

The
Mary Stewart
Party



A Christian Ladies' Banquet
From The Heart

The Mary Stewart Party

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Details, Details, Details

Follow these tips and add your own creative flair to make your banquet "one of a kind" perfect! Take care of basic arrangements and then have fun developing the *Mary Stewart Party* theme.

LET'S HAVE A BANQUET!

A banquet is a party with food as the main attraction. Add a short program, a speaker or entertainment. The occasion is enjoyable, comfortable and social. The most popular traditional spring banquet is the Mother and Daughter Banquet. There are other occasions when banquets are enjoyable. Ladies Evenings, Women's Group programs, Holiday gatherings, summer picnics and even father and child banquets.

LET'S HAVE A PARTY!

A party is a *fun and games* event where people mix for sparkling conversation, good food and laughter. Parties tend to be informal and hosts do not go to extra trouble to decorate. While party games were once wildly popular, there are groups who do not enjoy a lot of organized activity. It should be a highly enjoyable experience. The activities should fit the needs of the guests present.

Sometimes parties do not have to be planned at all. A larger party requires good planning to handle the program, publicity, decorating, welcoming, refreshments and clean up. Delicious refreshments are offered and you know you have had a great party if you had a chance to create your own fun and remember the event fondly.



ATTENTION TO SMALL DETAILS

Often it is the small detail that makes the biggest impression. Wild flowers on a table, small table gifts for each guest, background music, greeters at the door and other thoughtful gestures make individuals feel welcomed and special.

PRACTICE CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY

In the middle of a fun activity, people should be growing in their understanding of the Lord. Everyone should be giving affection and receiving love from other Christians in the family of God. Begin friendly conversations, avoid gossip or mean spirited comments.

SET PARTY GOALS

What do you want to see happen during the two hours your guests are with you? Be specific! Specific plans in this workbook are complete. However, you may have more fun if you change *our* details to fit *your* needs. Add creative ideas and change any activities as desired.

WORK WITH A TEAM

Choose a small leadership team to complete all advance arrangements. The team may be as few as three or as large as ten or more. Divide tasks between the members and trust them to finish their tasks. While the leadership may be divided, one person should be in charge to keep the whole affair moving smoothly.

ORGANIZE!

Follow our suggestions adding your own creativity at the beginning of the planning process. Write down exactly what will happen and when the jobs must be completed.

Do not leave organization to the last minute.



PURCHASE SUPPLIES AS NEEDED

Decide what the party budget is and stay within the limit. Keep expense records. Use the church tax exemption number.

PRACTICE A POSITIVE APPROACH

Keep the atmosphere light and happy during the planning process. If your attitude is right, the rest of your team will catch the spirit. After all, this is a party!

PRAY!

Pray for the event, the team and the guests. Pray as a team. Take each detail before the Lord and then—Relax!

SET UP

Provide adequate time to set up tables, decorations, props, food and other items necessary for the event. Reserve the church for the entire day and there may be situations when room arrangements must take place a day before the party.

SAY THANK YOU

The behind-the-scenes team is the core of the special event. Take time to write a thank you note, call them and give a small thank you gift.

Recognize this team publically at the event.

CLEAN UP

When the event is over, clean up begins. The party is not complete until the church is in order. Encourage the team to remove their props immediately. Stay to help with kitchen clean up.



Should We Invite A Speaker?

By all means invite a special person to share inspirational thoughts. When using a speaker, consider eliminating or reducing program segments we provide that are best performed by the guests themselves. The speaker should conclude the evening's festivities.

THE PERFECT PERSON

A good speaker makes a faith connection with the specific group. Choose the speaker from a list of possibilities suggested by friends, relatives, pastor, other churches, community groups or national organizations.

CONSIDER THE COST

Speaking fees are part of the banquet budget. Ask the speaker if they have a set fee. If not, give a generous monetary gift including traveling costs.

Think about the time they invest in preparation, travel and presentation.

GIVE SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

Send a letter, make a telephone call and stay in contact through the Internet. Include information like arrival time and place, group size, time limit, lodging information and other personal details.



Tell the speaker the type of program and detail what you would like their speech to include. Continue to make contact periodically until the speaker leaves their home to travel to the event.

CARE AND FEEDING OF THE SPEAKER

As soon as the guest speaker arrives, assign a prearranged hostess "friend" to handle introductions, sit and converse with the person at dinner to give the speaker a sense of belonging.

Be aware that it is disquieting for a speaker to enter a room of strangers, be expected to speak about personal issues and leave still feeling as if everyone is a stranger.

Handle all expenses from the time the speaker leaves their home until they return. If more meals are required, host or pay accordingly.

AFTER THE PARTY

Pay promptly. Stay with the speaker until they leave to return to their home. Thank them from your heart and always follow up with a handwritten thank you note.



Mary and Martha Decorating



Create a simple yet colorful decor. When guests enter the party area, they should see and feel the theme immediately. Discuss decoration at the beginning of the planning process. Follow our suggestions or invent your own decorations.

Our tips are meant to spark your own creativity. Read and follow directions as much as possible but use items that are available locally. Not every activity listed must be used. Choose the best and leave the rest!

