
Mary Anoints Jesus

Kids Bible Activities and Sunday School

Lesson from John 12:1–8



Priceless Gifts... Sunday School Lesson: Mary Anoints Jesus

If pouring perfume on someone's feet sounds strange, wiping it up with hair probably seems even more odd. However, the story of this action by Mary reminds us of some beautiful elements. We see the foreshadowing of Christ's preparations to go to the cross, as He is anointed for burial. We also note that Jesus cares for individuals and is pleased with our efforts to give ourselves to Him. No gift is too precious to dedicate to the Lord!

Lesson focus: This lesson focuses on the importance of Jesus as a priceless and valuable treasure. Knowing what He did and does for us in His death and resurrection, we should want to offer ourselves to Him with our time, talents, and devotion. At the same time, Jesus loves us and thinks that we are worthy of His ultimate sacrifice: death for our sins.

Bible Story Passage: John 12:1-8

Target Audience: Kindergarten-6th grade (elementary students age 5 to 12 years old)

Materials Needed: Construction paper, markers, stickers, scissors, tape/glue, empty containers, toilet paper, cotton balls, perfumes, fake money (all optional, depending which activities you choose to use).

More Bible Teaching Activities about Mary Anointing Jesus

- Watch the [children's object lesson](#) on [Craft demonstration video](#)
- See our [John 12:1-8 children's sermon](#)
- Study some [scripture passages about anointing in the Bible](#)
- [Download our "C if for Christ" coloring sheets](#)

Games and Lesson Introduction Activity

Lesson Opening: This lesson reviews events that happened to show who Jesus was and how special He was, and also reflect how much Christ values us. To get started, select from one of the following openers, or select another of your own choosing!

- **Steal the moneybag:** This game is played much like “Steal the Bacon”. Use a bag of play money in the center line of a play area, and have students line up on either side of it. Assign numbers and have students chase one another to try to get the “moneybag” to their side before being tagged.
- **Perfume Sniff Test:** what’s that smell? Soak several cotton balls in fragrant liquids such as perfume, vanilla, or lemon juice. Have students smell the cotton balls to try discerning what the aroma is.
- **Anointing Accounts:** Anointing takes place several times in the Bible. Usually it was meant to signal a new king or show signs of protection. In this case, Jesus is anointed for burial. Look at other Scripture references to anointing. A few include 1 Samuel 16:13, Psalm 89:20, Mark 6:13, and Exodus 30:22-33. Consider dabbing some oil on student hands or foreheads with cotton balls!
- **Wipe your feet:** Mary wiped the feet of Jesus with her hair. Recount that with a relay in which students must run to the opposite side of a play area, roll their feet in mud or oil, and come back to rinse or wipe feet. Warning: this one can get messy!
- **Mummy race:** The perfume was meant to be part of the burial process... play a game recounting that by having students divide into teams. Give each team a roll of toilet paper. On signal, have the kids wrap a designated “mummy” in the toilet paper. Award prizes for fastest, best wrapped, or most decorative team.
- **Valuable items debate:** Display items or pictures of items at various costs. Have children try to guess which are worth more money. For older kids, guess how much items are worth. Invite them to think about what they would buy if suddenly equipped with great wealth.

Transition into the Scripture study component and discuss how Jesus is a treasure of immense value. In this story, we will see someone give Him a costly gift. It might have seemed wasteful to those around her, but Jesus knew it was special.

Ask: What is the most expensive or meaningful gift that you have given someone? What would you give Jesus for a gift if He came to your house?

Mary Anoints Jesus (John 12:1-8) Sunday School Lesson

Bible Lesson: This story is found in all four Gospels, and there is some debate over whether all accounts point to the same event, or some are slightly different. For the purposes of this lesson, the focus will be on the actions of Mary (sister of Lazarus and Martha) at Bethany. This took place, most likely, directly before Holy Week events.

This story is one that can be acted out with individual roles or experienced together by trying some of the motions or actions as verses are read. It is relatively short but includes poignant elements.

Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. -John 12:1-2

Set up or remind students of context here. Lazarus was the man that Jesus brought back to life. His sisters were Mary and Martha. If you have discussed this story previously (Lazarus or the Martha/Mary dynamics), it might be worth pointing out that there are similar trends here. Once again, Martha is busy serving. Mary is going to do something else!

Ask: What do you like to do for dinner guests? How do you help when people come to your house to visit?

Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. -John 12:3

What in the world is happening here? Explain a bit: Mary poured a pound of expensive perfume on the feet of Jesus. Most of us, if using perfume, would definitely not pour it on someone's feet! There is something significant going on in this act, though. For one thing, Mary was demonstrating how important Jesus was to her. She was also, in a way, anointing Him, preparing Him for something incredible (kingship and, ultimately, death). However, not everyone was happy about this...

But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, 5 "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" 6 He said this, not because

he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. -John 12:4-6

Mary was immediately criticized for what she did. The jar of perfume was worth almost a year's wages, and she poured it right on the feet of Jesus! Judas was angry and accused her of being wasteful...although in truth he wanted to keep the money for himself! Mary knew that nothing was too good for her Lord. She might not have understood it at the time, but her actions were readying Jesus to sacrifice Himself.

