

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year C – Fifth Sunday in Lent**  
**Lesson Plans for Younger Children**

**Scripture: John 12:1-8**

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: Come, let us adore him. (Antiphon for Lent, Book of Common Prayer, page 81.) And what if, during this season of Lent, we sought a deeper understanding of this amazing gospel of grace? Will that image of grace energize us to do the spiritual housekeeping we need to be ready for the "new thing" God is doing in Easter?

**A notation for this week's Gospel**

The imported perfume was worth a year's wages, and it was poured out on the feet of Jesus. Was it an obscene waste of valuable resources that could have been used to feed the poor? Or an orthodox preparation of a body for burial? How do we become responsible stewards knowing when to store up and when to pour out?

**Theme: The fragrance of generosity**

**Before Class:** Poke around your house for items that would smell good to the children. You probably want to avoid perfume. It could be a fragrant soap, an orange-fragranced cleaning product, or shaving cream; it might even be artificial flavoring like lemon or cloves. Bring an assortment of these items for the children to sniff and choose which one (or ones) they think smell the best. Also bring a small jar to go on your altar, containing the preferred fragrance. Bring cotton balls so each child can have a drop or two to take home, a small container of white glue, scissors, and some clear plastic (plastic wrap or a plastic bag or two). Check on the plants, if you have left them at church.

Note: The references to the Crucifixion are made as some children may not be in your class next week, and you want the opportunity for them to ask any questions they might have about it.

**Beginning:** Tell the children that the story we have today is about a jar of really sweet smelling perfume and you need their help in deciding which of the fragrances you brought should be selected. Let each child, in turn, sniff each fragrance you brought and see if there is consensus. If not, which are the two best choices? If their choice allows a little bit to be poured into the jar you brought, do so.

**Praying:** Thank you that we have so many sweet-smelling fragrances in our world. Be with us as we hear about your servant, Mary, and the fragrance she used to show her love for you. Amen.

**The Story.** Tell the children that the story we have today happened very shortly before Jesus was killed. Remember that Jesus died on the cross but that he came back to tell us that he was now with God and that someday we will all be together with him and with God. In this story, some friends of Jesus decided to give a nice party and invite Jesus. They had good things to eat and fun people to talk with. It was warm where Jesus lived and people wore summer clothes and sandals without socks. So their feet would get very dusty and gritty. A good friend of Jesus whose name

was Mary decided to wash Jesus feet and then pour a sweet smelling perfume on his feet. Maybe it smelled like the fragrance we picked today. When she poured it on Jesus' feet, you could smell the sweet smell all over the house. Some people thought she should have not poured it all over Jesus feet because it was very expensive. They thought she should have sold it and given the money to poor people. Jesus told her she had done a good thing. He told her that she had gotten his body ready to be buried. Mary knew that Jesus was soon going to be killed.

**Activity:** Invite the children to create a picture of Mary washing Jesus feet that they can take home with them. Show them how to take a little piece of the plastic and fashion it into the perfume jar, placing the cotton that has been dipped in the fragrance within the plastic and then gluing the jar on their pictures.

**Getting Closure:** Gather the children around the altar and give each child the opportunity to show and talk about their picture. You could comment that you are so glad Jesus had friends who really loved him and that you are glad Jesus loves us and wants us to love him.

**Closing Prayer:** Loving God, thank you for your servant, Mary, who washed your feet and reminded us of caring for each other. Amen.

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