

Interactive lesson



picture from <https://www.pexels.com/photo/woman-in-white-sweater-baking-cake-3992206/>

How can you tell if someone is baking?

<Let them respond>

How do people usually react to the smell?

<Let them respond>

Do odors always stay put in the spot where they start? <Let them respond>

What do you do if you encounter an odor you do **not** like? <Let them respond>

How about with your other senses? Do you react similarly to things you see, hear, touch, or taste that you do not like? <Let them respond>

What about behaviors? <Let them respond>

Can we emit love? <Let them respond>

Does the way we live or act affect only us, or spread to those around us? <Let them respond>

Do you think Jesus would enjoy what you have been emitting? <Let them respond>

Let us always live such that the love of Christ wafts outward from us to others, pleasing to their souls and inviting them to know our awesome God better.

Gospel lesson

In the chapter just prior to this, Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead a couple of miles outside of Jerusalem. Many Jews were excited about this, and word got back to the temple.

The chief priests feared that the Romans would see people following one called “Messiah” as a threat against Rome, then come and destroy both the temple and the people. The temple leaders planned to kill Jesus, saying it was better for just one man to die than for the whole nation to be destroyed.

(Foreshadowing much?)

So Jesus and His disciples went to north into the hills, to Ephraim (for an unspecified amount of time before returning), because the temple leaders were looking to arrest Him.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-anointed/>

John 12:1-8

(NRSV)

¹ Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.

² There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him.

³ Mary 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.

⁴ But 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.)

⁷ Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial.

⁸ You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

The word of God for the people of God

<Hymn "When We Are Called to Sing Your Praise">

TFWS #2216>

Message: Filled with the Fragrance



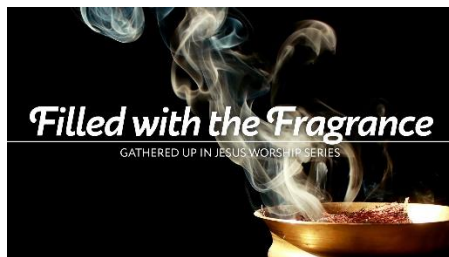
pictures from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/gathered-up-in-jesus>

Please pray with me?

Great Lord who delights in delighting us,
as we take time now to further consider today's
scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That as our senses are filled with Your Word, we may
share Your grace with the world. Amen.



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/gathered-up-in-jesus/fifth-sunday-in-lent-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/fifth-sunday-in-lent-year-c-graphics>

This week we are “Filled with the Fragrance.”

“We are nearing the end of this season; next week is Palm/Passion Sunday. So, here we can focus on giving honor to the Christ who [h]as journeyed with us throughout this difficult season.

Like Mary, we can pour out in blessing praise and worship as we gather. We can offer something precious as we approach the one who loves us more than his own life.”

You know how, when a turkey dinner is in the oven, the smell of the cooking food fills the house? Isn't that wonderful? It fills us with anticipation of the delicious meal to come. We look forward to the

sharing of nourishment around the table, both food and fellowship.

Often, smells bring us to awareness of something outside of ourselves, to awareness of our environment and other people. Sometimes they are lovely, like cologne reminding us of a loved one, and sometimes they are less pleasant, like fertilizer in a field that reminds us of growing crops and tended livestock.

When Mary anointed Jesus's feet, the smell of nard filled the room.



cartoon from <https://www.agnusday.org/comics/421/john-121-11-2004>

In those days, nard was used both as an incense offering in the temple and to prepare a body for burial. It could remind people both of worshipping God and of the loss of loved ones.



picture from

<https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-anointed/>

Since Jesus had recently raised Mary's brother Lazarus from the dead, she was likely offering it in worship of Him and remembrance of His power over death. Wiping His feet with her hair meant the scent would stay with her even when He was gone, after He left for Jerusalem.



picture screencaptured from

<https://www.jesusfilm.org/watch/Lumo-the-gospel-of-john.html/Lumo-john-12-1-50/english.html>

I wonder what the smell reminded Judas Iscariot of, that he reacted so negatively. Jesus had told them multiple times that He would be killed in Jerusalem; I wonder if Judas was in denial about that, since Jesus reminded him again of His upcoming burial.

In this scene, Judas clearly focused on material world practicality more than on honoring Jesus. I suspect he had the old idea of a military Messiah in mind, and struggled with what Jesus had been saying.

How often do we wish for things to be the idealized way we remember them, like the Hebrews their kingdom under David, that we cannot open our minds and hearts

to the new possibilities before us? Both the reading from Isaiah and the psalm today refer to depressed Israelites stunned by the new things God brought them to, out of the old (old things which probably never were how they idealized it).

You could say those readings apply to the Exodus, or to the exile, or to Jesus's resurrection, or maybe to more modern things like the end of World War II or even the end of the covid-19 pandemic. A wonderful aspect of scripture is its truth through the ages, how God's Word is relevant to all human hearts.



picture from <https://www.pexels.com/photo/mirvish-village-building-at-night-3122803/>

Today's scriptures highlight how we struggle with letting go of what we knew and turning to something better than what we have. Even Paul wrote to the Philippians about how invested he was in the Hebrew religion and temple rites, only to discover that they were trash when compared with living in Jesus.

