



ORANGE GROUP IDEAS

MAIN IDEAS FOR THE NIGHT

Jesus wants the heart of every Christian's to feel peaceful – even when life gets stressful. What are some things that we can do to limit the stress in our lives and to take care of ourselves? We can actively work to get rid of BUSYNESS (that's taking things out of our lives), and work to add in a rhythm of REST, RECREATION, and WORSHIP (that's called Sabbath).

KEY VERSES:

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. **John 14:27 (NIV)**

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better..." **Luke 10:41-42a (NIV)**

IMPORTANT NOTE:

This week's material concludes with two important (perhaps even offensive) articles for parents to consider on their own. If your group has adult-time, you might consider letting folks read these article on tier own either ahead of time or during group time, and then discussing their reactions. I've included them in these pages but also attached them as separate .PDFs if you'd like to send them to your adults separately.

ICE BREAKERS

Orange Group Leader: *Choose the icebreaker(s) that you believe will work best for your group. They all easily carry the main ideas of this week's material.*

JUGGLING

Have everyone try juggling! Have fun with this because most of us are terrible at it. (Perhaps give a prize to the best and worst jugglers in the group!)



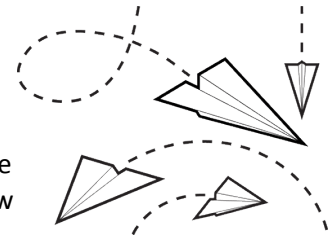
WHAT YOU NEED: A place free of precious and breakable objects. Several sets of three (3) tennis balls – they don't have to be new! Smaller balls with some weight work better for younger children to grasp.

WHAT TO DO: Teach everyone some basics: Start by practicing a high-arc toss from one hand to the other, and back again. The height of the toss should be slightly above the head. Then add a second ball and time the tosses so that each hand is free to catch the incoming ball. (Of course, they must avoid hitting one another in mid air as well.) After that is mastered, try adding the 3rd ball by finding a rhythm that allows for juggling to occur.

WHAT TO SAY: Sometimes we can be so busy doing so many good things, that we begin to feel stressed and pressured. God does not want us to stay like that for very long. So one of the big ideas we'll be discussing tonight is BUSYNESS – when we've just got too much going on in our lives to rest the way God wants us to rest. The other idea is to add good patterns (or rhythms) in our lives – sort of like you have to do in order to juggle. Those patterns will help to rest and refresh us.

AIRPLANE BLITZ

This game is about how busyness can become a way of life for us because there will always be more to do regardless of how much we have already done. The object of the game is to have the least number of airplanes on your side. Participants can only throw ONE plane at a time and they must stop when the leader says, "stop".



WHAT YOU NEED: A large amount of plain copy/printer paper; A way to simply divide the room into two halves

WHAT TO DO: Have the participants make lots and lots of paper airplanes (3-4 minutes). Next, clearly divide the room in half. (A couch works, but a taller divider is better.) Put half the kids on each side of the divider. Put half the paper airplanes on each side of the divider.

WHAT TO SAY:

- Sometimes we can be so busy doing so many good things, that we begin to feel stressed and pressured. God does not want us to stay like that for very long.
- EXPLAIN that the object of the game is to have the least number of airplanes on your side. Participants can only throw ONE plane at a time and they must stop when the leader says, "stop".

LEAD THE GAME:

1. Say "Go". *They throw the airplanes over the divider as fast as they can. Planes are flying in both directions. Pick up any planes you see out of the field of play and throw them back.*
2. Let them go about 3 minutes. Give them a ten second warning and then say, "Stop!"
3. Count the airplanes on each side of the divider. The team with the least number of planes wins.
4. Repeat it a number of times, keeping track of the wins to get the champions.

TALK ABOUT IT:

1. **Was this an easy game? Did it seem to get more difficult the longer it went?** (*tiring*)
2. **Was there anything frustrating about the game?** (*Hopefully it will come out that even if you tried harder, the planes just kept coming back. Enough never seemed to be enough to get rid of them! It was very tiring!*)
3. **How might this be like our lives?** (*invite comments*)
No matter how hard we work (or busy we keep), there will always be more to do. If we're not careful, we can end up spending our lives busily trying to take care of all the urgent things that come flying into our lives (like paper planes), and never do the most important things.

EVERYBODY GETS A SPECIAL DAY!

WHAT YOU NEED: A picture of a birthday cake; or an actual cake (if someone actually has a birthday to celebrate!)