HOW COMPLICATED IS THIS GOING TO BE?

This can be as casual or involved as desired. If there are folks in your church who love to decorate, give them the responsibility to turn Fellowship Hall into a work of art. If no one comes forward, decorate simply at each table.

WHAT SHOULD BE DECORATED?

Decorate tables with center pieces and theme related items. Consider decorating the ticket table, the program area and four walls of the large room. A separate "Martha" area should be decorated to perfection.

WHERE CAN I FIND PROPS?

Think about items people stash in attics, basements and garages. There may be props available at the church. Junior and Senior High Schools may lend props from stage presentations.



Specialty shops may be willing to lend or rent items from their retail displays. Talk to owners of bridal shops, party stores and furniture stores. Ask other churches for items they may have in their storage rooms.

Make transparencies of coloring book pictures or other artwork. Place on an overhead projector and enlarge images which can be painted or colored and placed on the walls.

BACKGROUND MUSIC

Play Christian CD's as guests enter and during dinner. Take into consideration the fact that conversations will be taking place. Volume should be just loud enough to hear in the background. Play music at the end of the evening as guests are gathering their belongings and leaving.

There may be times when live music is appropriate. Ask a pianist, organist, harpist, small jazz band, classical string quartet, college or high school musicians to participate. If the musicians are not part of the church family, be prepared to feed them and offer a small honorarium for their time.

ART SUPPLIES, DECORATIONS, SMALL GIFTS

There are many resources available in local communities. Check out craft shops, party stores and discount stores. Make table decorations, programs and table gifts.

LOOKING FOR GREAT STUFF AT REASONABLE PRICES?

S&S arts and crafts catalog offers art supplies and decorative items. For a **free** master copy of their current catalog, call 1-800-243-9232. A mini catalog should be included with this workbook. Check out their enjoyable web site: www.swww.com

Oriental Trading Company catalog offers a wide variety of appropriate decorations and gift items for many fun themes. If you do not have their delightful catalog, call toll free 1-800-228-2269. Order directly through the company at their delightful, easy to use web site: www.orientaltrading.com



Creating Atmosphere



Here are a few tips to consider when developing an event that moves along comfortably. Be aware of crowd psychology. No one enjoys going to a party where everyone is a stranger, no conversation takes place and the mood is subdued and boring. Everyone enjoys an event where people are talking and laughing, the light is controlled, music is setting the mood, strangers are introduced and tables are inviting.

WHEN THE FIRST PERSON ARRIVES, THE PARTY HAS BEGUN!

Greet guests cordially at the door, give them a name tag (if appropriate) and direct them to the party area. If special items are on display, encourage guests to travel from spot to spot as the crowd gathers. They may examine table decorations. Help them choose a place to sit or find an assigned table and specific seat. Point out rest rooms and conveniences within the building. Keep guests out of the kitchen!

GET ACQUAINTED

Put people at ease. Have them get acquainted with simple table activities. Place conversation starters under each plate. Scatter pens or pencils at each table and place paper puzzles or short games so guests can work together to win a table prize.

GETTING TOGETHER

Help guests "sense the whole." Enthusiastic group singing helps the togetherness get started and so do mixers.



SMALL GROUPS

Place guests in small groups quickly and offer opportunities to make more intimate contact with others. Devise an activity that could be done in twos or fours. Dividing up by birth months is an effective way of creating smaller groups across all lines—age, sex, color.

ALTERNATE THE PACE

Some activities might be active and some quiet. Have some activity requiring mental activity with pencil and paper, skits, etc. done in groups of different sizes and sometimes in the whole group.

BUILD TOWARD A CLIMAX

Complete some of the more exciting activities just before dinner and continue the fun after the meal.

CLOSE WITH A WHOLE GROUP ACTIVITY

Do not end the evening with refreshments. Use a whole group activity which brings everyone together. It could be singing around some rallying point, listening to a story, letting people tell what they enjoyed or a frankly spiritual closing with a serious skit or talk, songs, hymns, praise choruses, sharing and a benediction perhaps featuring a fellowship circle.

CLEAN UP

Leave the church cleaner than you found it. Often those enjoying the fun are asked to help clean up. That can be fun and "many hands make light work."





The Mary Stewart Party



Luke 10:38-42

The Lord and his disciples were traveling 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 the best
and it will not be taken away from her."



The Mary Stewart Party



In honor of Martha's lesser known younger sister, Mary Stewart, we are celebrating the life of the everyday housewife and mother.

Martha is Perfection with a capital "P". Her house is beautiful and every meal is a gourmet feast. Shortcuts are a way of life for dear Mary Stewart because she loves to sit at the feet of Jesus while dirty dishes soak and laundry piles up in the hallway.

Does this remind you of another famous sister pair from the New Testament? Martha and Mary of Bethany struggled with the same issues as the modern woman. When company arrived, stress levels increased and it became obvious that Martha would bear the hospitality burden alone.

Let's recreate realistic reminders of life among everyday housewives. This party theme is successful when used as a Mother/Daughter Banquet or Women's Group Party.



