



Anointing Jesus

Goal: To do acts of kindness for others as the woman did for Jesus.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Mark 14:3-9

There is beauty in the gift. It is an alabaster jar, translucent, with scented amber oil inside. The oil is spikenard, or nard, and comes from the Himalayas. Luxury. It is a calming scent and used for burial. Purpose. The jar is sealed with wax and must be broken to open it. Extravagance. The woman pours the entire contents of the jar on Jesus' head and shoulders. Anointing. She rubs it into his head, neck, and shoulders, easing away the tensions, blessing the moment. Soothing. Jesus recognizes that she is preparing his body for burial, for there will be no opportunity when the time comes. Knowing. Wherever the story of Jesus is shared—the good news—this woman and her act of extravagant kindness, of beauty and blessing, will be told. Remembrance.

The others in the room, his followers, don't know and can't see. They, with the woman, are in the here and now. The difference is that the woman's present is focused on Jesus while the others see waste and blame. They wish to scold rather than bless. Jesus calls them on this. "Why do you trouble her?" he asks. Jesus, who lifts up and blesses the poor in every circumstance, knows that there will always be opportunities for kindness to them, but his time is limited. The woman, knowingly or not, pours out not only the oil but also herself as she offers love and generosity to Jesus.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

What does an act of extravagant kindness look like to children? For most children, extravagance is all about the thing and less about the experience or act. They may focus on the beauty of the alabaster jar or the expensiveness of the oil because the act of kindness seems so small (and in the case of pouring oil on someone's head, kind of icky!). The extravagance, in this case, was the sacrifice, the extra she was willing to give, and the risk she took in giving it. Her act cost her something, not just giving up an expensive oil, but putting herself out there, open to criticism and judgment. Those are the acts of kindness that are truly from one's self and one's heart.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

How do we model acts of kindness the way the woman did and help children understand the effort and sacrifice she showed? It's often easy to do something that doesn't matter much to us even though it helps another, such as making a card or going through the cupboards and giving away the canned vegetables or soup you don't like. What would it be like to have to work a bit harder to let someone know they are cared for? Perhaps cleaning the kitchen when you'd rather be playing a game or giving away the boxed mac and cheese that you love for dinner are examples of extravagant acts of kindness that children can understand.

Gracious God, you love us so extravagantly! May we show others overflowing kindness and love. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2023–2024

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 13, 13a, 23, 27

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

story audio (see p. vii)

candle

green cloth

oil diffuser with fragrant
oil

crackers, grapes, juice
or water

tray, napkins

copies of **Grace Notes**
(GN) 1

Responding

Celebrating

large gift bag; items
for the bag, including
but not limited to: can
of food, blanket, T-shirt,
greeting card, plate, and
box of crayons

Extra

copies of **GN 2**

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule,” to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

“Celebrating God’s Grace” requires more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing

SD **C** **LG** **T**

Greet the children by name and with the words “The grace of Christ be with you.” Prompt the children to respond with the same words.

Invite children to help prepare the worship space. Offer a candle, a green cloth, a Bible, and an oil diffuser with fragrant oil to be placed on the worship table so that its fragrance can begin to fill the room. Place grapes and crackers on a tray and cover with a napkin. Display **SCM 13a**.

As children prepare the space, lead discussion about some of their favorite smells. Invite them to share about memories associated with particular smells. Share your own as well. Prompt discussion about something kind that someone did for them this week. Invite each child to recall and share a way that kindness was shown to them in recent days.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities, and suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing. Invite a volunteer to practice reading the Scripture passage for today’s reading.

SD *Smells can affect our memories, emotions, and behaviors. For children with sensory issues, smells can be a source of anxiety that can distract and overwhelm. If the scent is overwhelming or difficult for a child, remove the oil diffuser from the room and vent as necessary.*

Singing

B **MS** **L**

Play and sing “Sing Thanks to God”—**MM 23**; **SCM 27**. Invite the children to sing, clap, dance, shout, and praise as they sing each corresponding verse.

Praying

SD

Turn on the candle as a reminder of Jesus’ presence with us. Invite children to close their eyes and breathe deeply, taking in the oil fragrance that has filled the room. Allow for a few moments of silence as they breathe in and out. Encourage them to imagine Jesus present with them here in the room, looking at them with kind eyes.



Pray:

God, thank you for the grace of your Son, Jesus, who is always present with us. Show us how to be faithfully kind to others just as Jesus shows kindness to us. Amen.

Preparing to Hear the Story

FA LG C

Uncover the tray of grapes and crackers, and provide napkins and juice or water. Invite children to serve one another. As they do, tell them that the story they are about to hear takes place during a shared meal among friends. Spend a few moments talking about why it is enjoyable to have friends together for dinner. Encourage them to enjoy their snack as you read today's story.