WHAT TO SAY: Ask the following questions:

1. (*Show the cake.*) What does this mean? (*That it is somebody's birthday*)
2. Does everyone have a special day? (*Yes, regardless of how old a person gets to be.*)
3. Does God, our Heavenly Father, have a special day? (*Yes, but it's not his birthday because he has always existed!*)
4. What do we call God's special day? (*Sabbath; which for Christians like us happens on Sundays.*)

Explain that we treat that day different than the other days of the week. Sabbath is a day unhurried, a day to rest. If there's anything we all need, it's simply to take a day to slow down. That doesn't mean everyone must sit on the couch and stare at the walls. Rather, it's a day to set aside our work and demanding activities and to focus on God and on family and friends, instead.

OTHER ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT THE MAIN IDEAS:

AT JESUS' FEET

WHAT YOU NEED: Copies of the “Mary, Martha and Jesus” & “Feet” coloring pages (both attached) for each child; adequate Crayons / Markers; Scissors (if desired)

WHAT TO DO: First, pass out only the “Mary, Martha & Jesus” sheets to the children in your group. Have them color and decorate as you read the narrative below.

WHAT TO SAY:

If we sit by someone’s feet all day long, what will we see? What will we hear? What will we learn about that person? *Explain that it would be hard to be right by someone all day long and not learn quite a lot about him/her.*

READ the following passage aloud:

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. 40 But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” 41 “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.

Luke 10:38-42 (NIV)

There was someone else at Martha’s home when Jesus came to visit. It was her sister Mary. She began to sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to Him. Wouldn’t it be wonderful to sit at Jesus’ feet for a few hours! Did you know that when you ask Jesus into your heart, He comes and lives inside of you, and you can sit at his feet and listen to Him through His Word (the Bible) anytime you want? He is always available to us.

TO DO: *Invite the parents to interact with the children as they continue to color their pages for a few more moments...*

NEXT, pass out the “Feet” coloring page to each child and invite them to start working on it as you describe below. As they work, the children can color and then cut the feet out however they want. While the children are coloring their feet, ask them some questions about sitting at someone’s feet.

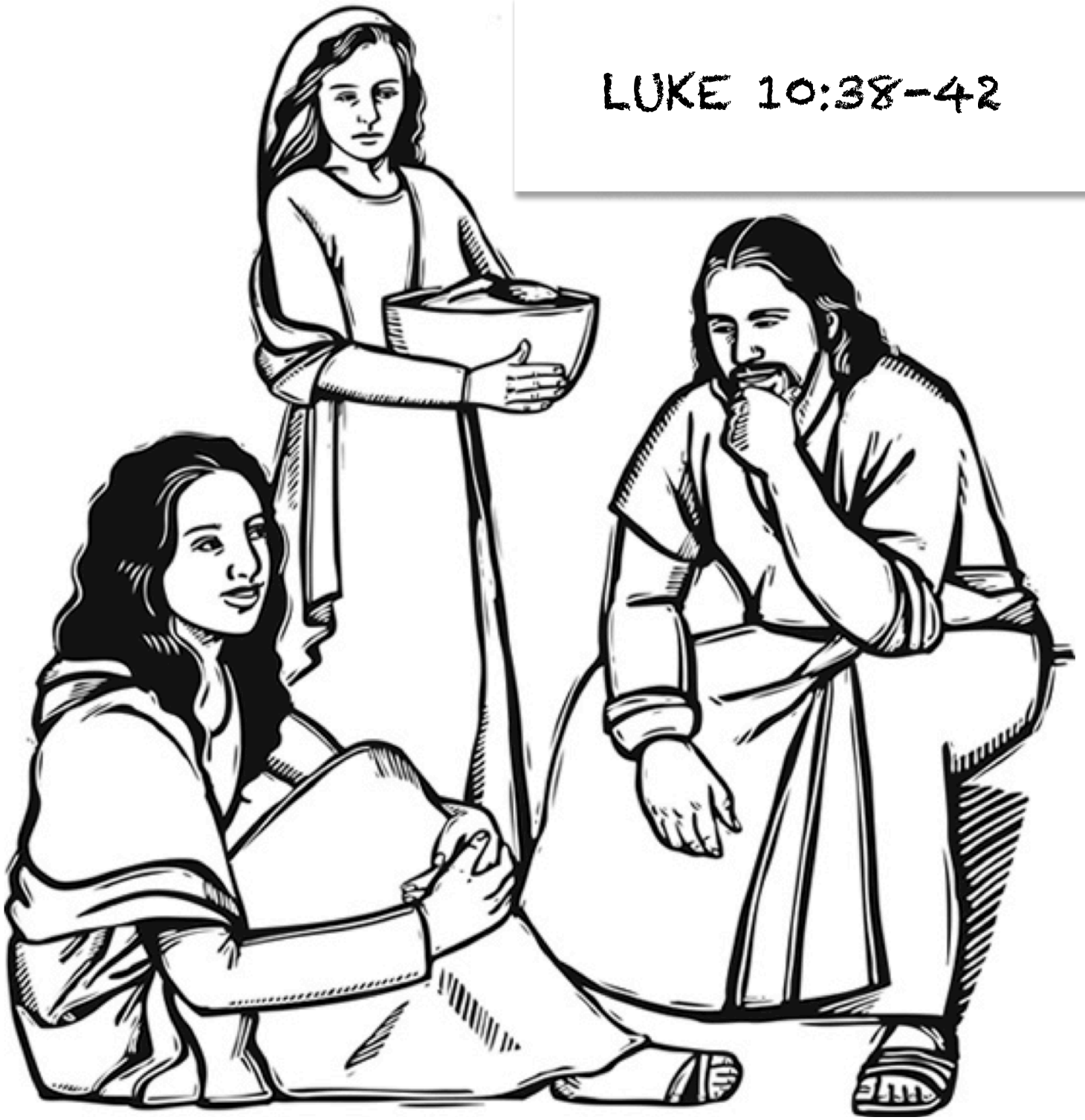
SAY: **Jesus wants us to spend time with Him. So we should always make sure that we don’t get too busy doing other things that we no longer have time to read or listen to Bible stories, or to pray, or to attend church on Sundays.**