Martha's Perfect Welcome



Greet **MARY STEWART PARTY** Guests in a "sublime" area that should be color coordinated and elegant in every way.

Serve a delicious cold beverage in crystal punch bowls with crystal cups. Consider serving delicate hor's doerves and delicious morsels.

Cover the serving table in white linen and place a lovely flower and candle centerpiece on the punch table. Consider adding pastel netting and white twinkle lights to the wall or table. The panorama should be feminine and perfect in every way. No seating is required.

Play soft background classical music as guests begin arriving about one half hour before the banquet begins. After they enjoy an elegant "Martha" welcome, open the doors and enter the fun filled "Mary" banquet area together.

Martha's Lovely Spring Punch

2 Large Cans Ecto Cooler Hi C (green)

2 Large Bottles of Ginger Ale

½ Gallon Vanilla Ice Cream

Combine ingredients. Spoon Vanilla Ice Cream on top of the liquid in the punch bowl. It will foam and look beautifully elegant while being served.





Mary's Decorations

Be brave! Instead of the typical elegant banquet decoration, have fun with the "harried housewife" theme by displaying mismatched everyday items on serving tables and at individual guest seats.

TABLE CLOTHS

Spread newspaper to completely cover each table Or make newsprint place mats. Colorful Sunday comics work great at intervals throughout the room. Or, gather a variety of colorful kitchen table cloths to cover individual guest tables.

CENTERPIECES

Fill large soup cans (with labels) or glass canning jars with wild flowers. A wooden spoon may stick out of the center of the wild flowers. Trim the can/jar with a colorful ribbon. Wicker baskets filled with several sizes of lit candles and silk flowers look nice too.

DISHES AND TABLE WARE

Set tables with mismatched sets of dishes and glasses. During the planning phase, collect as many varieties of paper dessert plates as possible. Place colorful matching/mismatching napkins at each place.

TABLE GIFT

Consider giving each guest a small take home gift. At each place setting: One aromatic dryer sheet gathered in the middle and tied with a bow, sample sized containers of toothpaste, bath powder, mouth wash, soaps or other fun items.

SERVING DISHES

Serve family style. Serving dishes may be metal pans or pottery crocks but should be informal. If serving a buffet, leave hot foods in large pots. Use cookie trays, wicker baskets and doughnut boxes as containers.





Martha's Menu

Let's let Martha prepare the meal! Whatever casual fun is created with decor and serving dishes, the group will want a delicious meal. Plan food and assign a kitchen team to prepare the meal on banquet day. Think about hiring caterers!

OPTION #1:

Tossed Salad

Swiss Steak

Mashed Potatoes/Gravy

Mixed Vegetables

Rolls/Butter

Beverages: Coffee, Tea, Cold Drink

OPTION #2:

Jell-O Salad

Stuffed Chicken Breast

Baked Potato/Sour Cream/Butter

Vegetable: Buttered Corn

Rolls/Butter



Beverages: Coffee, Tea, Cold Drink

CHILDREN'S MENU

OPTION #1:

Chicken Nuggets
Jell-O
French Fries
Cold Drink

OPTION #2:

Hamburger on Toasted Bun
Potato Chips
Apple Slices
Cold Drink

Dessert

Do not disregard the power of dessert!
Give attention to delicious details at the end of the meal.

Consider homemade cake and ice cream, homemade pie and ice cream, Chocolate Sundaes, Banana Splits, Cherry Cheesecake or other decadent, calorie filled treats.

Use your Martha Stewart imagination to make the presentation of desserts extra special on lovely plates.



Get Acquainted!

Table Activities

*Seat guests informally at prearranged tables.
Be sure families sit together
if this is a Mother-Daughter Banquet.*

As groups arrive, encourage them to get to know one another by playing the games provided on each table. Guests may team up to answer the questions.

Furnish small prizes for each successful table group.
Prizes may be Hershey Kisses,
mini candy bars or other tiny treat.
Walk the prizes to the guests as they win.
Secret: Let EVERYONE win at least once!

Use the games we suggest or find others to fill the need.
Copy as many as needed.



Mary's Outspoken Puzzle

Solve by saying the phrase out loud, over and over, faster and faster, repeating the phrase until you "hear" the answer. Work in teams. Write the correct answer next to the phrase.

EXAMPLE: LAWN SAND JEALOUS (a place) ANSWER: Los Angeles

1. SHOCK CURSED TOE (a person)
2. SAND TACKLE LAWS (a fictional character)
3. MY GULCH HOARD UN (a person)
4. MOW BEAD HICK (a book)
5. TALL MISCHIEF HER SUN (a person)
6. CHICK HE TUB AN AN US (a product)
7. THOUGH TIGHT AN HICK (a thing)
8. AISLE OH VIEW (a phrase)
9. TUB RAID HEAP HUNCH (an old TV show)
10. CARESS TROUGHER CLUMP US (a person)
11. DOCKED HEARSE WHOSE (a person)
12. THUMB ILL KEY WAKE OWL LICKS HE (a place)
13. AGE ANT HUB BLOWS HEAVEN (a fictional character)
14. THESE HOUND DOVE MOO SICK (a movie)
15. BUCK SPUN HE (a fictional character)



ANSWERS--FOR THE LEADER ONLY!