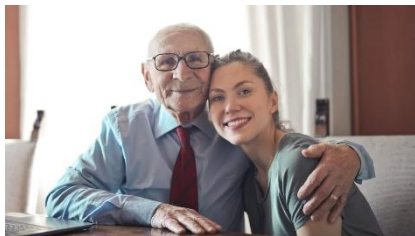
Rather than spiritually dumpster diving, we should be turning to God for the new blessings being provided.

God does not want us worrying about material world things at the expense of relationships. We are called to put our relationships first, to share God's love

instead of focusing on rituals, on money, on power, on fads, or on stuff.

Much like odors, the effects of our actions travel well beyond us to capture the attention of others. Mary gave the best she had, driving home the point that our relationship with the Lord is important. Judas Iscariot put the show of charity ahead of actually caring for people, and Jesus corrected him before that unpleasantness spread further.

What spirit are you emanating? Most of us give off a mixture of things, some desirable and some less so. We need to work on being more pleasing to God, and on sharing His love with one another.



picture from

<https://www.pexels.com/photo/positive-senior-man-in-formal-wear-and-eyeglasses-hugging-with-young-lady-while-sitting-at-table-3823497/>

Last week I asked you to seek out someone with whom you have a broken or wounded relationship, and to try to reconcile with them. If you have not, please try this week! If you did, God bless you, and please build on it more this week.

Like smells wafting to fill an entire room, let God's love, God's glory, and God's strength blend within your actions to fill the community and the world,

chasing away cynical materialism so that all may get a sense of God's kingdom here on earth.

<Doxology>

<Offertory / Pastoral Prayer>

Let us pray:

Loving God, you give and give, and didn't think the life of your son was too high a price to pay for our salvation.

Jesus' life was an example of sacrificial giving, all the way to the cross.

As we give this day, we want our gifts to impact the world, but even more, we want them to bring glory to Christ, who lived and died for all your children.

Help us to not hold back anything.

Let us live unselfishly and more sensitively, that we may spread love's fragrance wherever the odor of cynicism and despair hangs in the air.

- Lord, please help {these members of the body of Christ whom we lift up} with Your healing touch and comfort:

- **Susan Hall** - plate in leg complications; wheelchair

- **Carl Goodrich** - now in nursing home

- **Don Forrest** - in rehab after breaking hip

- **Paul Carson** - hernias

- **John Nixon & family** - house fire

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- -
- Thanks for
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 - -
- Hold those who cannot be with us in Your loving embrace until we see them again.
 - Family far off
 - Travelers
- Lord, please help the people of Ukraine who wander displaced from their homes due to the war.
- Send Your Spirit to address world/social problems
 - end bigotry, dismantle racism, reform systems persist
 - bring world peace
- Guide our Leaders - local, state, federal, international, and especially of Your church.

All these things we pray in Your holy name, Amen.

<THE GREAT THANKSGIVING Communion - UNCOVER elements>

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.

In love you made us for yourself; and when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, your love remained steadfast.

You bid your faithful people cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the Easter feast, that renewed by your Word and Sacraments and fervent in prayer and works of justice and mercy, we may come to the fullness of grace that you have prepared for those who love you.

<slide change>

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ, whom you sent in the fullness of time to redeem the world.

† He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in our likeness.

† He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

† He took upon himself our sin and death and offered himself, a perfect sacrifice for the sin of the whole world.

By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

<hold hands out over bread/elements>

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

<hold hands out over juice/elements>

When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,

<slide change>

we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
as a holy and living sacrifice,
in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.
Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

<hold hands out over elements>

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on
on these gifts of bread and juice.
Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ,
redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each
other, and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at
his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit
in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours,
almighty God, now and forever.

Amen.

And now, with the confidence of the children of God,
let us pray: *<Lord's Prayer>*

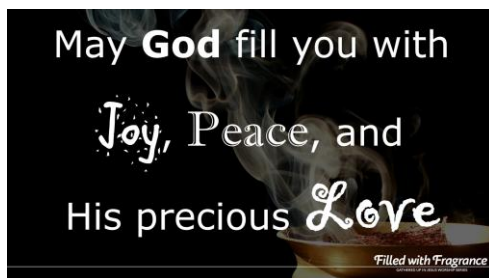
<Breaking of the bread and lifting of the cup>

<Serving of the elements;
concurrent hymn “Come, Sinners, to the Gospel
Feast” UMH #616>

<COVER remaining elements>

<Hymn “Fairest Lord Jesus” UMH #189>

<Benediction>



background picture from
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/gathered-up-in-jesus/fifth-sunday-in-lent-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/fifth-sunday-in-lent-year-c-graphics>

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace
in believing, so that you may abound in grace by
the power of the Holy Spirit.

Go into the world proclaiming Christ’s glory
through your words and actions,
that all may sense His precious love
filling their lives too.

Amen.