Before your program, make at least 30 "asteroids" by crumpling up aluminum foil. When you're ready

to play, set your baskets at the front of the room. Choose two pairs of kids to play with each pair being a team. Give one kid from each team a basket to hold. Give the other players a stack of at least fifteen asteroids. To play, separate the team members by at least fifteen feet (about four and a half meters), and give teams 60 seconds to toss and catch as many asteroids in their baskets as possible. Repeat the game as many times as you'd like with new players.

✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** Simplify this activity for kids with certain kinds of disabilities by having them all make their own asteroids and then toss them into one basket.

- When you're blasting off into space, you'd better watch out for asteroids—those big rocks that float through space.
- Today's Bible story is going to remind us that sometimes things get in the way of spending time with God.

POLL | Let's Talk About Space Food

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Poll your kids' responses to the following questions. You could ask them to respond by raising their hands, cheering, or running to different areas of the room—a different area for every possible answer.

✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Add an activity for your preteens using baby food. Call the baby food "astronaut food," and have your preteens compete to see who can name the most flavors correctly.

- **Does outer space sound more scary or cool?**
- **Would you ever want to be an astronaut?**
- With so many asteroids floating around, outer space sounds sort of like a scary place, but it sounds pretty cool, too. But there's one problem—when you're an astronaut, you're really far away from all of your favorite foods!
 - **If you were an astronaut, which Earth food would you miss most?**
 - **If you were in outer space for a whole year, which person from Earth would you miss most?**
 - **When you finally came back to Earth after a whole year in space, what kinds of food would you want at your Welcome Home party?**
- We might not be going to space anytime soon, but we can still make the most of what we do to spend our time and who we spend it with!

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | Luke 10:38–42 (Jesus Visits Mary and Martha)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the Bible passage as though you are reading an astronaut's mission log.
- Hello, future astronauts! As part of training, astronauts regularly make logs of everything they do so that we will have the most accurate data for how we will do once we are in outer space. By looking at the exercises or experiments we did yesterday, we will know how to improve today.
- There's a place we can go if we want this kind of information about our life with God ... Scripture! There is so much to learn from the stories of Jesus' time on Earth—sort of like his mission log! So, it's time to *blast off* into the Bible!
- **Let's see the entry from Luke 10:38–42.**
- So if I'm reading this right, it seems Jesus went to Mary and Martha's house to spend time with his friends but one of his friends, Martha, was super distracted. Not in a bad way, either—she was making preparations as any good host would do after inviting people over to their home. What was worse was that she was doing everything all by herself because her sister, Mary, was hanging out with Jesus the whole time.
 - **How would you have reacted if you were Martha?**

● How would you have responded if you were Mary?

- As an astronaut, I could understand why Martha was so frustrated. On a space mission, every single person needs to be pulling their weight, and in this Bible passage, it seems Mary wasn't helping at all.
- But then Jesus didn't tell Mary to go help Martha. And Jesus wasn't upset with Martha, either. Jesus reminded them that he didn't require a fancy meal and all the things Martha was concerned about. He just wanted them to choose spending time with him above everything else.
- Jesus knew both Mary and Martha's hearts and that they were acting out of love for him. Martha showed her love by trying to put together a wonderful meal. Mary showed her love by listening to everything Jesus said. While both of these things were important, Jesus was letting them know that he cared about each of them more than what they did for him!