Read the correct answers when everyone has had time to complete their puzzles at each table. Present gifts as desired.

1. Jacques Cousteau
2. Santa Claus
3. Michael Jordan
4. Moby Dick
5. Thomas Jefferson
6. Chiquita Bananas
7. The Titanic
8. I love you.
9. The Brady Bunch
10. Christopher Columbus
11. Doctor Seuss
12. The Milky Way Galaxy
13. Agent 007
14. The Sound of Music
15. Bugs Bunny



Martha's Bible Occupations

In the letter box below circle the names of occupations of Bible times. Use the word list at the bottom of the page.

O W R O T C E L L O C X A T

A U O X B N W P D J N L F N

M W S D R E H P E H S R I A

B A K E R N E J O U R A S H

A O W N E O N R U E X O H C

S O M E L R G L N D O W E R

S B U T L E R N O U G A R E

A X S O U R A P L M N E M M

D O I R F T V S E T L O A Z

O R C S E N E O I L O Q N E

R O I E M B R O I D E R E R

S C A R P E N T E R O W J Z

O U N R R O T A R O P Z L A

WORD LIST

AMBASSADOR BAKER BUTLER CARPENTER EMBROIDERER ENGRAVER
FISHERMAN FULLER JUDGE MERCHANT MUSICIAN ORATOR
SHEPHERD TANNER TAX COLLECTOR TILLER



Mary and Martha Music

Play pre recorded background music as the group arrives. Christian CD's, soft jazz, classical music or show tunes are appropriate.

Do not play the CD's loudly. Conversation should be a priority with music as a pleasant diversion.

Some communities may have amateur/professional musicians who are willing to come and play. Think about asking a violinist, guitarist, harpist, pianist, flutist or other soft instrumentalist to perform as guests arrive and enjoy dinner.

Mary's Neat Stuff

After dinner, present a fun program. Decorate a stage or corner where participants stand to deliver their segment. Use these ideas or develop your own interesting setting by dividing the stage in half.

MARY'S MESSY HOUSE: One large rocking chair with afghan draped across the top, overflowing laundry baskets, scattered toys, stacks of dirty dishes, coat rack with stacks of coats, tennis shoes and dirty socks on the floor and other *out of place* items. Place a small table and lit table lamp next to the rocking chair. Add a large, open Bible!!!

MARTHA'S IMMACULATE HOUSE: One large rocking chair with afghan neatly folded on the seat, neatly folded laundry in large baskets, toys in a toy box, NO dishes or other scattered items, Place a small table and lit table lamp next to the rocking chair. Add a fresh flower display to the table. Bible may be placed neatly in plain view.



Meet Mary and Martha The Hostesses with the Mostess-es!

Choose two wonderful women to act as hostesses . One portrays meticulous Martha Stewart and the other, her dearly loved but messy sister, Mary Stewart. They wear "Martha" and "Mary" name tags. Introduce activities and become mistresses of ceremonies. Select gals with a terrific sense of humor and excellent speaking abilities.



They dress as other guests. They simply personify a perfect housewife and a slightly less perfect but kindhearted, devoted to Jesus homemaker. Martha is dressed perfectly and Mary less so with slightly messy hair, mismatched earrings and untucked outfit. Their words and actions encourage guests to choose the well balanced approach to the Christian life.

Martha and Mary greet each guest pleasantly when they arrive and guide them toward the elegant punch area. "Welcome! I'm Mary Stewart." "Welcome! I'm Martha Stewart!" As guests finish their punch, the gals then open the banquet area and usher as many groups to their seats as possible.



The Lazarus Team

Ask men and boys of the church to participate by cooking, serving and doing dishes. Call them "The Lazarus Team" after Martha and Mary's famous brother. Be sure to feed the guys and say "thank you" publically. It is fun to give each team member a name tag stating:

HELLO!
I'M ON THE LAZARUS TEAM!
JOHN DOE

OPTION: It may be amusing to dress all servers alike. Ask them to wear dark slacks and white dress shirts. If a formal look is desired to please *Martha*, they wear ties. If a casual *Mary* style is required, no tie! Provide matching full aprons for each Lazarus guy.

Meet with the Lazarus Team before the Party begins. Explain their task fully. If necessary, refresh their memories on proper techniques for serving coffee and which side to place the entree and when to remove dishes before the next course. As always, Lazarus' smiles and polite attentiveness work magic with their feminine guests.



Martha's Printed Programs



Printed programs are not necessary but many groups enjoy presenting a "take home" keepsake.

Include the menu, names of the committee members, names of the Lazarus team, words to songs, small artistic touches and a bit of poetry.

The programs should be a "Martha" project since perfect hostess Martha would be tuned into this type of detail.

Place the information in book form. Decorate colorful covers with ribbons.

Use the church copier to make clear copies. Put the pages together with staples.



Let The Fun Begin!



Assign program parts as desired from the following list. If there is any portion of our program that does not fit with your group, eliminate it and replace it with something you know they will enjoy.

