

Children's Devotion Week of March 16

FAMILY ACTIVITY: Pretzel making

In the past, pretzels made from a simple recipe using only flour and water could be eaten during Lent when not eating eggs or dairy products was a part of the Lenten celebration. Also, there was a time when pretzels were hidden on Easter morning just like we hide eggs now. A common story says that an Italian monk gave twisted-knot pretzels to children as a reward for learning their prayers. The monk baked strips of dough that he folded into a shape resembling a child crossing his or her arms in prayer. Whatever their origin, pretzels have become a favorite snack for both Lent and Easter.

RECIPE: <https://buildfaith.org/making-pretzels-a-traditional-activity-for-lent/>

LESSON 1: The Beatitudes

PARENT BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Jesus preached his most famous sermon to a huge crowd on the side of a mountain. The Sermon on the Mount, as it is often called, is found in Matthew 5–7. Jesus' sermon began with twelve statements, called Beatitudes, to encourage the crowd and explain how people will live in God's kingdom.

Matthew shared several features of this setting. First, it took place on a mountain. Mountains are important in the Gospel of Matthew, where they are often places of revelation. Second, Jesus sat down to teach the crowd, which was the expected pattern of Jewish instruction in that day. Finally, the makeup of the crowd was important. Jesus taught his disciples, but that also included the people in the crowd who were following him.

Matthew used a standard Jewish literary form for each Beatitude, starting with "Happy are people..." or "It will be well with the one who..." and ending with "for that one shall receive... ." These blessings are for people who are ready for the kingdom of God, who experience well-being and happiness under God's rule.

When we're hopeless, grieving, humble, and hungry to do the right thing, God plants happiness within us. God promises the kingdom to the meek, the poor in spirit, the merciful, and the peacemakers. The peacemakers are called God's children because they live in peace and bring harmony to others.

The lifestyle Jesus taught in the Beatitudes challenges us in our daily lives to be more like Jesus. The Holy Spirit lives in us and helps us become more like Jesus.

READ: Matthew 5:1-9

Q: Which Beatitude do you like the best? Why?

WATCH: <https://my.amplifymedia.com/amplify/video/unitedmethodistpublishinghouse/33162-deep-blue-connects-adventure-spring-2020/33300-lessons/112483-jesus-teaches>

Discussion Questions:

1. How can you be a peacemaker? At home, at school, with your friends, with your family?
2. How can you show a happy/blessed attitude this week?
3. Do you think the Beatitudes teach us to be a leader or a servant? How can a person be a leader and a servant?

SIGN LANGUAGE SONG:

Learn the song and dance here:

Beginner: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XRQVj39WkDE>

Advanced: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzpO4GVZ6Bw>

LESSON 2: Mary Anoints Jesus

PARENT BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

It was almost time for Passover, and crowds of people were headed to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast. On their way to Jerusalem, Jesus and his disciples stopped in Bethany and visited again with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. They hosted a dinner for Jesus and his disciples.

Jesus had visited with them before, and in a previous visit, Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead. This visit, Lazarus joined Jesus at the table as an honored guest. Martha served the meal, while Mary sat at Jesus' feet.

Mary's actions during this meal would have been considered scandalous by most people in that day. It wasn't a woman's place to sit at the master's feet as a disciple, but she was a devoted disciple who wanted to learn from and worship the master. Mary brought with her a jar full of expensive perfume made from pure nard. During the meal, she anointed Jesus' feet with the perfume and wiped his feet dry with her hair. Jewish women at that time didn't let their hair down in public, so her act could have been viewed as extremely improper.

Judas, the disciple who carried the money bag, expressed his view about Mary's anointing with perfume as a waste. The perfume was worth a year's wages. He said it should have been sold and the money given to the poor.

But Jesus defended Mary's actions. Mary was showing great love for her master and gratitude to him for restoring life to her brother. Anointing his feet showed Mary's great humility. Mary probably wasn't aware that her simple act was a preview of things to come: Jesus humbly washing his disciples' feet as a servant and Jesus' death and burial. Jesus said the perfume was used as an anointing to prepare for his burial.

Judas, who had stolen money from the money bag before, revealed a heart in love with self and money, not characteristics of a disciple. Judas's actions were a preview of things to come: his betrayal of Jesus. But Mary's actions showed her love and respect for Jesus.

READ: John 12:1-8

Q: What happens when you come in your house with dirty feet or dirt on your shoes? What do you wash your feet with?

WATCH: <https://my.amplifymedia.com/amplify/video/unitedmethodistpublishinghouse/33162-deep-blue-connects-adventure-spring-2020/33300-lessons/112486-mary-anoints-jesus>

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think Mary wanted to honor Jesus? How can you show love to Jesus?
2. When have you wanted to do something extra special for someone? Did you do something extravagant?
3. Jesus acknowledged Mary's anointing as a sign of love. Mary was a servant leader just like Jesus. Servant leaders focus on the growth and well-being of the people around them, and put others' needs first. Can you think of someone who fits that definition and is a servant leader? What makes that person a servant leader?