

Women in the Ministry of Christ

Memory Verse: *I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy*
(Psalm 116:1 NIV).

Background Helps:

It has been often remarked that Jesus, during his earthly ministry, treated women with honor and respect. He healed them (or their children) of disease, he delivered them from sin, he engaged them in conversation, he received their hospitality and related to them as friends, he used them as illustrations in his parables, he taught them and made them his disciples, and he commended their faith. Jesus treated women as persons in their own right in keeping with the truths of Scripture that women were created, like men, in the image of God (Gen. 1:27) and that they are “heirs with [men] of the gracious gift of life” (1 Pet. 3:7).

According to Luke 8:1-3, there was even a group of women who followed Jesus during his public ministry, supporting both him and his disciples from their possessions. Mary, his mother, had the extraordinary privilege of giving birth to the Son of God. Other women anointed his body beforehand for burial (Matt. 26:12), remained with him to the bitter end at his crucifixion and burial (Matt. 27:55-61), and were the first to see him after his resurrection on Easter morning (Matt. 28:8-10, John 20:11-18). Jesus raised the status of women in his day in a way that was contrary to the thinking of many of his contemporaries.

Lesson Helps:

Once again your lesson could follow one of several alternatives:

1. My aim is to teach my students about the way Jesus related to the women of his day, so that they will treat women of today with honor and respect. Following the thoughts presented in the background helps above, this lesson would include an overview of a number gospel passages showing Jesus in interaction with women (see the Bible reading schedule). In a larger class divide into small groups, giving each group one incident from the life of Christ to consider. Then have each group report back to the main body. You may want to consult the Danvers Statement, handed out at the teacher training session, which summarizes the biblical view of womanhood.
2. My aim is to teach my students how Jesus delivered women from their sin, so that they will trust in Christ to deliver them from their own sin. The stories in John 4 and Luke 7:36-50 are examples of Jesus saving women from their sin. Use these episodes to present the gospel to your class.
3. My aim is to teach my students how Jesus healed women (or their relatives) of their diseases, so that they will call on the Lord for physical healing. Use the

stories in Mark 5:21-43, Luke 7:11-17, and Matthew 15:21-28 to bring hope to those suffering with physical afflictions.

4. My aim is to teach my students about women who were loyal followers of Christ, so that they will choose to be his loyal followers also. Using Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42 and John 11; 12:1-8) and Mary Magdalene (Luke 8:13, Matt. 27:55-61, John 20:1-2, 11-18) as your examples, challenge your class to follow Christ as faithfully as these women did.

The memory verse, Psalm 116:1, would fit well with most of these lesson aims. Like these women, our response to Christ's mercy toward us should be heartfelt love for him.

Assignment:

-  Read about women in the early church (Prominent Women of the Bible).
-  Memorize 1 Peter 4:10.