



4 Embrace Simplicity

As a spiritual discipline, embracing simplicity is about the intention of the act. If it is just to have a clean house, then it may look like simplicity, but it may not lead to connecting with God or keeping company with Jesus. If the goal is to love God and others and that leads to moving away from busyness and possessions, then simplicity is embraced as a spiritual practice. The focus is on what allows one time, energy, space, and quality to love God and others.

- Read *More!* by Tracey Corderoy (Tiger Tales, 2015) or watch the YouTube video “Ms. Tarrant: More! by Tracey Corderoy and Ill by Tim Warnes” (bit.ly/FMMoreBook, 5:33; stop at 4:44). Wonder what “less is more” means in the story and for you.
- Try the Five Daily Steps:
 1. Seek God: Where can you spend time with God today?
 2. Give Thanks: What are you grateful for today?
 3. Simplify. Don't Overcomplicate: What is needed for today?
 4. Let Go: What can you say, “It's OK if I don't have . . .” or “It's OK if I don't do . . .”?
 5. Give Thanks: again and again and again!
- Play a game with your family or friends. Give each person a simple item such as a piece of string, a box, a spoon, or a paper lunch bag. Each person thinks of three ways to play with their object and then the group brainstorms three more ways.

Dear God, embracing simplicity isn't easy. We want so many things, and we want to do so much. Help us remember what is most important is time spent with you. Help us get rid of any clutter in our lives that keeps us from you. Amen.

Unscramble the mixed-up words from the story. Use the circled letters to answer the question: Instead of working around the house, what did Mary do with Jesus?

O H M E



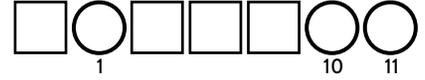
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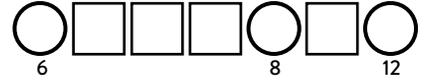
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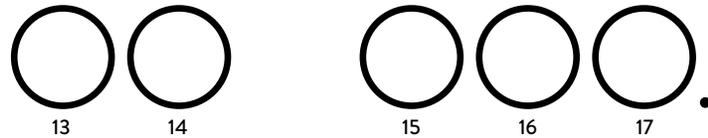
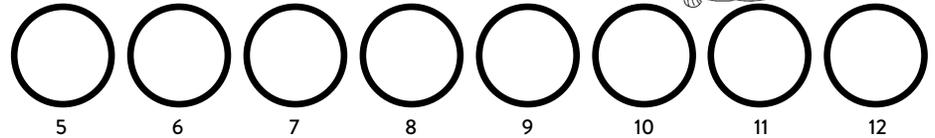
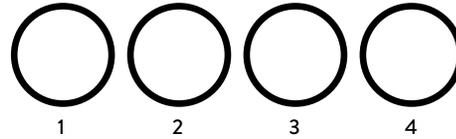
I I M N A E G



I N V D E I T



A H T R A M



home, disciples, today, imagine, invited, Martha. Mary listened to him.



BIBLE STORY

Based on Luke 10:38–42

“Jesus is in town!” an excited Martha exclaimed as she ran into the house carrying baskets full of food from the market. “Mary, we must begin cooking!” she called to her sister. A huge smile spread on Mary’s face. Jesus was here! But before she could say a word, Martha continued speaking. “I already invited Jesus to the house. I insisted he and his disciples come today for a decent homecooked meal. Can you imagine how tired Jesus must be, always traveling and taking care of others? Now he can be taken care of for a change.”

When Jesus and his disciples arrived, the sisters gladly welcomed them into their home. Martha and Mary were so happy they could spend time with Jesus. “Please sit down, Jesus,” Martha graciously offered. “Oh wait, let me just wipe away that dirt on the bench. OK, now you can sit. You must be thirsty.” And just as quickly as she talked, Martha walked off to get drinks.

Mary was about to follow her sister to help. But as Jesus sat down, he began to speak. Mary loved hearing Jesus speak. He always told such marvelous and interesting stories. So instead of leaving, Mary sat by his feet to hear more.

Which is where Martha found Mary, as she rushed back to Jesus with the drinks. Not wanting to interrupt what Jesus was saying, Martha tried to quietly get her sister’s attention. “Ahem,” Martha cleared her throat as she looked directly at Mary. Martha hoped Mary would get up and help her. When Mary did not respond, a frustrated Martha left to finish preparing the meal by herself.

As she cooked, Martha kept thinking of all the things that needed to be done: sweep the floors, wash the table, refill the water pitchers. More cleaning! More cooking! More things to do! Why wasn’t Mary helping her?! Didn’t she understand how important this was?

As she stirred the pot, Martha could hear the laughter of Jesus, his disciples, and even Mary. As the stew in the

pot started to boil, so did Martha’s frustration. Martha marched up to Jesus, “Lord! Don’t you care that I’m by myself when there is still so much more to be done! Tell my sister to help!”

Looking up at her, Jesus replied, “Martha, Martha. I care about you. You are worried because you keep getting distracted by more and more things to do while I am here. But few things are needed right now—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better for her, and it will not be taken away from her.”

