



LESSON 2: THE CHOICE IS YOURS

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN: They have a choice when it comes to dealing with their stress: They can choose to give in to the worries of this world, or they can choose to focus on Jesus.

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO DO WITH WHAT THEY’VE LEARNED: To identify, practically speaking, what it means to choose to focus on Christ instead of their stress.

Scripture Focus: Luke 12:22-31

OVERVIEW: You may have heard the phrase “be Mary in a Martha world.” That phrase is based on the scripture in this lesson. Mary and Martha were sisters, and what little we know about them, we see an interesting picture. One, Martha, worried over the details, and the other, Mary, focused on embracing the moment. We see this based on an encounter with Christ. One day when Jesus came to visit, Martha hurried about preparing the meal while Mary was content to sit and spend time with Jesus. The way both the sisters handled the daily pressures of life is an excellent model for helping teenagers understand the causes and solutions for anxiety and worry. Choosing to focus on Christ will help your students learn the Biblical model for dealing with stress.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO

The Jesus And Stress Teacher Prep Videos are short videos designed to help you grasp the main points of the lessons as you prepare to teach.

To access your “Jesus And Stress Lesson 2 Teacher Prep Video,” click on the URL below.

- <https://youthministry360.com/jesus-and-stress-teacher-prep>

BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you’ll be studying. The Details give you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what’s happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by “context”?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson, you’ll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By “context” we mean at the very least helping students know who wrote the book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **What’s The Big Deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don’t get a “big picture” understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God’s plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

THE DETAILS

- **Author:** Luke was a doctor, a Gentile Christian and a companion of Paul.
- **Time frame:** The Gospel of Luke was written around 60 AD.
- **Purpose:** Luke is the only Gentile author of the Bible. His entire purpose was to write an accurate account of the life of Jesus so as to present Jesus as Savior, fully God and fully man. It is one of the synoptic Gospels, having much in common with the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

THE SETTING

The city of Bethany is near the eastern side of the Mount of Olives not far from Jerusalem. Jesus was visiting in the home of Mary and Martha, sisters to Lazarus whom Jesus would eventually raise from the dead. Apparently, they knew Jesus was coming because Martha had been busy preparing both the house and the meal. Hospitality was one of the key virtues of the Jewish culture, and sitting together for a meal was an important time for both eating and fellowship in that day.

THE MAIN POINT

Students experience stress, some at very high levels. Not only are students overwhelmed with the feelings associated with too much stress, but many times they choose to handle the overload by participating in destructive behaviors.

LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains three elements: An introductory activity called The Lead-In; the Bible study section called The Main Event; an application-focused segment called The Last Word.

THE LEAD-IN

- **Goal:** To help students identify how focusing too much on one thing can cause them to miss the obvious things going on around them.
- **Set-Up:** You will need to set up a way for your students to watch a clip from YouTube. The clip can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oSQJP40PcGI> (Or search for the Awareness Test. It should have people playing basketball.)

FIRST, tell your students that you want them to participate in an experiment. Explain that many people today say that students cannot focus on things, and you want to prove them wrong. Tell them you are going to show them a video clip that involves counting. They need to simply follow the instructions in the clip.

THEN, show the video and when the question is asked “how many times the ball was passed”, stop the video and ask for responses. After everyone has had an opportunity to answer, ask if anyone noticed anything strange that happened in the video. (Halfway through the video a person in a bear costume begins moonwalking through the group.) Some students may have caught this, and it is okay if they want to reveal this to the group. At this point you can say, “Well let’s see what was going on,” and then show the rest of the video. Then **ask the following question:**

- **Why was it so hard to catch the dancing bear over to counting passes the first time you watched the video?**
Answer: I was too busy counting passes, it was hard to see, I wasn’t expecting that to happen, etc.

NEXT, tell your students there are several videos on the Internet like this one and they are called Selective Attention Tests. The idea is that when people are focused on a task, like counting passes, they sometimes miss the obvious perhaps more important things going on at the same time. Tell them that magicians use this technique all the time and it is called “sight of hand.” The magician will get you to focus on what is happening with, let’s say, their left hand while they are hiding something with the right hand. Then ask if they are wondering what all this has to do with a Bible lesson on stress.

