

HAVING A MARY HEART—BONUS SESSION

Built around an extended time alone with God and an optional luncheon, this Bonus Session is an excellent way to close out your study. It can be used as a final session with 1–1½ hours dedicated to prayer or an actual four-hour “Half-Day of Prayer” scheduled on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon (which I suggest for studies limited to an hour). Though this may be intimidating for some of your ladies, I can promise that whatever format you choose, it will be a rich day none of you ever forget!

BONUS SESSION SCRIPT:

ASSIGNMENT:

(To be assigned at end of week 10 – see Leader’s Guide for other options)

- Encourage women to use tips found in both “Reading and Marking Your Bible” sidebar (week 4) and “Bible Reading Highlights” sidebar (week 5).
- Assign the “Bible Reading Highlight” template pages in back of guide as homework for the week. For those unsure where to read in the Bible, point them to the suggestions in opening paragraphs of the template section.
- Encourage the women to wear comfortable clothes and to come prepared for their time with the Lord. Remind them to bring their Bible and a notebook or journal and anything else that would supplement their time with God.
- Give your ladies advance notice of the time they will have alone with God (1–1½ hours on a study day and 3½–4 hours on a separate half-day of prayer.)
- If doing optional potluck luncheon, ask women to bring a dish.

PREPARATION:

BEFORE SCHEDULED HALF-DAY OF PRAYER:

- Tour your facility and arrange to have access to as many rooms as possible. Though women won’t have a room to themselves, make sure you have enough space to allow some privacy.

ON DAY OF SESSION:

- Check preselected rooms to make sure they are clean and marked as designated prayer spaces. In large areas such as a main auditorium, you might want to have worship music playing very softly.
- Provide coffee and water bottles for women to take to rooms. A basket of granola bars and/or fruit is also a nice touch.
- Prepare a table of quiet-time resources: various translations of the Bible, devotionals, commentaries, concordances, “scripture compilation” books, and other Christian books. Have extra pens and paper on hand as well. A few empty journals are nice for women who’d like to use one.
- If having lunch together, make any necessary preparations.

WELCOME: (8 MINUTES)

- Welcome ladies.
- Go over the day's schedule. Let the women know what time and where you will come back together for lunch.
- Explain where prayer spaces are located. Encourage them to find a place where they'll be comfortable and yet give others around them privacy.
- Briefly point to and ask them to consider using the "Bible Reading Highlight" sidebar and template provided in the back of their study guide.
- If you have a resource table available, invite women to use anything they might find useful in their time alone with God.

BLESSING: (10 MINUTES)

From Joanna: To His weary, busy disciples, Jesus gave this invitation –
"Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." MARK 6:31

In a sense, that's exactly what this extended time alone with God is about. In choosing to exit our busy lives for a while, we have a chance to sit at Jesus' feet like Mary did. To drink in His love and soak up His wisdom. To find rest for our souls. That "calm, inner tranquility" we so desperately need. So that when it is time to leave this place—this oasis of His presence—we are filled with everything we need. For we are filled with Jesus.

Oh, girls, this is going to be wonderful! Just you wait and see!

- Inform ladies what TIME they should gather for lunch.
- Pray over the ladies and your time together. Then dismiss them with these instructions:
"From this moment on, please refrain from speaking.
This time is meant to be between you and God alone.
If you have an emergency, I will be at (LOCATION).
But until we come back together at (TIME), let's honor the Lord and each other by giving reverence to this time."

QUIET TIME: (60–90 MINUTES)

COMING BACK TOGETHER: (15 MINUTES)

- As you welcome the women back together, ask them to share what it felt like to spend a dedicated time with the Lord.