Ask: What would you describe as a waste of money or resources? What do you think Jesus wants you to give Him?

Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. 8 For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me." -John 12:7-8

Jesus defended Mary. He rebuked those who were angry with her, emphasizing that she had truly cherished Him. You see, Jesus loves it when we bring gifts to Him. Of course, we don't have to do this. He doesn't need us as some sort of ego boost or support system. But He loves us! He wants us to be near Him just because He values us. Whatever we have to offer, He will cherish and use in remarkable ways. We need to recognize and appreciate how amazing Jesus is, and honor Him with our whole lives!

Craft Suggestions: With the elements of anointing and pricey perfume, consider recounting the key parts of the story with some creative, decorative, "smelly" crafts:

-Perfume Container Coin Bank: Decorate an empty box or container for "perfume." Use to collect loose change or to keep prayer requests.

-“Hairy Feet Wall Hanging”: Cut out a foot shape from paper. Attach to a heart or cross shape using yarn or string. Decorate and add verses and captions to recall the story.

-DIY Perfume: Create perfume by using flowers or oils to scent water. Place in decorated jars or bottles.

-For younger students, provide scented markers and scratch n' sniff stickers to create a “smelly” picture to take home.

Pray: Say a prayer of thanksgiving to God for His gift of Jesus. Ask for help to honor Christ and to serve Him with our gifts and lives.

Sunday School Craft Ideas for the Anointing of Jesus

Perfume on feet? Wiping it up with hair? The story of Mary's anointing of Christ might seem strange on the surface, especially for kids. However, it communicates some important truths. We see in John 12 how valuable and wonderful Jesus is. Mary treasured the Messiah and wanted to give him all that she could. We should love and value Christ, as well, especially since we know that He loves and values us. These crafts recall the story and the importance of putting God first. A "Perfume Piggy Bank" represents gifts that can be given to Jesus, and serves as a coin bank. A "Hairy feet ornament" uses yarn and paper to show the strange actions of Mary in the story.

Bible Verses or Craft Captions to Consider...

Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it[c] for the day of my burial. 8 For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me." -John 12:7-8

Mary anointed Jesus...I'll give my heart to Christ!

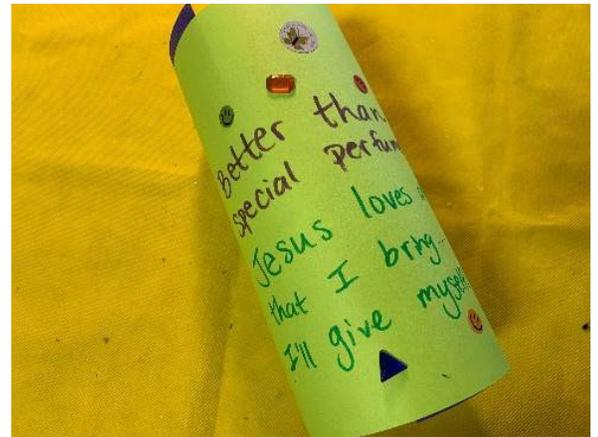
Jesus loves me...I offer myself as a gift!

More fragrant than perfume...my gift to Jesus!

Craft one: "Perfume Piggy Bank"

You will need:

- Empty container (coffee can, box, oatmeal, etc.)
- Glue or tape
- Scissors
- Construction paper, cardstock or cardboard
- Markers or decorating materials
- Stickers, glitter, jewels, or other decorations
- Scented bag (optional)



Procedure:

1. Decorate paper or cardstock with verses or captions. Consider a theme of saving valuable items or collecting coins.
2. Use paper to cover a box or container. Add extra decorations as desired.
3. Attach extra verses if needed. Add hole for the container, if using as a piggy bank. Collect monetary or "life offering" contributions in your bank!

Craft Two: "Hairy Feet Ornament"

You will need:

- Scissors
- Construction paper or cardstock
- Glue and/or tape
- Decorative materials (markers, crayons, stickers)
- String or yarn
- Cross decoration (optional)



Procedure:

1. Cut one paper or cardstock piece to resemble a foot. Cut another in a heart shape.
2. Decorate the foot and heart with stickers, pictures, and more.
3. Add verses or captions as desired. Option: spritz with scented perfume.
4. Use yarn or string to represent "hair." Attach to the foot shape and the heart shape, stringing together if desired. Display to recount the story and the importance of giving ourselves to Jesus.





Thank you for downloading these free materials. Our team is grateful for your trust and pray that God will bless your ministry.

This resource was prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#) (pictured right). She serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO. She has shared her teaching gifts through Ministry-To-Children since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.

Every week she writes new [Sunday School lessons](#), [Bible crafts](#), and [children's sermons](#).

Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May 2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader. In addition to children's curriculum, she shares her student ministry activities and lesson ideas on [YouthGroupMinistry.com](#)

My name is [Tony Kummer](#) (pictured below). I started Ministry-To-Children.com in 2007 as a free resource for anyone sharing Jesus with kids. I am building three new websites. One is called [Ministry Answers](#) to help Christians find answers in God's Word. The other two are [Devotional Christian](#) and [10 Bible Verses](#) to help you focus on personal prayer and quiet times.



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