

Mary Anoints Jesus' Feet

John 12:1-8

MEMORY VERSE

JOHN 12:7-8

Then Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A tray with various small items.

As many pieces of light colored construction paper, scissors and crayons or markers as the number of children in your class.

Hand lotion.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Lower! Lower!

In the days of kings, there was a rule; no one could be taller than the king. This was fine as long as he was tall or standing up, but when he sat down you had better fall on your knees! This was a way to show respect and reverence.

Play a silent variation of the game "Mother, May I" by choosing a "king" and explain to the children that they must never be higher than the king. Instruct the king to do random actions like pick up a pretend coin from the floor, tie his shoe, sit in a chair, touch his knees, jump up high, etc. all in an attempt to get lower than his loyal subjects. The "subjects" must make sure that their head is always lower than the king's.

A variation of this can be played with older students. Have the students carry a tray of objects to the king one at a time, being careful to always remain lower than the king. The king, however, will not make this easy for the subject. The subject must make it to the king without dropping anything from the tray.

LESSON TIME!

It has been said that we spend more time asking God for things we need rather than giving Him the thanks and praise that He deserves. If you think about it, we can never worship God enough. In our lesson today, we will see the difference between one who worships from a humble heart of praise and one who has a heart filled with selfishness and pride. **Jesus wants us to worship Him with a humble heart.**

JOHN 12:1

Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead.

It was six days before the Passover, and Jesus would soon triumphantly enter Jerusalem, riding on a humble donkey, and have a great multitude express their praise to Him. His days of ministry were coming to an end. This would be His last Passover celebration because He would be crucified on the cross as our Passover Lamb. He went back from Ephraim to Bethany where Lazarus lived and attended a dinner in His honor.

JOHN 12:2

There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him.

Jesus knew that the religious leaders were out to arrest Him and kill Him, but He still returned to Bethany only two miles away from His enemies. Why? He wanted to spend some quiet time with His friends: Mary, Martha, Lazarus and others. How precious it is to have a friend like Jesus, who desires a relationship with us.

Martha was a perfect example of one who has a desire to work and serve the Lord. What a blessing she was to Jesus, as she lovingly served her Master. Jesus longs for us to live as servants, working for Him and His kingdom. **Jesus wants us to worship Him with a humble heart.**

Lazarus was a perfect example of a life impacted by the ministry of Jesus; Jesus raised him from the dead. The religious leaders wanted to kill Lazarus because of the witness he was of the wonderful miracles that Jesus performed. Lazarus was a living testimony of the Lord's power over death. Like Lazarus, we too can worship Jesus as a witness to others of the life-changing work He has done in our life. Not only can we worship Jesus by serving Him, but we can also worship Him with our life, living as a witness to others of what He has done for us.

JOHN 12:3

Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

Mary's act of love and worship demonstrated a beautiful heart of humility to Jesus. Not only was it public, but spontaneous, sacrificial, lavish, and personal. **Jesus wants us to worship Him with a humble heart.** Mary's act of worship pleased Jesus very much.

Feet

Take light colored construction paper and trace around each child's foot. Have them cut out their "feet" and print today's memory verse on them. They can decorate their feet with crayons or markers.

While working with the children, explain to the children how Mary's humble worship of Jesus pleased Him.

Mary's act of worship has stood the test of time as a memorial of a woman who worshiped Jesus in humility. Little did Mary realize that her expression of worship would be a blessing to believers around the world for centuries to come.

It would have required a year's wages from a common laborer to purchase that ointment, perhaps a lifetime of savings. Yet, her beautiful act of worship was an example to us of what true worship is. Jesus was the most important one in her life and she was willing to give everything she had to please Him. How much do we love Jesus? Are we willing to make the same sacrifice that Mary did? This ointment was used to anoint kings, and Mary's expression of worship spared no expense as she anointed her kingly Messiah. **Jesus wants us to worship Him with a humble heart.**

Mary must have understood who Jesus was and that He would soon give His life for her because she was content to sit at His feet and hear His every word. She wanted to spend as much time as possible with her Lord. Her act of worship may have been misunderstood and criticized, but she gave the Lord her best, regardless of what others thought.

Bowing

In many other cultures, bowing is a way to show your respect to another person. Bowing down is a physical way to show what our hearts do when we worship the Lord.

Encourage your class to discuss what having a humble heart means. How would it feel to bow before someone? What would it like to have someone bow before you?

Explain to your class that there are many ways we worship God. When we bow our heads in prayer, it is an indication of our hearts humbled before him. Martha's heart was bowed to the Lord as she served Him. Lazarus' heart was bowed to the Lord when he told others what Jesus did for him. Mary's heart was bowed as she anointed Him.

JOHN 12:4-6

Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said,

"Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?"

This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

Judas Iscariot was regarded with high esteem, thought to have the character and integrity to be responsible with all the money of the disciples. This was a person they trusted to take care of their possessions. Wow, what an honor! How would you feel if your friends asked you to take care of their money for them?

Judas appeared to be a man of integrity, but his heart was filled with selfishness and pride. He often dipped into the disciples' funds for his own use. Jesus of course knew this, but apparently never did or said anything about it. God might not immediately do anything to stop us, but this does not mean He approves of our actions. Instead of seeing what we can get away with, let's see how we can best worship and serve Jesus, just like the people in our lesson.

Judas acted as if he was concerned about the poor as he criticized the "waste" of this perfume. His real desire was to pocket some of the money for himself. Mary gave openly and sacrificially, but Judas wanted to hoard money for himself secretly and selfishly. **Jesus wants us to worship Him with a humble heart.**

Shortly after this incident, Judas would betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. How sad it is to see a life created by God and full of potential but given over to selfishness and pride, a life ruined by self. Like Mary, we should have a heart of humility that is filled with love and devotion for Jesus. **Jesus wants us to worship Him with a humble heart.**

JOHN 12:7-8

But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial.

"For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

Mary was showing her devotion to Jesus before it was too late. Normally, anointing was something festive, but Mary anointed Jesus in anticipation of His burial. Jesus knew that He must endure pain, die and be buried for all the sins of the world.

Jesus immediately defended Mary's act of love and devotion. There will always be the opportunity to help the poor, but the opportunity to show love to Jesus while He was on the earth was limited. Jesus' words should have taught a valuable lesson about the value of money, yet Judas would not heed this self-sacrificing example.

The Christian life should be a beautiful balance of work, witness and worship unto the Lord. When Jesus looks at our heart, is He pleased with the worship of our heart to Him? Our life should be as a prayer unto Him. **Jesus wants us to worship Him with a humble heart.** We should examine our own hearts to ask whether we are bringing joy to His heart in our work, our witness, and our worship.

Anointing

Have your students divide into groups of two each. Let them anoint one another's hands with hand lotion. This will be a first hand look at anointing.

Ask your students to explain what it was like to selflessly anoint someone else's hand. What was it like for them to have their hands anointed?

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to work, witness and worship Him. If any children have not responded to the gospel, give them an opportunity to do so.