Showing Mary

by Renita J. Weems

Discussion Guide

Showing Mary, by Renita J. Weems (Warner Books, copyright c 2002), uses the life of Jesus’ mother, Mary as both illustration and inspiration to show how women can share in the blessings of God and live up to their potential. Dr. Weems shows how Mary came to terms with her destiny and the role her cousin Elizabeth played in offering support and encouragement during this challenging time in her life. The book provides help for women of all ages to live as daughters of Christ and gently leads the reader to a new understanding of self and personal destiny.

Permission is granted to reproduce this discussion guide.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The introduction looks at how you begin a spiritual pregnancy and what you have in common with Mary.

1. Share why you have selected this book to read and what you hope to learn from it.

2. How does it feel to be on the verge of something special?

3. Why is Mary a good role model for women who are changing?

Chapter 2

“Greetings, You Have Found Favor”

This chapter looks at Mary’s reaction to the news of her pregnancy and what it means to be favored by God.

1. What thoughts and feelings did Mary have in reaction to Gabriel’s greeting?

2. Share some skills and abilities that make you special.

3. Discuss what it means to be favored by God.
Chapter 3
Ready From Within

This chapter examines the process of change and how to prepare for it.

1. Why is most change unwilling in the beginning?
2. How did God prepare Mary for coming changes?
3. How do you know when something from within is ready?

Chapter 4
God is With You

This chapter looks at the assurances of God and why you are never alone.

1. How did Mary know that God was with her?
2. Share a time you felt God’s hand in your life.
3. Discuss how friendship with other women can help you on your journey.

Chapter 5
“To a Girl Named Mary”

This chapter looks at how Mary responded to this miraculous news from God.

1. What did Mary mean by asking how can this be?
2. List some of the lifestyle choices available to women today.
3. Share something that is a reality today that you could not have imagined as a child.

Chapter 6
Why Now?

This chapter examines the mysteries of God’s perfect timing.

1. Share what you know are truths about God’s timing.
2. Do you think Mary questioned God’s timing? Why or why not?
3. List some ways that God tries to get a person’s attention.

Chapter 7
So What’s So Great About Being a Virgin?

This chapter examines various aspects of being a virgin in Mary’s time.

1. Share a new insight you learned about the word “virgin” or about Mary.
2. Explain how Mary was and is every woman.
3. What do you admire about Mary?

Chapter 8
“Psssst …. You’re Pregnant”

This chapter looks at reactions to pregnancy and how it is a life-changing experience.

1. What is known about Joseph’s reaction to Mary’s pregnancy?
2. What are typical feelings for a woman when she finds out she is pregnant?
3. Discuss the role that balance plays in a woman’s life.

Chapter 9
I Have Been Here Before

This chapter examines spiritual awakening and why they can take us by surprise.

1. Share a time when you experienced a spiritual awakening.
2. What’s the connection between prayer and asking yourself questions?
3. Explain why, on the surface of it, God’s timing never seems to be right.

Chapter 10
“Let It Be Done According to Your Word”

This chapter looks at accepting change as a natural and wonderful part of life.

1. What does “may it be done according to your word” mean and not mean?
2. How can Mary be an example for women whose lives are suddenly changed?
3. What things should you keep in mind when change occurs in your life?

Chapter 11

**Even Elizabeth**

*This chapter examines Elizabeth’s pregnancy and how it was also a blessing for Mary.*

1. What was unusual about Elizabeth’s pregnancy?
2. Share an unbelievable situation you once found yourself in.
3. God knocks repeatedly. What does this mean for us?

Chapter 12

**Overshadowed**

*This chapter looks at the human search for love, satisfaction and intimacy.*

1. Why are we never completely satisfied by human love?
2. List things we seek to give us satisfaction. Why don’t they work?
3. Explain what it means that in our lonely places we encounter the Holy.

Chapter 13

**Sex and Sleep Dust**

*This chapter looks at the meaning of being engaged in Mary’s times and what people believed then about sex and marriage.*

1. How did Mary’s generation view marriage and sex?
2. List some ways how Mary’s pregnancy was a problem for her and local customs.
3. What is “sleep dust” and why is it a danger?
Chapter 14  
**Here Comes the Bride**

*This chapter looks at the realities of weddings and marriage, then and now.*

1. What false expectations about weddings and marriage exist today?
2. List some ways society promotes helplessness in women.
3. Discuss some keys to finding the inner woman and the authentic you.

Chapter 15  
**My Mother, My Self**

*This chapter looks at roles that mothers play and mother-daughter relationships.*

1. List some reasons why Mary may have chosen her older cousin to discuss her pregnancy rather than her own mother.
2. How can mothers be role models for their daughters?
3. When you were a teenage girl, who did you talk to about dating and sex? Why did you select that person?

Chapter 16  
**Shedding the Eternal Girl**

*This chapter looks at girls who are frozen in time and never reach their full potential.*

1. How are girls portrayed in fairy tales? What’s wrong with the portrayals?
2. How was Mary different from those girls in the fairy tales?
3. How can you shed the fairy tale layers you have outgrown? How can others help you?

Chapter 17  
**Midwives**

*This chapter looks at the need for women to give and receive support.*

1. List some ways friends have given you support over the years.
2. Share some ways you have supported your friends.
3. How did Mary and Elizabeth support each other?

Chapter 18
**Showing**

*This chapter shows the value and benefits of best friendships.*

1. Why did Mary need Elizabeth? What did Elizabeth offer to Mary that no one else could?
2. List some of the losses and gains that change brings.
3. Name some of the traits of strong friendships.

Chapter 19
**“But (She) Had No Children”**

*This chapter looks at women who don’t bear children, by chance or choice.*

1. List reasons why women have children. Create a companion list of why they don’t.
2. Name some of the issues and pressures that women of child-bearing age face today.
3. How is motherhood different today as compared to when Mary lived?

Chapter 20
**Late Bloomers**

*This chapter looks at women who come into their own late in life.*

1. What does it feel like to be a late bloomer? In what ways do you feel different?
2. List some truths and myths about late bloomers.
3. How did Elizabeth benefit from being a late bloomer?
Chapter 21

**Mary and Red Shoes**

*This chapter looks at why some women hold themselves back while others use and enjoy the gifts that God has given them.*

1. Share a time you wanted “red shoes” and what happened as a result.
2. Name some things that sometimes prevent girls from transforming.
3. How was Elizabeth a center or inner compass for Mary? Why do we all need an Elizabeth in our lives? Who helps you stay on course?

Chapter 22

**Something Within**

*This chapter looks at that special time in life when a woman sets herself free.*

1. Share a special time when it all came together for you.
2. How are you like Elizabeth?
3. How does it feel to have everything fall into place?

Chapter 23

**Surprised By Passion**

*This chapter looks at the many ways passion is expressed by women.*

1. Name one or more of your passions.
2. Share your most recent surprisingly joyous experience.
3. Discuss how both Mary and Elizabeth experienced shared passion.
Chapter 24

Getting Into the Dance

This final chapter encourages you to give birth to the beautiful things inside you.

1. How does it feel to find God within yourself?
2. Explain what it means to get into the dance.
3. Share what you gained from reading this book and by participating in the discussions.