

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Fifth Sunday in Lent
Gospel Lesson for Adults

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: You will need Bibles or copies of the scripture for everyone in the class.

Beginning: As we read today's Scripture, suggest the group reflect on how we make decisions about when to generously pour out what we have and when to be judicious stewards of our resources.

Opening Prayer: Lord, you have done great things for us, and we are glad indeed. Amen. (Adapted from Psalm 126:4)

The Scripture: John 12: 1-8. Ask for a volunteer to read the passage after which you will keep silence for a moment or two, allowing people to reflect on what they heard, or to go back and re-read a portion of it.

Questions:

When is this passage happening? (Verse 1 - a week before the Crucifixion)

Foot washing was common in this culture, but usually done by a servant. What do we think caused Mary to decide to wash Jesus' feet and use such costly perfume? (She appears to know she is preparing Jesus for burial)

Ask for a different volunteer to read the passage one more time.

Allow a moment of two of silence.

Option: Invite the group to discuss today's passage. How do we become responsible stewards knowing when to store up and when to pour out? What stood out for them about the passage?

Getting Closure: Tell the group the following is from the Isaiah passage appointed for today: "Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43: 18-19) Invite them to wonder how this informs the Gospel lesson today.

Closing Prayer: As we prepare to walk, again, through the last days of Jesus' life, keep us ever mindful of the awesome love poured out and the new thing you are doing in our lives. Amen.

John 12:1-8

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ²There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. ³Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, ⁵'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' ⁶(He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) ⁷Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.'

Printed by the Office for Formation and Vocation Ministries of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

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