



Women in the Bible

Mary Magdalene

Interpreting the Text:

1. Choose passages from two different gospels that describe a similar aspect of Mary Magdalene's story (e.g. two stories of her at the crucifixion). How are they similar, and how are they different?
2. Ancient texts notoriously ignore the emotions of the figures in their stories. Examine the language in the passages surrounding Jesus' resurrection, especially Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-11; John 20:1-18. What do these passages tell us about Mary Magdalene's interior life?
3. There are a lot of Mary's in the Gospels, and sometimes they get mixed up or consolidated. How does this reality impact how you read stories about Mary Magdalene, or stories we assume are about her?

Applying the Text:

1. How have you heard Mary Magdalene portrayed in sermons, seen her depicted in movies, or thought you knew about her before this lesson? How do those pictures of her compare with the one painted by the four gospels?
2. In all four gospels, Mary Magdalene and other women are the first to find out about Jesus' resurrection and therefore the first to share the good news. And in most of the stories, the men do not believe them. What, if anything, does this passage have to say to today's gender relations?
3. Where do you imagine Mary Magdalene among Jesus' followers? Is she in the inner circle? Staying quietly to the side but listening intently? Where would you imagine yourself among Jesus' followers in these stories? Does your gender identity factor in here or not?