BIG IDEA | We can spend time with God.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you'll need a [large cardboard rocket ship](#), extra cardboard, a [rocket launch sound effect](#), and paint (black, white, and gray). Before your program, paint the back of the rocket ship cutout black. When it's dry, add the Big Idea for this week in white paint. To reuse from week to week, consider using chalkboard paint and chalk markers. Cut the extra cardboard into large cloud shapes and paint them shades of gray. When you're ready to reveal the Big Idea, have kids shout, "Three ... two ... one ... blast off!" Then, play the rocket launch sound effect and have at least one volunteer run to the front of the room holding the cloud cutouts. Use the clouds to obscure the rocket ship while another volunteer turns the rocket ship so the Big Idea is facing out. Have your volunteers return to their seats and lower the volume of the sound effects.
- Today's Bible story can teach us something really important about how we can launch our faith in God to new heights. And that is ... **we can spend time with God!**

STORY | The Time I Got Distracted

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer to share a story) about some of the things that distract you from spending time with God.
 - ✦ **PRETEEN HACK:** Remind kids that today's Bible story is not necessarily about being more like Mary and less like Martha ... it's about recognizing that there are different ways to spend time with God. Preteens are usually swamped with extracurricular activities (whether sports or video games) and might not know how to carve out time with God daily. Discuss with kids the various ways they can spend time with God, and they'd be surprised at how easily they can do it within their everyday routines!
- **What's one thing that distracts you from spending time with God?**
- We all have a lot of things going on in our lives. From school to lessons and practices, birthday parties and family gatherings, not to mention games we want to play and shows we want to watch ... there just doesn't seem to be enough hours in a day to get everything done.
- But spending time with God shouldn't be something we try to squeeze in when there's time. We need to move it to the top of our daily to-do list. **We can spend time with God** first and fit all the other things in after!

OBJECT LESSON | The Impossible Hole In The Potato

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you'll need a potato (the softer and smaller, the better) and a plastic straw (the sturdier, the better). Be sure to practice this experiment ahead of time! First, show your kids how the straw only bends when you try to stab a potato with a straw. Ask, "**Do you think I could ever stick this straw through this potato?**" Next, cover one end of the straw with your thumb and stab it swiftly into the potato. The straw will go right through! If you'd like, have a few kids take turns trying to stab straws through the potato.
- It might feel like finding time to spend time with God can feel impossible—almost as impossible as sticking a straw through a potato! But sometimes, things that seem really difficult aren't all that impossible. And

sometimes these seemingly impossible things can become as natural to us as breathing air!

- **What made the straw strong enough to go through the potato?** When I put my thumb over the end of this straw, the straw filled with air. The air made the straw strong.
- Air isn't something we really think about ... we just breathe. When we love Jesus, spending time with him is as easy and necessary as breathing.
- But sometimes, when we're panicked or stressed, we have to remind ourselves to take deep breaths, right? So, if you're ever swamped and find you're not spending enough time with God, you can stop what you're doing, take a deep breath, and talk to God!
- **Can you take a deep breath?** Do you feel all of that air filling up your lungs? Now, blow it out! Now, take another deep breath! Now, blow it out! Now say it with me ... **we can spend time with God.** And spending time with God makes us strong and ready to face impossible things!

SCRIPTURE | Colossians 4:2–6

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read the passage together.*
- The apostle Paul was someone who spent a lot of time with God. It was what kept him going from place to place, telling everyone about Jesus, even when his life was on the line.
- He would write letters to other followers of Jesus, urging them to spend time with God, too. In the letter we just read, he reminded them to “devote” themselves to prayer. To be devoted to something means making an effort to do that thing a lot. And being devoted to prayer is a great way to spend time with God.
- **But what can we pray about?** Paul answered that, also. He said to be “watchful” and “thankful”—that meant to pay attention to what’s going on around them and thank God for watching over us all. He even asks them to pray for him, too!
- That’s not all. Paul also gives them some tips on how to live their lives as people who love God. He says to be kind to people, in both actions and words. He knew that when we spend real time with God, our lives will show God’s love toward others as well.
- **We can spend time with God** and invite others to join us when we show them how awesome God is!

