

Adult Small Group Study: The Apostle to the Apostles

Target Audience: Adult Cell Groups, Bible Studies, and Faith Sharing Communities

Duration: 40 Minutes

Focus: Exploring the radical discipleship of St. Mary Magdalene and applying her virtues to adult life, the workplace, and modern evangelization.

Part 1: Welcome & Opening Prayer (5 Minutes)

Leader Introduction:

"Welcome, everyone. Today we are looking at the extraordinary life of St. Mary Magdalene. In 2016, Pope Francis elevated her memorial to a Feast Day on July 22nd, cementing her ancient title as the 'Apostle to the Apostles.' We are going to watch a short, 13-minute animation that explores her journey from the crucifixion to her historical ministry in Rome, where she testified before the Emperor himself. As we watch, pay attention to the virtues she displays when facing immense grief, cultural hostility, and the unknown."

Opening Prayer:

Lord, as we gather today, open our hearts to the witness of St. Mary Magdalene. Give us the grace to see our own spiritual journeys reflected in hers. May her profound faithfulness, courage, and zeal inspire us to follow You more closely, no matter the cost. Amen.

Part 2: Video Screening (15 Minutes)

- **Play the Full Animation:** (00:00 – 13:13)
- **Leader Note:** Ensure the volume is appropriate and the closed captions (if needed) are clearly visible.

Part 3: Scripture Connection (5 Minutes)

Bridge the animation to the Word of God to ground the discussion.

Read Aloud (John 20:15-18):

Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher)... Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Brief Reflection:

Jesus called her by name in the midst of her deepest sorrow. It was this intimate encounter that fueled her radical obedience and missionary zeal to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Part 4: Group Discussion (10 Minutes)

Divide the group into smaller clusters (3-4 people) or discuss as a whole, depending on the room size. Present the following three thematic questions based on her virtues:

1. Faithfulness & Zeal in the Darkest Hours

- **Context:** Mary stayed at the foot of the cross when it was dangerous, and she was the first to arrive at the tomb when it seemed hopeless. Once she realized He was alive, she ran to tell the grieving disciples.
- **Discussion:** In adult life, it is easy to become spiritually numb or cynical when facing grief, illness, or prolonged hardship. How do we cultivate Mary's steadfast **faithfulness** in our darkest seasons? What does it look like to reclaim a genuine **zeal** and joy for the Gospel in our daily routines?

2. Courage & Perseverance in a Hostile Culture

- **Context:** Mary traveled to Rome and stood before Emperor Tiberius Caesar. She faced mocking crowds and the very real threat of execution to denounce injustice and proclaim the Resurrection.
- **Discussion:** Today, standing up for Christian values in the workplace, online, or even within our own families can invite hostility or cancellation. Where is God currently calling you to exercise greater **courage**? How do you maintain **perseverance** when your efforts to share the truth are rejected or misunderstood?

3. Faith & Obedience in the Unknown

- **Context:** She approached the most powerful man in the world armed with nothing but an egg, operating in radical **obedience** to Christ's command to preach to all nations, and having complete **faith** that the Holy Spirit would provide the words.
- **Discussion:** As adults, we often rely heavily on our own resources, plans, and logic. Where in your life are you struggling to yield control to God? How can we better embrace the "foolishness" of faith, trusting that God will equip us for the missions He calls us to?

Part 5: Closing Application & Prayer (5 Minutes)

The "Red Egg" Application:

"According to tradition, the egg Mary held turned red before the Emperor's eyes—a symbol of new life and the blood of Christ. As we leave today, think of one specific 'Emperor' or 'Roman marketplace' in your life. It could be a skeptical coworker, a struggling family member, or a specific societal injustice. This week, ask the Holy Spirit for the grace to bring the reality of the Resurrection into that exact space."

Closing Intercessory Prayer:

- *Invite the group to share any brief, specific prayer intentions.*
- *Conclude with:* "Heavenly Father, we thank You for the great love and courage of St. Mary Magdalene. Send Your Holy Spirit upon us, that we may not keep the joy of the Resurrection to ourselves. Make us bold witnesses of Your truth in our homes, our workplaces, and our communities. St. Mary Magdalene, Apostle to the Apostles, pray for us. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."