



Introduction: Who is Smart Martha?

1. Are you more of a "Martha" mom or a "Mary" mom? How can doing "Martha" work help you to be more of a "Mary" mom? Do you have some examples of this?
2. Do you ever feel overwhelmed with your tasks of being a mother? What wears you down the most? What helps you overcome these feelings of overwhelm and defeat?
3. What works for you as a "Saw-sharpening" experience?

Chapter 1: Toys R Taking Us Over

1. Smart Martha suggests having a criteria for what toys you have in your home. What's your toy-keeping criteria?
2. Which of these ideas would you or do you find helpful?
 - Less is more
 - Toys in one place
 - Rotating toys
 - No toybox
 - Costume bin exception
3. Have you struggled with relatives buying too many or the wrong toys for your children? How do you handle this?
4. Do you play with your kids? What do you enjoy doing with them? What do you hate, but do it anyways?

Chapter 2: The Media Monster

1. Although any information about media quickly becomes outdated, some of the basic ideas still apply. What are the ways that you keep up with what your kids are into and what they are using?
2. Perhaps the biggest danger with the internet, rather on cellphone or our computers, is pornography. The statistics are staggering. How are you protecting your kids from this grave danger? What would you like to be able to do better?
3. Video games are incredibly addicting. How can we help our children learn to manage this? What kind of rules should we set as regards to amount of time played and what they play?
4. Many studies are now being released linking social media use to childhood depression and anxiety. How can we help our children steer away from the harmful effects of social media?

Chapter 3: Dinner!

1. So much in our Catholic faith revolves around a meal. Think of the examples in scripture--Passover meal, prodigal son's returning home feast--to the most important meal--the Eucharist. How has our fast-paced culture lost the importance of a meal? Why should we want to restore this? How can we as a family re-instate this important practice?
2. What family traditions do you have that revolve around your dinner table?
3. OK, planned weekly menu or not? How does planning help dinner to be more consistent and more amiable to family traditions?
4. What "Martha" tendencies do you have that keep you from enjoying dinner or having guests more frequently for dinner?

Chapter 4: It's Your Home, Too: Chores. . .

1. What one area of your home gives you the most problem to keep clean?
2. How do you, or ideally like to, do chores in your home? Do you use a chart? App? Do you pay allowances for these?
3. With your problem area from the first question, can a "Smart Martha" solution or "Saw-sharpening" solution help you to manage it better? See if anyone from the group has an idea.

Chapter 5: From T-Ball to Trombone

1. How many activities is too many? How do you make the decision that there is too much stuff going on and how do you decide what's got to go?
2. Perhaps the most outdated information in the book is the use of files. All physical file folders should now be replaced with folders on your computer--in documents, pictures, and in your email, or systems like, Evernote. How well do you organize, for example, your emails?
3. Bags? Not everything can be stored and solved with a computer. Have you used bags for your children? (Like a Mass bag, Library bag, etc.) Have you used bags like this for other things?

Chapter 6: Memories. . .

1. Seems like a lot of the clutter that comes with school-aged children, especially Kindergarteners, is school papers and artwork. How do you deal with this constant stream of clutter?
2. Do you "capture the moment" or "live in the moment?" What's the right balance here? How have cell-phones with cameras and social media helped or hindered this?
3. How do you keep the pictures on your phone accessible and archived?
4. How much memorabilia do you keep or want to keep for your children? Do you have a way to store it?

Chapter 7: The Heart of the Matter

1. What are some of the concepts or activities that you consider the "Heart of the Matter" for your family?
2. Is Sunday a special day in your house? How can we guard this special day and use it to concentrate on "Heart of the Matter" stuff?
3. What's one way you encourage your children to read? What hinders you kids from being readers?
4. Any ideas for encouraging the arts?
5. Any ideas for service projects that involve the whole family?
6. Finally, do you feel guilty about not accomplishing all of these important matters, or not doing them well enough? Don't. How can we feel encouraged about what we've done and what we are able to do? What really is the most important "matter" for your family?

Chapter 8: Babies

1. How does a baby bring out the "Mary" in you?
2. Has being "open to life" (either by practicing NFP or not) brought "blessings" to you? Can you share these?
3. If you had to live in a tiny house with a baby, what top 5 baby items would you keep?
4. What baby gear did you find least helpful?
5. How does starting over anew everyday bring a sense of hope to busy, drowning-in-messes, worn-out moms?
6. How has meeting and discussing these mom topics with other moms helped you out? What has been the best part of these discussions?