FINALLY, transition to the Main Event by **saying something like the following:**

- **Last week we learned that over 80% of students experience moderate to severe levels of stress. So the question is not do you have stress, but how do you handle your stress? Unfortunately, many students focus on the wrong thing when stress becomes a problem. They look to staying busy or getting involved in bad behaviors to get their minds off their worries and anxieties. In today’s lesson we are going to find out that focusing on Christ and His teachings is the way to find peace when life seems out of control. So open your Bibles to Luke chapter 10 and let’s get ready to study the Bible.**

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help your students discover what it means to focus on Christ as a way to help them handle the stress in their lives.
- **Set-Up:** None needed.

FIRST, begin the Bible study portion of the lesson by reminding the students that this is the second lesson in the series “Jesus and Stress.” Take a few minutes to remind the students what they learned last week:

- **The disciples tended to face issues like a lack of food, water, and clothing; so do we.**
- **Jesus taught them that if God can feed the ravens and clothe the lilies, then He is bigger than anything they may face in life. This is the same for us when it comes to the stressors in our lives.**

Set up the Bible study portion of the lesson by telling the students that they will be looking at a passage in the Gospel of Luke. Fill in the rest of the context by asking students how much they know about Luke. Use the Bible Background to guide your discussion.

THEN, read or have a student read Luke 10:38. Explain that Martha and Mary were sisters who also had a brother named Lazarus. Ask if anyone can remember how Jesus and Lazarus were connected. (Not only was Jesus very close to this family, but He would eventually raise Lazarus from the dead.)

NEXT read or have a student read Luke 10:39-40. Then, ask:

- **How many of you have brothers and/or sisters? For those who have siblings, think of some of the ways you are alike.**

Allow students to respond.

- **Now, think of some of the ways you are different.**

Allow students to respond.

- **How do we see the different personalities of the two sisters reflected in these verses?**

Answer: We see a contrast in the personalities of the two sisters. Martha was seen as bearing the responsibility of hospitality, something vital in the Jewish culture. Martha was depicted as a worker. Mary was pictured initially as someone who seemed to be less concerned about the tasks at hand.

- **What was the point of conflict between the two sisters during Jesus’ visit?**

Answer: Martha was busy preparing the dinner and Mary was sitting listening to what Jesus had to say.

- **Why do you think this caused a conflict?**

Answer: Perhaps Martha could not understand how her sister could just sit while work needed to be done and Mary couldn’t understand why work was more important than spending time with Jesus.

- **What request did Martha offer to Jesus?**

Answer: She wanted Him to tell Mary to come and help her.

THEN, continue by reading or having a student read Luke 10:41-42. Tell the students that different versions of the Bible use different words to show how Jesus described Martha. Have students call out any words their translations use to describe Martha. (May include worried, upset, anxious, bothered, and troubled). **Say something like:**

- **In today’s language, Jesus may have even said that Martha was stressed. But what Jesus does in verse 42 is put things in perspective for Martha. Let’s take a closer look at what Jesus said.**

Lead students in a brief discussion. **Ask:**

- **When Martha complains to Jesus, what is His response in verse 42?**

Answer: He says that only one thing is needed.

- **Over the centuries, there have been disagreements in the exact interpretation of what Jesus meant when He said “one thing.” Take into consideration the context of the verse, what Martha is complainin about, and what you’ve already learned about what Jesus has to say about our worry and stress. What do YOU think Jesus means when He said “there is only one thing that is needed”?**

Answers will vary. Don’t be in a rush to provide the answer let students wrestle with it. Once you’ve allowed several students to respond, explain to students that the correct answer probably lies in the same passage they studied last week.

- **Does anyone remember the last part of the passage we studied last week? We studied Luke 12:22-31. Jesus told His disciples not to stress out over meeting their needs, but to instead seek what?**

Answer: God’s Kingdom. Jesus said, “And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.” Jesus seems to be telling Martha to seek His Kingdom first, and to let the needs of the day fall in line as less important.

- **It’s important to stop and ask: Was Martha wrong to care about the preparations of the meal?**

Answer: No.

- **Then what was the problem?**

Answer: The problem is that Martha’s whole focus was on meal preparation, instead of her focus being on God (who was literally sitting in her living room). She put her worries and concerns over earthly things, even though they were valid concerns, ahead of the value of being in Jesus’ presence.

- **How are we like Martha in our own lives?**

Answers will vary.

- **What can we learn from Mary? What choice did she make?**

Answer: She valued Jesus above all else. She understood that part of having a guest like Jesus was spending time with Him rather than what was planned or cooked.

