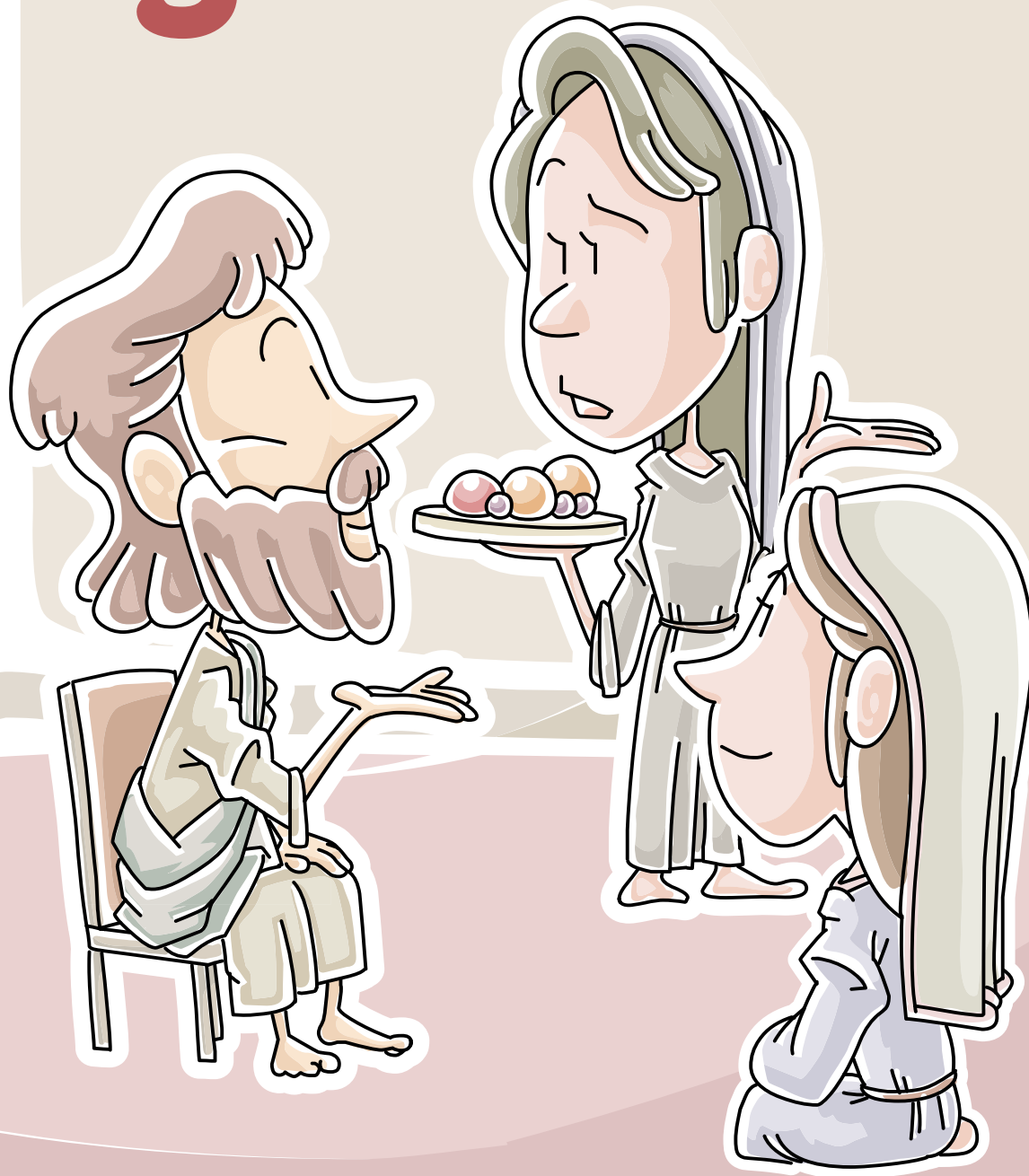
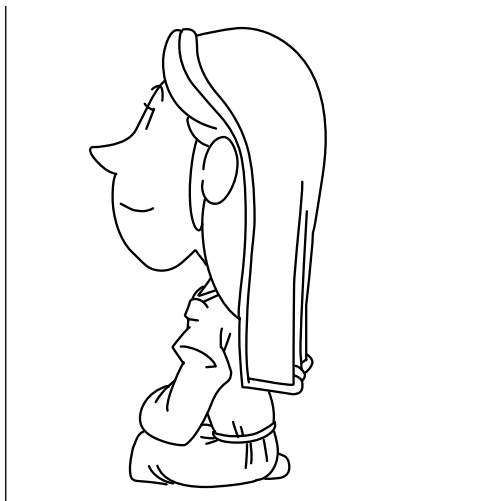


# Mary and Martha



## Colour me!



### Luke 10:38-11:4

The Lord [Jesus] and his disciples were travelling along and came to a village. When they got there, a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat down in front of the Lord and was listening to what he said. Martha was worried about all that had to be done. Finally, she went to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it bother you that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to come and help me!" The Lord answered, "Martha, Martha! You are worried and upset about so many things, but only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen what is best, and it will not be taken away from her."

When Jesus had finished praying, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his followers to pray." So Jesus told them, "Pray in this way: 'Father, help us to honour your name. Come and set up your kingdom. Give us each day the food we need. Forgive our sins, as we forgive everyone who has done wrong to us. And keep us from being tempted.' "

## Commentary

Mary and Martha lived with their brother Lazarus in a village called Bethany, not far from Jerusalem. It seems that Jesus often stayed with this family whenever he travelled south for the festivals, although today's story may have been from the first time they met. On this occasion, Martha was obviously keen to prepare a proper home-cooked meal for him, whereas, to her annoyance, Mary chose to sit and listen to Jesus telling stories. Of course, hospitality is about giving someone that much-needed meal, but it is equally about giving a guest your time and attention. Mary was certainly doing the latter and, although Martha's work in the kitchen has its place, sometimes it's possible to be so busy trying to get things right for your guests that you forget to spend time with them.

Perhaps that's true of prayer too, which is the focus of the second part of this passage. The simplicity of this version of the Lord's Prayer is what Jesus wanted his disciples to understand. In just five short sentences, there is everything we really need to know about talking to God and understanding who God is. No wonder this is such a special prayer, used by millions of people around the world.

## Questions

- ▶ What exactly did Martha get wrong? Are we in danger of making the same mistake?
- ▶ What is the 'one thing necessary' that Mary chose?
- ▶ Prayer doesn't need a lot of words, as Jesus makes clear. Can you sum up in just a few headline words the heart of the Lord's Prayer?
- ▶ Which part of this special prayer is most important for you at the moment?



## Visual aid

Find the picture of 'Praying hands' by Albrecht Dürer online. You might like to research the story behind this picture, which is about Albrecht and his brother.



## Activity idea

Create a big poster of the Lord's Prayer to which everyone makes some contribution, colouring in the letters or adding decoration. You could also add your praying hands to this prayer by photographing each person's hands together in prayer, printing off the pictures and adding them as your signatures to the poster.



## Prayer idea

Learn the Lord's Prayer together by heart, either in this version from Luke's Gospel or from Matthew's (Matthew 6:9–13), using the translation you are most comfortable with. Check that each of you understands the meaning of the words you are saying. Use it together whenever you pray.

## Key verse

Father, help us to honour your name (Luke 11:2).

## Old Testament story link

Psalms 63:1-8: This is one of King David's many special prayers to God.



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