VIDEO | *Blast Off*, Episode 1

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week’s episode of [Grow TV](#).*

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

REFLECTION | Making Time For God

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your program, fill a large glass jar first with large space-themed toys (like [these planet-shaped stress balls](#)), then smaller space-themed toys (like [these astronaut figurines](#)), and lastly, sand to fill in all the gaps. After you show this to the kids, dump everything out and try to fill the jar up again with sand first, then with the small toys, and then with the large toys—they won’t all fit into the jar. Remove everything from the jar and place everything back in the correct order.*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Bring two preteens to the front and see if they (with the help of their peers) can figure out the secret to making everything fit before you demonstrate it.*
 - ✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** *Let your kids with disabilities touch the sand, hold the toys, and place the toys in the jar.*
- Sometimes, it’s hard to spend time with God because we spend all of our time doing other things we love! Sometimes, we go to sleep at night and think, “Oh no! I forgot to spend time with God today! But when would I have had time?”
 - The larger toys represent all the ways you can spend time with God.

- The small toys represent all the other things you normally do (like sleeping, eating, doing chores, or going to school).
- The sand represents everything else you like to do (like playing games, watching videos, or hanging out with friends).
- If you fill your time with the things that aren't necessary first (sand), you'll find that you're running out of room and time to do the things that are more important (small toys) and things that are really important (big toys), like spending time with God! But when you add the big stuff first, somehow everything just fits!
- It's the same way when it comes to spending time with God. When we make spending time with God a priority, we still have plenty of time to do all the other fun things we love to do! But when we don't make spending time with God a priority, we get to the end of the day and realize there's no time left for God!
- **How do you think you can organize your day so you can make sure God comes first?**

RESPONSE | My Time With God

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give every kid a copy of the My Time with God [printable](#) provided in your Week 1 folder.
 - ✳ **PRETEEN HACK:** Add a challenge and a prize to this activity. Challenge your preteens to choose a specific time they'll try spending time with God, and offer a prize if they come back with notes about how they spent time with God during the week.
- Since Jesus isn't here on Earth, we can't invite him over for dinner or listen to him speak, like Martha and Mary got to do. **So, how can we spend time with God?** We can do things like ...
 - Talking to God in prayer.
 - Reading the Bible.
 - Singing songs of praise.
 - Coming to church.
- But that's not all! You can spend time with God by appreciating the things God has made, drawing a picture, writing a letter, or even doing a dance.
- **Take this handout and write your name at the top, but don't color it yet.**
- You'll take this sheet home with you. Every day this week that you remember to spend time with God, color in one rocket ship. Next week, bring this worksheet back with you so we can see how many days you spent time with God.
- If you forget, that's okay! You don't have to color everything in to cover it up. But now you know you might have been distracted by other things, and you can try to spend more time with God next week!
- Because **we can spend time with God** every day.

MEMORY VERSE | Psalm 119:105 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Learn the memory verse together using any combination of the resources provided: [memory verse coloring page](#), [sign language motions](#), or choose from [this list](#) of our favorite memorization techniques!
- **"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path."**

PRAYER

- God, thank you for always making time for us and listening to us when we pray to you. Help us to spend time with you every day and not get distracted by other things that pull our attention away from you. We know that spending time with you is the most important thing we can do each day. Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

● SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS

- **Who were the two sisters in today's story?** *Mary and Martha.*
- **Why was Martha upset with Mary?** *Mary wasn't helping her with the preparations.*
- **Why do you think Jesus was happy with how Mary spent her time?** *Mary chose to be near Jesus and listen to his words.*
- **Read Colossians 4:2. What does it look like to be "devoted to prayer"?**

● APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- **What do you think it means to spend time with God?**
- **Can you name some things that distract you from spending time with God?**
- **What's one way you could spend more time with God this week?**

ACTIVITY | Your Day With God

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give every kid a [My Day With God printable](#) and markers or crayons. Have them color and write some ways they can spend time with God in each of these scenes. Afterward, have them cut each image and description out, arrange them around the outer rim of a paper plate, and glue or tape them. Have them make an arrow out of construction paper and attach it to the center of the plate using a brass fastener.
- Spending time with God doesn't have to be at one special time each day. **We can spend time with God** all day long, even as we do other things.
- **How can you spend time with God in each of these events?**