Today's story can be found in *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), www.pcusastore.com.

Hearing the Story

B MS L

Invite a child to find Mark 14 in the Bible. Have a volunteer read Mark 14:3–9. Conclude the reading by saying, “Word of wisdom, Word of grace,” and prompt the children to say, “Thanks be to God.” Place the open Bible on the worship center.

Invite the children to act out the story as they hear it a second time either using **SCM 13** or the story audio. Ask for volunteers to be Jesus, the woman, the disciples, and a narrator (optional).

Reflecting on God's Grace

C

Use these questions for discussion:

- ▼ What was surprising in this story?
- ▼ What are some of the most important things you heard Jesus say?
- ▼ What does this story teach us about how we are to treat others?
- ▼ How do you imagine the woman felt as she was offering her gift to Jesus? How do you imagine Jesus felt?
- ▼ What the woman did was an act of kindness toward Jesus. How do you think we can model her example as we try to do kindness toward others?

Provide copies of **GN 1** and colored pencils. Invite children to cut out the jar. Remind them that the woman gave the best she had to honor Jesus with an act of faithful kindness. Ask them to consider what they would give if they were going to give their best to honor Jesus. Encourage them to be thoughtful while understanding that there are no wrong answers. They should record their ideas or draw a picture on the jar and place it on the worship table.

Singing

Sing “Lord, I Want to Be a Christian”—**MM 13; SCM 23**. Turn off the candle.



RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and for the time available.

Claiming God's Grace



Lead children in recalling all the ways Jesus shows kindness. List them on a sheet of newsprint. Then lead them in writing a litany following this pattern:

One: Because Jesus (*insert something from the list*),
All: we respond in kindness to others.

Record the litany on another sheet of newsprint. Ask children to create hand or body movements to the “We respond in kindness to others” line. Then invite a leader to read the “One” voice line as the rest respond with the “All” line, with voice and motions.



Celebrating God's Grace



Before the session, prepare a bag with a can of food, a blanket, a T-shirt, a greeting card, a plate, a box of crayons, and any other items that may be used to show others kindness. Think outside the box. Children can come up with many great ideas.

Play a game that will encourage children to consider how they can use everyday items in acts of kindness toward others. Invite children to sit in a circle and place the prepared gift bag in the center. Explain that you will take turns around the circle pulling one item out for everyone to see. When each item is removed, children can work together to brainstorm ways that they can use that item to show kindness to others. For example, a can of food may be used to prepare a meal for a neighbor or donated to a food pantry; the blanket could be given to a homeless shelter or used to cuddle with a sibling. Invite all of their creative ideas.

LG *It's important to help children understand the need to share, act generously, and give freely. They learn that they are responsible for their part in creating a caring community. Kindness and generosity are contagious.*

Praying God's Grace



Tell the children that you are going to lead them in a “Whisper Prayer.” Invite the children to get comfortable around the space, not sitting too closely to someone else. Have the children take a few moments of silence, breathing quietly in and out. Then remind them that the woman in the story showed how much she loved Jesus by offering him the kindness of anointing him with her expensive perfume. Jesus told his disciples that her acts would always be



remembered. What she did was so special, and she did it because she loved Jesus deeply. Tell children to think about all the reasons they love Jesus, then cup their hands over their mouths and whisper to Jesus all the reasons they love him.

Extra Activity



Engage in a conversation about the difference we can make in another person's life, using the following questions:

- ▼ How did the disciples feel about the woman using the perfumed oil to anoint Jesus?
- ▼ What difference could have been made in the eyes of the disciples?
- ▼ Do you think they were right or wrong in their opinion? Why?
- ▼ What difference did the woman make in Jesus' life?
- ▼ Do you think he was right or wrong in his reading of the situation? Why?
- ▼ What do you think you can do to make a difference in someone else's life?

Hand out copies of **GN 2** and invite the children to find the ten differences in the pictures.

GN 2 Solution:

beard	jar
cup	sandals
dog	staff
door	stopper
flame	windows

LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Lead children in cleaning up the worship space.

Ask them to consider who they have in mind to show faithful kindness to this week. Imagine ways they can be kind as they live out the week.

Pray the following echo prayer together:

God, we are grateful /
for the chance to show kindness to others. /
We thank you for those /
who have shown kindness to us. /
God, help me to faithfully show kindness to others. /
Thank you for the grace /
of your kindness to us. /
Amen. /

As they leave, bless each child, saying, “(Name), God’s grace is poured out on you. Go and be kind.”



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads. Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).