The best after dinner program lasts no more than forty five minutes. Allow guests to use rest rooms before the program begins.

Sing Praise and Worship choruses between the program segments. Make it your own!

BEFORE DINNER WELCOME

MARTHA: Good evening, dear guests. I'm Martha and this is my dear sister, Mary Stewart. We welcome you to a very special party. Even though we are sisters, Mary and I are very different. I am a meticulous housekeeper and I treat my guests to the best foods and entertainment I can prepare.

MARY: Martha, I like a clean house too! I like to serve good food! It's just that I get busy doing other things. There's always a wonderful book to read, birds to watch and children to entertain. I love sitting in a quiet place talking to my Heavenly Father.



MARTHA: People tell us we're a lot like another set of sisters. Martha and Mary of Bethany and their brother, Lazarus, were Jesus' close friends. He often came to their home to rest. Martha of Bethany took care of Jesus. She served delicious foods. She cleaned the Bethany house and shopped in the crowded market to prepare for His next visit. Her beloved sister, Mary, loved to sit at the feet of Jesus and listen....just listen.

MARY: The words Jesus spoke were life changing. He said things Mary of Bethany longed to hear. He spoke of God's love and Heaven. She lost all track of time when Jesus was in the house.

MARTHA: *(Sigh...)* Yes, those gals were a lot like us. Well, we want you to enjoy this wonderful dinner. We divided the work between us. Mary was busy with the children's choir until late this afternoon. She pulled herself together to get the tables ready just before you arrived.

MARY: And of course my sister Martha spent hours getting the food and program ready. Well, enjoy Martha's delicious dinner and we'll be back later to have some fun!

Open In Prayer.



AFTER DINNER WELCOME

MARTHA: Let's enjoy some words of wisdom, fun and laughter about our jobs as wives, mothers, grandmothers, daughters, friends and women of faith.

MARY: Several of our good friends will come forward and help us. Actually, I think I will enjoy just sitting here listening to the rest of you talk. I could use the break. Whew!

MARTHA: Yep, that's my sister-Mary Stewart. I work, she sits. Let's get this show on the road because I have to do the dishes after this party and I don't want to be up all night.





I Resign!

I'm a lot like Mary Stewart. I am hereby officially tendering my resignation as an adult, in order to accept the responsibilities of a 6 year old. I want to be six again. I want to go to McDonald's and think it's the best place in the world to eat.

I want to sail sticks across a fresh mud puddle and make waves with rocks. I want to think M&M's are better than money because you can eat them. I want to play kick ball at recess and stay up on Christmas Eve to hear reindeer hoof beats on the roof.

I long for the days when life was simple. When all you knew were your colors, the addition tables and simple nursery rhymes but it didn't bother you because you didn't know what you didn't know and you didn't care. Got that?

I want to think the world is fair and everyone in it is honest and good. I want to wonder what I'll do when I grow up and what I'll be, who I'll be and not worry about what I'll do if this doesn't work out. I want that time back.

I want to escape to six when my computer crashes or I have a mountain of paperwork or a depressed friend or fight with my spouse or second thoughts about so many things. I want to travel back and build a snowman without thinking about anything except whether the snow sticks together and what I can possible use for the snowman's mouth. I want to be six again.

Unknown Author, Probably a Busy Mom



GOLDEN RULES FOR MARTHA STEWART LIVING

I'm a lot like Martha Stewart. I believe that we should live by a strict set of everyday rules. If we pay attention to details, our lives will be much happier. Here are my Golden Rules for Martha Stewart Living.



If you open it, close it.
If you turn it on, turn it off.

If you unlock it, lock it up.
If you break it, admit it.
If you can't fix it, call in someone who can.

If you borrow it, return it.
If you value it, take care of it.
If you make a mess, clean it up.
If you move it, put it back.

If it belongs to someone else and you want to use it,
get permission.

If you don't know how to operate it,
leave it alone.

If it's none of your business, don't ask questions.
If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

If it will brighten someone's day, say it.
If it will tarnish someone's reputation, keep it to yourself.



DISCLAIMER: "Dear Lord, Forgive Me" is very funny but please consider your audience before using it. If you think it would offend anyone, eliminate it. If you use it, choose a presenter who can pull it off with humble humor and a genteel attitude. It will make the piece fun.

DEAR LORD, FORGIVE ME

Dear Lord, I rarely ask for much. Today is no exception. I don't need diamond earrings, handy slicer dicers or comfy slippers. I only want one little thing and I want it deeply. I want to smack Martha Stewart.

Now, hear me out Lord. I won't draw blood or anything. Just one good smack, right across her perfect little cheek. I get all cozy inside just thinking about it. Don't answer my prayer just for me but for thousands of women across the country even though most of us are happy her legal problems are in the past.

Through sheer vicarious satisfaction, You'll be giving a gift to us all. Those who are living average, garden variety lives aren't concerned with gracious living. We feel pretty good about ourselves if our paper plates match when we stack them on the counter, buffet-style for dinner.

We're tired of Martha showing us how to make centerpieces from hollyhock dipped in 18 carat gold. We're plumb out of liquid gold unless it's the furniture polish variety. We can't whip up Martha's creamy holiday sauce spiced with tumeric. Most of us can't even say tumeric, let alone figure out what to do with it.