What are some things in your life (good things!) that compete for time spent with Jesus? *(Give time for responses and invite the children to write those in the space above their feet pictures.)*

So, while doing some of these things is good, we shouldn’t try to make them all fit into our lives all of the time. Otherwise, we will be too busy and too tired and too grouchy to spend the time with Jesus that He wants. (It’s sort of like only eating desserts and sweets all of the time – it might taste good for a little while, but eventually it will make us sick!)

What could we do to create a pattern every week of taking time to be with Jesus? *(Invite ideas and include parent’s comments.)*

LUKE 10:38-42



On the lines below, write down a few activities, people, or events that could make us so busy that we don't have time to spend at Jesus' feet.



CROSS WORDS

Invite the children to complete the crossword puzzle on the next page. Working the crossword puzzles enables children to understand elements of the stories better. This certainly is true of this crossword puzzle about Martha's desire for Mary to help her with housework and Jesus' praise of Mary for listening carefully to His teaching. Children can understand the importance of slowing down, listening to and obeying all Jesus says.

The Story of Mary and Martha Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

2. What we eat
4. Small town
5. Jesus thought this was important.
7. The one who sat at Jesus' feet
8. Female children of the same parents
9. Concerned or troubled

DOWN

1. Jesus said Mary had done this well.
3. Followers of Jesus
6. A visitor to your home
7. The one who served the meal

The Story of Mary and Martha Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

2. What we eat
4. Small town
5. Jesus thought this was important.
7. The one who sat at Jesus' feet
8. Female children of the same parents
9. Concerned or troubled

DOWN

1. Jesus said Mary had done this well.
3. Followers of Jesus
6. A visitor to your home
7. The one who served the meal

The Thief of Intimacy, Busyness For Parents Only

I was sitting in our living room a few days ago, with my laptop on my lap, doing what I always do “after work” — answering emails that don’t stop at 5, catching up on business.

My little girl, a real love of my life, came into the room in that beautiful way she does. She doesn’t so much walk as she skips, she glides, she dances. She walks on her tippy toes, because she is, as she says, a “for real life” princess. As she came dancing into the room, she started to say in her own sing-songy way, “Daddy, would you like to...”

At that very moment she saw me, laptop in lap, locked into my war against email. The struggle I always lose.

She cut herself off. Her dancing came to a halt. Her sing-songy voice changed to something else, something not even resembling disappointment. It was resignation, more like surrender to the rhythm of her daddy’s life, knowing the scene she had seen countless times before.

Without waiting for my response, she cut herself off mid-sentence, pivoted on her beautiful feet, and walked out. I heard her say, with her back turned to me, “Oh, you’re busy.”

