

A PUPPET PLAY IN ONE ACT

Dinner Guests (Mary & Martha)

Based on Luke 10:38–42 · Written by Carrie Elderberry



SUITABLE FOR
Ages 5 and up

CAST SIZE
5 puppets

PERFORMANCE TIME
8–10 minutes

PROPS REQUIRED
None

MAIN THEME

Jesus cares less about a perfect table than about the person who sits down to listen.

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To print just the play on its own, print pages 5-9.

PRODUCTION OVERVIEW

Synopsis

GIRL is dressed "to the nines" for Easter, convinced that looking good matters most, until BOY reminds her that God cares about the heart. They go looking for a Bible story to settle the question and find Mary and Martha—one sister frantic to have everything perfect for Jesus's visit, the other simply wanting to sit and listen to Him.

Spiritual Concept

Martha's instinct to serve well isn't wrong—it's her anxiety and distraction that Jesus gently corrects. Mary chooses "what is better" not because serving doesn't matter, but because time spent with Jesus can't be replaced by any amount of preparation.

Age Suitability

Suitable for all ages.

Performance Time

8-10 minutes

CAST & TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Characters (in order of appearance)

GIRL — Dressed in an extremely ornate outfit and very pleased with it; believes dressing up is the most important part of honoring God.

BOY — Plainly dressed; gently pushes back on GIRL's focus on appearances.

MARY — Excited that Jesus is coming to dinner; wants to spend the time listening to Him.

MARTHA — Wants everything to be perfect for Jesus's visit and grows increasingly frantic trying to make that happen.

JESUS – A male voice heard from offstage only.

Prop Options

No props required – ideas only.

PERFORMANCE NOTES FOR PUPPETEERS

New to puppets? General prep, technique, and voice tips live at gospelpuppets.org/getting-started.

Character Notes

GIRL isn't played as shallow or foolish—her instinct to “look good for the Lord” comes from a real (if misplaced) desire to honor Him, which is part of why the Mary-and-Martha story lands for her by the end.

MARTHA's anxiety builds steadily through the scene (five-course dinner cut to three, “Damage control!”) – let her panic escalate naturally rather than starting at full volume.

MARY stays warm and unbothered by Martha's stress throughout, even while calling to her from offstage—her focus is entirely on the guests, not on managing her sister.

Staging

MARY's dialogue is delivered from offstage for a stretch while MARTHA reacts onstage—this can work well with MARY's puppet re-entering only once she comes to get MARTHA at the end of that section.

JESUS's line is heard from offstage in a male voice; no puppet needed for this role.

A wonderful, fun (and totally optional) way to include more people, especially pre-readers desperate to help, is to have a hand-held “curtain” ready for any scene-changes. Have one of the puppets call out “Scene change!”—one whose character suits the interruption—and the helpers can run up and screen the center stage for a moment, while chimes are rung and while the puppets switch places.

Reading the Script

CAPS = volume/intensity or emphasis.

Ellipsis (...) = The author's pacing notation.

DINNER GUESTS (MARY & MARTHA)

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(Enter GIRL and BOY. GIRL is wearing an extremely ornate outfit, and is very pleased with it. They greet the audience.)

BOY: Wow, you sure are dressed fancy!

GIRL: *(admires herself)* Don't you know that Easter is the most important thing? You're supposed to dress up extra SPECIAL for it!

BOY: I don't think I HAVE any extra special clothes. I wear the same things all the time.

GIRL: Don't you even have a TIE?

BOY: 'Though I do remember ONCE...that was for my cousin's wedding. I was the ring-bear!

GIRL: You must mean bear-ER. You must have looked so nice!

BOY: Well, all I remember is being ITCHY.

GIRL: It was WORTH it to look good for the LORD.

BOY: And I kind of lost the rings for a while...

GIRL: What?

BOY: They kept rolling off their little pillow-thing...

GIRL: That is terrible!

BOY: But then my mom sewed them on.

GIRL: That's good.

BOY: BUT she sewed them on so TIGHT, nobody could get them off! Hilarious!

GIRL: You are supposed to be SERIOUS when you are at church.

BOY: Well, maybe I better stop going, then.

GIRL: Oh! What a TERRIBLE thing to say!

BOY: Just kidding! But I am sure that you are missing something IMPORTANT.

GIRL: How do you mean?

BOY: The Pastor says that God only cares about what is on the INSIDE, in our hearts.

GIRL: *(shocked)* You can't mean that...

BOY: We don't fool GOD by getting all dressed up.

GIRL: But how else can I show everybody how serious I am?

BOY: Hey, there is a Bible story that might help. It's in Luke, Chapter 10. Want to go look it up?

GIRL: I guess so...oh! Bibles...holding a Bible makes me look serious, too. Ok!

BOY: There are some other puppets that will act it out. Come on. Scene change!

(Helpers can hold up a curtain while chimes are rung.)

(GIRL and BOY exit.)

(MARY and MARTHA enter. MARTHA has a spoon.)

MARY: Martha, aren't you EXCITED? Jesus is coming to OUR house, for dinner, this very evening!

MARTHA: Mary, I'll be excited AFTER we get everything ready for Him. Such an important guest!

MARY: And all His disciples, too! SO exciting.

MARTHA: We'll have to use our very BEST plates, and serve our very BEST food.

MARY: What? Why? Jesus is NOT a fussy eater, Martha.

MARTHA: Now, Mary, I'll be in the kitchen while YOU dust and sweep. Come help me, just as soon as you are done out there!