Ok, Lord, maybe You think I'm being a little harsh but perhaps You didn't catch that interview with Martha in last week's USA Weekend. We discovered that not only does Martha avoid take out pizza (She's only ordered it once), she refuses to eat it cold (No cold pizza? Is Martha Stewart Living?) When it was pointed out that she could microwave it, she replied, "I don't have a microwave."



Did You know that Martha has 40 sets of dishes adorning an entire wall in her home? Forty sets! Can you spell "overkill"? And neatly put away, no less. If my dishes make it to the dishwasher, that qualifies as "put away" in my house.

Martha was named one of America's 25 most influential people by Time magazine nosing out Mother Theresa and Maya Angelou. A guest in Martha's home said she gets up early to roller blade with her dogs, pick fresh wild blackberries for breakfast and shop for white fleshed peaches in the supermarket. This confirms what I've suspected about Martha all along: She's obviously got too much time on her hands.

There you have it, Lord. If there was ever someone who deserves a good smack, it's Martha Stewart. But...I bet I won't get an answer to my prayer. You probably want to smack her Yourself. (Sigh....) Amen.

-Anonymous



Love Letters



Martha and Mary sit in rocking chairs on opposite sides of the stage. They are writing letters to each other. First Martha reads her letter to Mary and then Mary responds:

Dear Mary:

This perfectly delightful note is being sent on paper I made myself to tell you what I have been up to. Since it snowed last night, I got up early and made a sled with old barn wood and a glue gun. I hand painted it in gold leaf, got out my loom and made a blanket in peaches and mauves. Then to make the sled complete, I made a white horse to pull it from DNA that I had sitting around my craft room.

By then, it was time to start making the place mats and napkins for my 20 breakfast guests. I'm serving the old standard Stewart 12 course breakfast, but I'll let you in on a little secret: I didn't have time to make tables and chairs this morning so I used the ones I had on hand. Before I moved the table into the dining room, I decided to add the perfect company touch. I repainted the room in pinks and stenciled gold stars on the ceiling. Then, while the homemade bread was rising, I took antique candle molds and made the dishes exactly the same shade of pink to use for breakfast. These were made from Hungarian clay which you can get at almost any Hungarian craft store. Well, I must run. I need to finish the buttonholes on the dress I'm wearing for breakfast.

I'll get out the sled and drive this note to the post office as soon as



the glue dries on the envelope I'll be making. Hope my breakfast guests don't stay too long. I have 40,000 cranberries to string with bay leaves before my speaking engagement at noon. It's a good thing.

Love, Martha

P.S. When I made the ribbon for this typewriter, I used 1/8 inch gold gauze. I soaked the gauze in a mixture of white grapes and blackberries which I grew, picked and crushed last week just for fun.
Love, M

Dear Martha:



I'm writing this on the back of an old shopping list. Pay no attention to the coffee and jelly stains. I'm 20 minutes late getting my daughter up for school, packing a lunch with one hand, on the phone with the dog pound....seems Old Ruff needs bailing out again.

Burnt my arm on the curling iron when I was trying to make those cute curly fries. How DO they do that? Still can't find the scissors to cut out some snowflakes, tried using an old disposable razor...trashed the tablecloth.

I've been working on some household tips of my own, dear sister. I've discovered a few secrets you never shared with me. How about DUCT TAPE? No home should be without an ample supply. It's a great way to hem drapes, tablecloths or just about anything. No muss, no fuss.



Then there's the OVEN! If you think ovens are just for baking, think again. Ovens represent at least 9 cubic feet of hidden storage space which means they are a great place to shove dirty dishes, dirty clothes or just about anything you want to get out of sight when company's coming. I discovered the same is true about CLOTHES DRYERS, WASHING MACHINES and FREEZERS.

Oh yes, and the purchase of a simple DUST RUFFLE for every bed adds lots of space. No bed should be without one. You told me it's purpose was to keep dust out from under a bed or coordinate the colorful look of a bedroom. Why didn't you share that it's highest and best use is to hide whatever I've shoved under the bed?

VACUUMING. Stick close to the middle of the room which is the only place people look. Don't bother vacuuming under furniture. It takes way too long and no one looks there anyway.

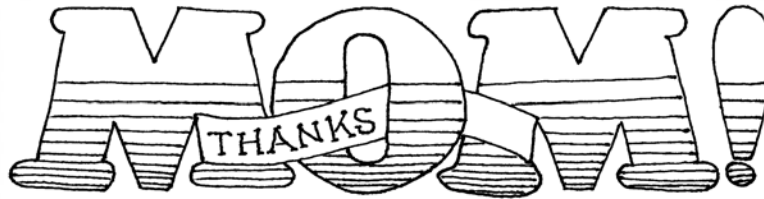
BED MAKING. Get an old fashioned waterbed. No one can tell if those things are made up or not, saving you, oh, hundreds of seconds over the course of a lifetime.