Wrap up this discussion by helping your students understand that while Martha was an excellent servant, and was right to care about her earthly responsibilities, she was creating anxiety by overdoing it. **Say:**

- **Martha wasn’t a bad person. Not at all. She just had a moment where she allowed stress to overtake her. She may have been a victim of overthinking or expected too much of herself. Martha was a servant, a doer, which is exactly what God calls us to be. But she lost sight of what mattered most. And because of this, she lost sight of her focus on Christ. We do the same thing when we let our stress and worry over our earthly responsibilities come before our worship and service to Jesus. We can’t ignore what we must do on this earth. But we must not let our stress and worry over our responsibilities come between Jesus and us.**

NEXT, tell them it is time to do a little check-up on Martha and Mary and see if the words of Jesus made any impact on their lives. **Read or have a student read** John 12:1-3 and help them see the following:

- **Martha is still serving. A servant’s heart is a precious gift and Martha is still a person who loves to do things. Point out that there is no mention of her getting upset with her sister. Chances are great that the words of Jesus did have an impact on her life.**
- **Mary is still focusing on Jesus. In fact, she goes above and beyond by pouring a very expensive portion of perfume on the feet of Jesus and then wiping the excess up with her hair. Tell your students that this is an act of pure love and that after her encounter with Jesus, Mary is able to focus even more on Him. It is**

possible that Mary had the gift of ... well giving! She is very generous with all that she has, even her time.

FINALLY, close the Bible study part of this lesson by helping your students understand that spending their lives being consumed by their tasks and responsibilities only leads to stress, anxiety, and worry. By focusing on Christ, they can find true peace that will calm their anxious hearts. **Say:**

• **Better still, by focusing on Christ we will discover the most important thing in the life of a believer and that is love. It's impossible to keep our eyes on Jesus and not be captivated by His love. It is His love that is the most important thing in our lives and it is His love that will guard our hearts from daily stress.**

Make sure no one has any questions then move to wrap up the lesson with the Last Word.

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To help students look at some ways to practice staying focused on Jesus each day.
- **Set-Up:** Provide a copy of the “Last Word Activity Sheet” (located in your Lesson 2 folder) and a pen or pencil for each student.

FIRST, explain to students that you want to help them with a little application activity that will give them a better handle on today's lesson. Remind them the key to finding help for dealing with stress is to keep their focus on Christ. Explain that you are going to pass out an activity sheet that has the letters F-O-C-U-S going down the side of the paper. As you read the Scripture passages as a group, have them try and guess what word goes in each blank. Give each student a copy of the Last Word Activity Sheet along with a pen or pencil, and work through the passages together, asking for guesses after each one.

The answers are:

- **F is Fellowship or Friendship**
- **O is Obedience or Obey**
- **C is Cares**
- **U is Unfailing Love**
- **S is Strong**

Take a few minutes to talk about how each word helps in dealing with stress in life. You can do this as a discussion, asking students how they think each concept helps deal with stress, or read them aloud as you go through the list.

• **Fellowship/Friendship** – We can have a great friendship with Christ because the Holy Spirit lives in our hearts and souls. Always remember that whatever is happening Jesus is with you all the time. Fellowship with God by reading His Word and worshipping Him helps keep our focus sharply tuned on Christ.

• **Obedience/Obey** – The psalmist talked about loving to obey God's laws. When we obey the teachings in the Bible God will help us find peace in our lives.

• **Cares** – The double excitement here is that the verse states that we can give God all of our worries and cares because He cares about us. Help your students see the importance of taking their stresses and worries to God and trusting Him to do His part in our lives.

• **Unfailing Love** – Students live with a lot of stress due to broken families. They may be afraid to put their trust in God, but they CAN trust Him because His love has never failed in the past, it doesn't fail now, and it will not fail in the future. What a great stress relief to know God's love is not dependent on imperfect humans but on His perfect grace.

- **Strong** – The writer of the psalm referred to God as a strong tower but He is strong in other ways, too. He is bigger than anything we will face in this life, including our stress.

FINALLY, close by challenging your students to choose one of the five words in the activity to be their focus word for the week. Ask them to write the word down in the space on the activity sheet and to take the sheet home with them. Tell them to spend a few minutes each day praying about the word, meditating on the word, and looking up other scripture verses that contain the word. Explain that as they spend more time focusing on Christ and the things of God, they will find an incredible resource of spiritual strength to help them with the stress of daily living.

If there are no more thoughts or questions, close in prayer.

- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're printing them, have them available for students as you wrap up class. If you're texting a link, posting them on Social Media, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU...

Do you have questions about a lesson?

Something that worked particularly well you want to share?

Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.