As she walked out, I stared at this blasted laptop screen. Silver frame. Plastic, shiny screen. Cursor that blinks like a heartbeat. But it is not alive, this laptop. There is no heartbeat here, as there is in that delicate angel of mine.



I ran after my little love and held her in my arms. I wanted to apologize not just for being busy in that moment, but for all the hundreds of other times she must have come into the room, dancing and prancing, singing and wishing to take me with her on her imaginary flights of fancy to beautiful worlds where little girls and their dads walk through meadows populated only by butterflies, unicorns, friends, tea parties, sunshine, and hugs. It’s a beautiful pink and purple world that my daughter lives in. Far too often, she’s been there alone.

All too often, I’m home, but I am not fully there with her, because I am tending to other business.

I am a good daddy, I know I am. I know it every time her beautiful face lights up when she sees me. I work hard. I try to be a good colleague, a good son, a good friend, a good partner, a good sibling. It’s not about how much I love her (“right up to the moon and back”). It’s about the time that she has my undivided attention. It’s about the quality of time in which I am wholeheartedly present. She, my love, is always present.

And when I give in to this busyness, I am missing out. People talk about #FOMO: Fear of Missing Out. I don’t fear it; I know it. I am missing out. I’m missing out by being so busy.

We live in a culture that celebrates activity. We collapse our sense of who we are into what we do for a living. The public performance of busyness is how we demonstrate to one another that we are important.

The more people see us as tired, exhausted, over-stretched, the more they think we must be somehow... indispensable. That we *matter*.

I know I matter each time I look into the eyes of she who matters most to me. I don’t gain anything by stepping into the swamp of busyness. No one emerges from this busyness whole.

The Thief of Intimacy, Busyness *continued.*

We have become a thing-centered society: the accumulation of stuff is one of our favorite priorities. We define our worth through the number of tasks we fulfill. How do we become a person-centered society again?

Tasks are finite. They come at us with an endless barrage. We check them off, and more follow.

So what's the price we pay for being busy? It's not that being busy makes us more stressed, or less efficient, or less pleasant. It's that we miss out. We miss out on an extraordinary amount of time, of being present, of living in intimacy with the people we love the most. The price we pay is... intimacy.

Intimacy is what we all crave. We all want to be loved. We want to give love and receive love. We all crave for others to be with us. And that love is often the slow, patient kind. It doesn't show up on any list of tasks that have been crossed off. There are no daily memos that recognize it, no annual reports of it. It shows up in the smile of my daughter when she sees me, in the way she puts her head on my shoulder, in how long she lingers before saying goodbye.

Somewhere we read love is patient, love is kind. Real love is also often undocumented, but lived.

To love someone, truly love someone, we have to be there. We have to be there wholeheartedly. Not one eye on the laptop, one eye on our child. Not one eye on our partner, one eye on the iPhone. To love someone wholly, we have to be wholeheartedly present ourselves. Being "busy" robs us of that intimacy.

There is a whole eternity present inside each of these moments, these breaths, in which we are truly present. And there is a thief that robs the grace inside these moments. That thief is scatteredness, busyness.

Each one of these breaths is a jewel. Inside these jewels there is the promise of intimacy. Seek it. Don't lose it to the thief of busyness.

Cruel Kindergarchy For Parents Only

We live in a child-centered age—a *kindergarchy*, if you will. If we're not careful, we assume their total well-being depends on us and anxiously strive to live up to the "myth of the perfect parent." In fact, sometimes we view our children more as products to be developed rather than as people to be enjoyed. The result can be busy, stress-filled lives filled with endless road trips between school, church, sports, tutoring, piano lessons...even the list is exhausting! Take a few moments to consider the following, if you have the time.

1. How did we come to assume that our children's failures will almost certainly be our fault for not doing enough? What cultural and spiritual forces have contributed to this?
2. What specific parental pressures have you felt raising your children? Where did these pressures come from? Do you see any negative impact?
3. How would you grade *your* parents in the way they raised you? How do you think your children would grade *you*? What might be one thing they wish was different?
4. Leslie Leyland Fields writes, "Parents with unbelieving children, friends with children in jail, the discoveries of the geneticists, and the faith heroes in Hebrews 11 are all powerful reminders of this truth: We will parent imperfectly, our children will make their own choices, and God will mysteriously and wonderfully use it all to advance his kingdom". How could this quote free us to parent with a realistic yet radiant hope?