Tried that cranberry thing. Frozen cranberries mashed up after I defrosted them in the microwave. Oh, and don't use Fruity Pebbles as a substitute in that Rice Krispies snowball recipe unless you happen to like a disgusting shade that resembles puke!

The smoke alarm is going off. Talk to 'ya later. Love, Mary



GREAT SAYINGS OF BIBLICAL MOTHERS ...AS TOLD BY THE KIDS



Choose several children and preteens to present this humorous look at things moms say! Say parts loudly and with expression.

Sometimes I wonder if my mom listens to herself while she's yelling at me. My friends and I got to thinking about what moms in the Bible said to their kids. This is what we came up with. It sounds strangely familiar. Come to my house and you'll agree.

SAMSON! Get your hand out of that lion. You don't know where it's been!

DAVID! I told you not to play in the house with that sling! Go practice your harp. We pay good money for those lessons.

ABRAHAM! Stop wandering around the countryside and get home for supper!

SHADRACH, MESHACH AND ABEDNEGO! Leave those clothes outside! You smell like a dirty old furnace.

CAIN! Get off your brother! You're going to kill him someday.

NOAH! No, you can't keep them. I told you, don't bring home any more stray pets. And get in here. It's starting to rain.



GIDEON! Have you been hiding in that wine press again? Look at your clothes.

JAMES AND JOHN! No more burping contests at the dinner table. People are going to call you the Sons of Thunder.

JUDAS! Have you been in my purse again?

JESUS! Shut that door! What do you think—were you born in a barn?



Real Mothers

This could be best presented by a young mother carrying her baby or toddler in her arms while she speaks.

Real Mothers don't eat quiche;
They don't know how to say it, spell it or make it.

Real Mothers know that their kitchen utensils
are probably in the sandbox.

Real Mothers often have sticky floors,
filthy ovens and happy kids.

Real Mothers know dried play dough
doesn't come out of shag carpet.

Real Mothers don't want to know
what the vacuum just sucked up.

Real Mothers sometimes ask "Why me?"
and get their answer when a little voice says,
"Because I love you best."

Real Mothers know that a child's growth
is not measured by height or years or grade.
It is marked by the progression
of Mama to Mommy to Mom.



I'm Giving You Permission To Quit!

*Taken from Misty Taggart's internet article "Superwoman Quits",
Ordinary Woman, Extraordinary God.*

Immediately, if not sooner, give away or burn all small clothing hiding in the back of your closet—including those blue jeans that used to fit....in High School.

Learn to form the following words, "No!"—"I don't have time"—"I have other plans"—and "No, there is no age requirement for using the washing machine."

Home grown refrigerator mold has no medical value...but keep this to yourself.

Yes, depression is caused by looking at models in magazine ads. Reassure yourself that they really do not look like that. They are air brushed, clothes pinned, girdled and starving to death. So, have a hot fudge sundae on me.

Accept it! You cannot—I repeat—cannot make everything okay for everyone! This is a vital step to a cure. If you hear the words, "No problem, I'll take care of it...," be sure they are being uttered by another woman.

When the boy at the grocery store asks, "Do you need help with these groceries?" The answer is "YES!" After all, you just spent \$137.40 for those 4 small plastic bags of what must be the world's most precious commodity.



If you are not a cook, admit it. Do not attempt to make 'coq au vin' for your husband's boss just because it happens to have chicken in it. Find the local KFC drive thru and feel the freedom of truth.

When your temperature is 102 degrees...lie down. Amazing, but when you arise, your house, family, pets and other obligations will have survived.

Personal tip: Plastic floral arrangements in the backyard hold their color for quite a spell. I hear you saying, "But Martha Stewart's garden is soooo beautiful." Yours would be too if you had a gardening team pruning and fertilizing 24 hours a day. Learn to enjoy PICTURES of beautiful flowers.

You are not Martha Stewart. Martha Stewart isn't even Martha Stewart. So...snap out of it!

You think I'm kidding here? I've lived it. I'm talking from experience. Do enough...be loved. Do enough...please God. You can't do enough to earn what has already been freely given to you. And isn't that just great?

It's true. You are covered by the most magnificent love available to mankind. God loves you so much that He allowed His only Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for you and me. Why? Because He knew we couldn't make it without Him. Admit it, God's just crazy about you!

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." John 15:5

"These things I have spoken to you that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full" John 15:11

My Sisters

By Joanna Hobbins

(This is particularly effective if performed
by someone who is a middle sister.)

My sisters I just can't live without
Sometimes they bug me,
Sometimes they hug me.

Before, as children we used to play
Today we have our own ways.

I will always have a big sister.
I will always have a little sister.
Although sometimes I wish I was an only child,
I don't know what I would do without my sisters.

Having sisters means I will always have a friend.
As I look back on memories of my life,
I remember my sisters and all the times we had together.

As I look up to my older sister
My younger sister looks up to me.

Through good times and bad
We will always stick together.
I love my sisters dearly.
I could not see my life without them.



What Is A Sister?

A Collection of Wisdom From Various Sisterly Sources!
One person may present this or several may take turns reading.

She is your mirror shining back at you with a world of possibilities.
She is your witness who sees you at your worst and best,
And loves you anyway.

