



**Educate
+ Engage**



TRUE
WORSHIPERS:



Think
Outside the Box

OVERVIEW

The woman with the alabaster box pouring out her expensive ointment on the feet of Jesus was one of the greatest worship moments in all of history.

Scripture Passage

Matthew 26:6–13 (KJV)

Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table. And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste? For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor." But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her."

John 12:3 (KJV)

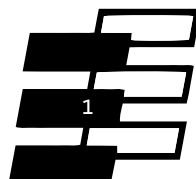
Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

EDUCATE

Ice Breaker Option

Display images of five of your favorite fast-food restaurant chains. (Examples: Chick-fil-A, McDonald's, Wendy's, etc.) Get students debating over which one is best, and then ask them to vote on their favorite by a show of hands. (The last fast-food chain you show will be the Taco Bell logo to tie in with the opening illustration.)

The Great Chicken Sandwich War of 2019 was unfathomable. However, one menu item that has changed fast food in recent years is Taco Bell's Doritos Locos Taco. I mean, come on, who doesn't love Taco Bell? Especially after those late-night lock-ins when every other restaurant is closed. The fast-food chain sold more than a billion Doritos Locos Tacos in the first year after the menu item launched in 2012, Taco Bell hired an estimated 15,000 workers to keep up with the demand.



Lesson 3

Long before the Doritos Locos Tacos craze, Taco Bell's business was suffering. People thought they might even close their doors until they developed their new slogan, "think outside the bun," a clever play on words that changed the taco game forever. Everything began to turn around for this late-night fast-food chain once they learned to think outside the box...I mean...the bun.

Who would have believed a declining business could be revived to the point of selling over a billion tacos sporting shells made out of Doritos? I'm not great at math, but last I checked Doritos + Tacos = Genius! That's a mathematical equation I can understand and support.

Mary's Worship Was outside the Box

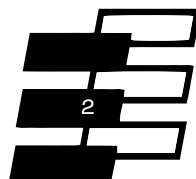
Scripture talks about an amazing woman named Mary, an example of someone thinking outside the box. Worship requires us to break out of the box of comfort. Worship breaks open the box of complacency. Worship is a radical act that breaks the box of other people's opinions. Worship focuses on Jesus and Him alone. Nothing about Mary's worship was ordinary or common. Her story is given in a panoramic fashion within Scripture. Today's lesson will primarily focus on Matthew's perspective because his Gospel points out some powerful details for us to consider.

Discussion Question: Have you ever praised God in an unconventional way because your need was so great?

Worship With Cost You Something

In Matthew 26 Jesus and His disciples were in Bethany at the home of a man identified as Simon the leper. There one of the purest moments of worship found in all of Scripture occurred. *Shachah*, one of the primary Hebrew words for worship, calls us to bow down before God. Worship refers to a posture of submission, thus an acknowledgement of God's sovereignty. Everything changed for Mary when she decided to think outside the box when worshipping her Lord and Savior. What was in her alabaster box? A precious perfume.

Many differing opinions exist regarding what its exact cost would have been in biblical times, but picture a bottle of expensive cologne or perfume you've been saving up. You know, the one with an overwhelming smell that fills the room like a glory-cloud boxing glove on that first night of youth camp. It was expensive. It was sacrificial for her to part with it. There is no telling how long she had saved for that perfume. Worship in its purest form always includes sacrifice. "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Hebrews 13:15, NKJV).



Lesson 3

When Mary saw that box, all she could think about was getting the perfume out of that box and onto the feet of her Savior. The heart of a true worshiper can only think about one thing when they get into the presence of God. *I've got to get my sacrifice out of this box and onto His feet!* What's in your box? What is a sacrifice to you? Whatever that is, think like this: I've got to get this out of my box and onto His feet!

Discussion Question: Has your worship ever cost you something? Have you ever experienced more of God's presence as a result of something you gave up?

Anything we value in life will cost us something. We drive more carefully when we're the one making the car payment. We don't walk through a muddy field when we just put on a new pair of Js because we recognize their value. Worship touches the heart of Jesus because He knows what we're pouring on His feet has a cost. Mary washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and dried them with her hair. This was an act of extravagant praise and monumental worship.

Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her" (Matthew 26:13, NKJV).

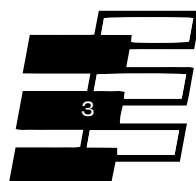
Mary's worship was the kind that builds memorials and touches the heart of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Discussion Question: When was the first time you recognized worship changing the atmosphere of a church service? What did that service look like?

Worship Is Expensive, But it Is Not Wasteful

Surely the people would be moved and convicted by what they had just witnessed. Sadly, Matthew's account detailed judgment from others, a familiar theme we see so commonly woven throughout Scripture. Matthew 26:8–9 record: "But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, 'Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor.'"

What a heartbreaking lie concocted from the beginning of time by the enemy of our souls, usually manifesting in the form of a question: "Is my worship a waste?" Do not believe the enemy's lie. Worship is never wasteful. Your worship may be expensive, but pouring it out on the feet of Jesus is never a waste. Once again the heart of Jesus is on display because He quickly defended



Lesson 3

her: "But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, 'Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me'" (Matthew 26:10, NKJV).

What some might call waste, Jesus calls worship. Can you think of anything more wasteful than coming to church and never offering up a sacrifice? Walking into the house of God without worship is a missed opportunity. They wouldn't go to the Temple without bringing God an offering. What a waste that would be! Mary's past may have been checkered. She didn't have all the answers. She wasn't perfect. All she knew was that she loved Him and she reserved her precious ointment for the Master. That broken alabaster box unleashed a beautiful aroma of worship to the only one worthy of that sacrifice. Worship can take what was wrong and make it right. Worship moves the heart of Jesus, no matter who else stands in judgment against you.

Discussion Question: Have you ever felt judged because you participated in worship while others spectated?

Closing

Maybe your worship is unconventional, like a Doritos Locos Taco, but it pleases God when you're willing to think outside the box. We would see less broken hearts in the church if there were more broken boxes on the altar. We would see less broken marriages and fractured families if fathers and mothers would break boxes at the altar. Today accept the challenge to be like Mary. You too can have the heart of worship. Broken can be beautiful once Jesus gets involved. The next time you pray or attend a worship service, remember to think outside the box.



ENGAGE

Like Mary, God is calling us to break open our box and worship Him without the fear of other people's opinions. Worship Him with all we have. Jesus is worthy of our sacrifice of praise.

