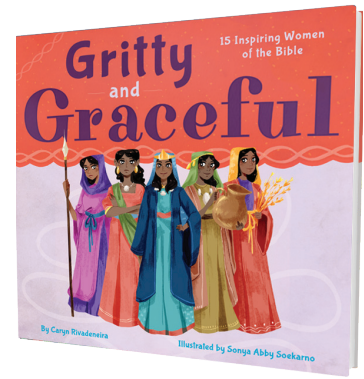


Gritty and Graceful

Lent Discussion Questions



A note for parents:

Gritty and Graceful is not a book about Lent. *Gritty and Graceful* tells the stories of 15 women who did great things for God. And even more so, of women for whom God did great things!

But of course, during Lent, we turn our attention on Jesus’s journey toward the cross, through his teachings and miracles, his sufferings and sacrifice, and his endless love and mercy. Even in the hard parts, we see the greatest thing God ever did for us: taking on human flesh and entering our world to gather us under God’s wings and to show us how to live.

In this, we discover that the Bible *is* a story of Lent—of God’s people in trouble and of God setting a plan to rescue and redeem them. That’s the story of Jesus! Thus, every story in the Scriptures becomes a Lenten story, because *every* story ultimately points toward this great act of God.

In this discussion guide, we’ve tied some key Lenten Themes to the different women. This practice—learning to spots signs of God’s Redemptive Love everywhere in the what we read or experience—isn’t about “proof-texting” or forcing views on the Scriptures. It’s a practice that acknowledges that God is in everything, that God’s hand is evident even in the trickiest of Bible stories—and in the trickiest moments of life!

We can train ourselves to see God’s hand by asking two simple questions:

What’s the hard part of this story?

What’s the good news of this story?

So, while this guide is specifically designed to go with the stories in *Gritty and Graceful*, these questions can be modified for other Bible stories—and even other books. The point is to learn to uncover signs the Story of Lent (that is, of God’s Big, Big Love) everywhere we look.

Let’s begin at the beginning.

I Am Eve

Lenten Theme: Ashes

Lent being on *Ash Wednesday*. The ashes remind us Adam and Eve in the creation story. That humans are *of* the earth. Spreading the ashes in a cross shape on our foreheads, however, reminds us that God has a plan! See if you can spot that plan in Eve’s story.

What’s the hard part of this story?

What’s the good news of this story?

I Am Hagar

Lenten Theme: Wilderness

Lent is 40 days long to symbolize both the 40 years the Israelites spent wandering the desert after they left Egypt and the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert before his ministry began. Notice the role the wilderness played in Hagar’s story.

What’s the hard part of this story?

What’s the good news of this story?

I Am Miriam

Lenten Theme: Trust

Jesus’ steps toward the cross was a huge act of trust. Jesus literally put his life in other people’s hands. Building trust is one of the reasons people choose to “give up” something for Lent. Where do you see trust in the story of Miriam?

What’s the hard part of this story?

What’s the good news of this story?

I Am Rahab

Lenten Theme: Self-Denial

Jesus put others first. His comfort and safety were never as important as showing love to others. Looks for signs of that in the story of Rahab.

What's the hard part of this story?

What's the good news of this story?

I Am Deborah

Lenten Theme: Surprise

Though we think of “surprise” as the stuff of Birthdays and Christmas Morning, Lent is journey of a King and a Messiah no one expected. What's the surprise in the story of Deborah?

What's the hard part of this story?

What's the good news of this story?

I Am Hannah

Lenten Theme: Prayer

Jesus's ministry on earth begins and ends in prayer. Along the way, Jesus not only teaches us how to pray but shows us how prayer helps us follow God's will. Notice the role of prayer in the story of Hannah.

What's the hard part of this story?

What's the good news of this story?

We Are Naomi and Ruth

Lenten Theme: Loyalty

God is loyal. Even when God's people wandered away and disobeyed, God never gave up. And in his ministry, Jesus showed that loyalty by extending love and mercy even to those who put him on the cross. Spot the loyalty in the story of Ruth and Naomi.

What's the hard part of this story?

What's the good news of this story?

I Am Queen Esther

Lenten Theme: Sacrifice

Jesus risked and gave his life for the good of the world. Even though Jesus was nervous about his trial in front of a king, Jesus was brave and did what was right.

How does Esther remind us of Jesus?

What's the hard part of this story?

What's the good news of this story?

I Am Mary

Lenten Theme: Obedience

Mary was young. Mary was not married. This was not a good time to have a baby! But when the angel asked Mary to be mom the Savior of the World, Mary said yes. Later, her boy Jesus would say yes to God as well. How is saying yes to God being obedient?

What's the hard part of this story?

What's the good news of this story?

We Are Mary and Martha

Lenten Theme: Discipline

During Lent, many people take on “spiritual disciplines.” A discipline is something—praying, reading the Bible, resting, helping others—that shows our loves for Jesus. Which disciplines did Mary and Martha use to show their love for Jesus?

What’s the hard part of this story?

What’s the good news of this story?

I Am the Woman at the Well

Lenten Theme: Seeking the Lord

In Lent we follow Jesus in his journey to learn to be like Jesus. We seek and discover Jesus! Notice how the Woman at the Well discovers Jesus.

What’s the hard part of this story?

What’s the good news of this story?

The Bleeding Woman

Lenten Theme: Faith

When we follow Jesus through Lent, a goal is to see our faith in God increase. What faith does the Bleeding Woman show?

What’s the hard part of this story?

What’s the good news of this story?

Mary Magdalene

Lenten Theme: New Life

Jesus’ journey doesn’t end with death on the Cross. His journey begins again with New Life on Easter morning! What other ways did Jesus bring new life to Mary Magdalene?

What’s the hard part of this story?

What’s the good news of this story?