

Bible background

Luke 10:38-42; Mark 14:1-11; John 11:1-2 and 12:1-8

Aim of lesson

To help the children think about how followers of Jesus can give of their best to him and the rest of God's family.

Preparation required

- (a) Collect a bag or box of things that are 'precious' to you - include some things that small children find 'precious'.
- (b) Find or borrow a large bottle of perfume!
- (c) Collect and prepare materials for making a number of small easy-to-assemble gifts, e.g. bookmarks, herb bags, small bags of boiled sweets etc, (you may need to enlist the help of a nimble-fingered friend for this lesson).

Suggested outline of lesson

1. Introduce the children to the family at Bethany; explain how kind they were to Jesus, and get them to think how grateful he would be after a long journey to be able to visit Martha, Mary and Lazarus. Remind them that he had no home of his own.
2. Tell the story of the two sisters which is related in Luke 10. Explain how important it is for us to spend time each day listening to Jesus and how good it is to be able to read about him.
3. Bring out your bag/box of 'precious' things and if possible let the children examine and touch them while you all talk about things that are precious to you all. Discuss the worth of things and why they are considered valuable. If the children were to take a similar collection, what would they each put in it?
4. Show the children the bottle of perfume and let them smell it. Explain how perfume is made and its ingredients, and why it is so expensive. Talk about how it is used - usually in small quantities! - and that it is often given by one person to another person they love very much.
5. Tell the story the meal at which Mary anointed Jesus, using the bottle of perfume to mime what Mary did. Ask the children what they think of her action, and use their reactions as a base to talk about the disciples' reactions. What could they learn from watching this happen?
6. Ask the children what they think Jesus felt, at the centre of the situation. Tell them what Jesus said and discuss how he knew what Mary's purpose was - what was Jesus really interested and impressed by, the perfume or the love and understanding Mary showed? Did Jesus' words about what she had done come true, and why did Jesus want us to know about it?

Alternative activities

1. Cut out a cardboard bottle/jar shape for each child and let them decorate them with shiny paper and fabric or sticky shapes.
2. Make and decorate simple thumb pots and lids out of modelling clay or salt dough. Simply stick your thumb into a ball of dough/clay and then pinch and squeeze the sides into shape. Modelling clay can be left to dry out and salt dough can be baked slowly in the oven. The children can then take them home the following week.

Relevance to the children's lives

We love Jesus with varying degrees of intensity, but we cannot show our love by pouring perfume over him. So what can we do? Jesus told his disciples that they could show their love for him by loving each other. Discuss what 'precious' things we can give to others who love Jesus to show our love for them - time, energy, care, space, encouragement, tolerance, obedience, etc.

Sometimes actual presents/gifts can be a way of showing our love. Encourage each child to think of someone in the ecclesia for whom they can make a small gift, and use the prepared materials to complete a gift for each child to give. Have each child make and write on a small gift card to attach to each gift. Make a definite time for the children to give their gifts to their chosen person.

Prayer

Ask God to help us to learn from the love he and Jesus have shown us, and to do what we can to show our love for them.

Verse

'She has done what she could.' Mark 14:8.