She is your partner in crime, your midnight companion,
Someone who knows when you are smiling, even in the dark.

She is your teacher, your defense attorney,
your personal press agent, even your shrink.

Some days, she's the reason you wish you were an only child.

If we believe the media, we would think the only important
relationship in our lives is a romantic one. Yet sisterhood is the
one relationship that will last longer than any other...
A sister will always be around.

Write your sister's weak points in the sand
and her strong points in stone.

A sister is one who reaches for your hand and touches your heart.

Sisters function as safety nets in a chaotic world
simply by being there for each other.

Having a sister is like having a best friend you can't get rid of
whatever you do, they'll still be there.

Who else sees to it that my head stays the right size?

Sisters don't need words. They have perfected a language of
snarls and snickers and frowns and winks
-expressions of shocked surprise and incredulity and disbelief.
Sniffs and snorts and gasps and sighs
...that can undermine any tale you are telling!

My sister taught me everything I know!
...and she was in sixth grade at the time.

Every sister has a fund of embarrassing stories she can bring out at
the most effective moment.

She takes my hand and leads me along paths I would never
have dared explore alone.

What's the good news if you haven't a sister to share it with?

By the way,
you don't have to share the same parents to be sisters!





Jesus and Martha "It's A Good Thing."

*This is the concluding, serious, spiritual thought.
Use it as the final part of the program.
If desired, divide the paragraphs between a series of speakers.*

I know who Martha was in the story of Jesus, Mary and Martha. She was Martha Stewart. She had to have been. Who else would feel that holiday decorating must include your kitchen, bedroom and every bathroom.

Can't you just hear Jesus...."Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about a great many things, but only one thing is needful!" And Martha whines, "But Jee-sus, I'm doing A GOOD THING!" I know Jesus must have replied, "Martha, good is always robber of the best."

There are many good things we can choose to do—cooking from scratch, decorating like the magazines suggest, sewing every drape and piece of child's clothing in the house...you get the idea. But let me remind you that Jesus was born in a barn and Martha was nowhere around to give it that "rustic, yet homey feel". It was a real, true barn. God must have thought it was the best thing.

Martha would have at least made sure Jesus was wrapped in a 100% cotton, 230 thread count lovely pastel piece of fabric, trimmed in appropriate braid and tightly sewn. But God thought Jesus should be wrapped in clean fresh graveclothes. Jesus came as a man for all people to have a relationship with Him.



I *know* when I am in the home of a Martha. How do I know? It's perfect. Bear with me here, Martha dear, don't be offended. I have been there, done that and it does not work. When I see some dear Martha giving everyone the illusion that it does work, I can't decide whether to pity her or smack her to honest reality.

Martha may have been able to squeeze in her little prayer time but does that make up for the fact that there is no way Martha is able to enjoy the Lord and her family with all those "good things" she has to do to make a perfect impression of a home. Let's hear Jesus one more time... "Martha, Martha. Your sister Mary has chosen the BEST thing and she will not be denied."

Pssst, Martha. Your sister Mary has chosen to get off the perfection treadmill. She has chosen her children, her husband, her emotional well being, her financial health and ultimately the enjoyment of God's presence that comes when one lets go of the troubles of this world.

"Come to Me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest." Matt.11:28 Martha don't be afraid and don't be denied. Come with me. "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1.

Melodious Music

*The following choruses and hymns
are a few suggestions guests can sing together.
Find songs your guests know well.*

**SURELY THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD IS IN THIS PLACE
JESUS IS THE SWEETEST NAME I KNOW
GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS**

SIMPLE GIFTS

'Tis a gift to be simple, 'tis a gift to be free.
'Tis a gift to come down where we ought to be.
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
'twill be in the valley of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gained,
to bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed.
To turn, turn, will be our delight,
'til by turning, turning we come 'round right.

APPLE BLOSSOM TIME

I'll be with you in Apple Blossom Time,
I'll be with you to change your name to mine.
One day in May, I'll come and say,
"Happy the bride the sun shines on today."
What a wonderful wedding there will be,
What a wonderful day for you and me.
Church bells will chime, You will be mine,
In Apple Blossom Time.



Sisters, Sisters

By Irving Berlin

Sisters, Sisters
There were never such devoted sisters.
Never had to have a chaperone, no sir,
I'm there to keep my eye on her.
Caring, sharing
Every little thing that we are wearing.

When a certain gentleman arrived from Rome,
She wore the dress, and I stayed home.

All kinds of weather, we stick together.
The same in the rain and sun.
Two different faces, but in tight places
We think and we act as one.
Those who've seen us
Know that not a thing could come between us.

Many men have tried to split us up, but no one can.
Lord help the mister who comes between me and my sister!
And Lord help the sister that comes between me and my man!

(Sheet music available at: sheetmusicplus.com \$3.95,
usually ships within 24 hours. Price may change.)





Bouquets Of Thankfulness

The Mary Stewart Party Committee....

Martha's Chefs...

The Lazarus Team....

Pianist...

Our Guests...

*Thank you for your presence
and your gracious sense of humor.
May the Lord go with you this evening
and for the rest of your life.*