MARY: All right, Martha...But there will be so MANY people. I'm sure they won't notice a little dust.

MARTHA: And hurry! We don't have much time.

MARY: I'll make sure I have SEATS for them all, first. Hey! Why don't you just go down to the shops, and buy the dinner "to go"?

MARTHA: Are you out of your MIND? Don't you realize how IMPORTANT an occasion this is?

MARY: Yes, I do, but—

MARTHA: We need to have everything of the BEST for Jesus, and everything needs to be PERFECT.

MARY: But Martha, Jesus is—I don't think—

MARTHA: *(cut her off)* Now get to work! We are wasting precious time!

(MARY exits and will continue to talk from offstage.)

(A knock is heard.)

MARY: I'm coming! Be right there!

(Another knock.)

MARY: Just a moment! Oh, come in! Come in!

MARTHA: Who is it?

MARY: They are here, Martha! Oh! It's so wonderful to see you again, Teacher! And Peter, how ARE you? All of you, come in!

MARTHA: WHAT? I'm not ready! Disaster!

MARY: Let me get some water, to wash your dusty feet!

MARTHA: *(very upset)* Don't tell me they're HERE already!

MARY: Martha! Come out to see everyone!

MARTHA: Oh, no! They weren't supposed to be here for another HOUR! I'm not nearly ready! This is a disaster!

MARY: *(still offstage)* Here, Jesus, sit right here in this comfy chair. I'm sorry we don't have enough chairs for everybody.

MARTHA: Mary!

MARY: Here are some cushions for the rest of you. Anybody thirsty?

MARTHA: Damage control! DAMAGE control! I guess I can't do the FIVE-course dinner. I'll have to cut it down to THREE courses.

(MARTHA looks backstage, and hisses at MARY.)

MARTHA: Mary! Come HERE a minute!

(MARY peeks through, happy and excited.)

MARY: Oh, Martha, they're here! Come out and join us! I've sent out for some PIZZAS, and we can—

MARTHA: Pizza? What are you TALKING about? This is a BIBLE story!

MARY: I know. Pizza is Italian. But this is just a PUPPET show! And—

MARTHA: We can't serve Jesus PIZZA! It hasn't even been invented yet! And it's fast food!

MARY: I know, but they are here, and hungry—

MARTHA: No! No! No! ABSOLUTELY not. Now get in here and help me!

MARY: (*firmly*) Martha, I love you dearly, BUT—I'm going back, to listen to Jesus some more.

MARTHA: No!

MARY: I just love the sound of His voice. He helps me understand things.

MARTHA: No!

MARY: (*ducks back out*) Now, please, come sit with us!

MARTHA: Well, of all the nerve! I'll just have to get Jesus, to straighten that girl OUT.

(MARTHA sticks her head backstage.)

MARTHA: Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me? To do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!

JESUS: Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.

(MARTHA stands for a moment, opening and shutting her mouth. Give her time to think.)

MARY: Martha! The pizza is here!

MARTHA: Ok, Ok, just let me get my breath. Everything is going to be FINE...the important thing is, that Jesus loves me, and He knows that I do love Him.

MARY: Are you coming, Martha?

MARTHA: Mary, I'll be right there! Oh! And... scene change!

(Helpers can hold up a curtain while chimes are rung.)

(MARTHA exits.)

(Enter BOY and GIRL.)

GIRL: That wasn't at ALL what I expected.

BOY: You know which sister YOU remind me of? YOU remind me of Martha—

GIRL: Yes, well never mind about THAT. It was pretty obvious...

BOY: *(comforting her)* I don't think there is anything wrong with wanting to dress up.

GIRL: You don't?

BOY: No, as long as you don't make OTHER people feel bad. You know what I mean?

GIRL: I think so. Jesus wants us to put our energy into loving HIM, and spending time with HIM.

BOY: That's right...and taking good care of each other, too.

GIRL: Love God, and love your neighbors—

BOY: No matter what they are wearing! Haha!

(Enter MARY and MARTHA.)

MARY AND MARTHA: Can we help with the ending?

BOY: Sure!

GIRL: On the count of three! One, two, three!

ALL: You can read more about Mary and Martha in the Bible, in Luke, chapter 10. Goodbye!

(Puppeteers come out front and ALL BOW.)

THE END

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

Discussion Questions

1. Why did GIRL think dressing up was so important?
2. What did BOY mean when he said God cares about what's on the inside?
3. Was Martha wrong to want everything to be perfect for Jesus? What was the real problem?
4. What did Mary choose that Jesus said “will not be taken away from her”?
5. Is it easier for you to be more like Mary or more like Martha? Why?

Related Bible Passages

Primary Text: Luke 10:38-42 – Martha is distracted with preparations while her sister Mary sits and listens to Jesus, and Jesus gently tells Martha that Mary has chosen what is better.

Song Suggestions

- “Sitting at the Feet of Jesus” – The Wiebe Family – <https://open.spotify.com/track/5eE0Jl5Yj1eCepuAQxDGoy>
- “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms” – Praise and Harmony – <https://open.spotify.com/track/6yhQqhyoqTIKGsPI48uMqo>
- “Step By Step” – Rich Mullins – <https://open.spotify.com/track/4I5F86BgWXG0cp4ddEZ4S8>

Ministry Context

This play works well for an Easter or general series on priorities, worship, or what it means to truly honor God—it pairs the very relatable temptation to focus on appearances with the equally relatable temptation to over-function in service. Consider pairing with a reading of Luke 10:38-42.