

WEEK 25: EVENTS PRIOR TO JESUS ARREST & HIS ARREST

MIDDLE SCHOOL

GOALS

Why was the anointing of Jesus by Mary significant?
What are the sequence of events in Matthew 26 in relation to Holy Week?

LESSON

Materials Needed: Bible, Plastic sleeve page protectors for timeline activity, Tape

Extended Learning Opportunity for Teachers:

The Gospel of Matthew: Torah for the Church by Fr. Lawrence Farley, pgs 339-362

The Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to Matthew by Blessed Theophylact, pgs 222-238

Holy Week <https://www.goarch.org/en/holyweek>

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN MATTHEW 26

Instructions: *As a review activity, you can ask the students to organize the images / icons, at the end of this lesson, in sequential order as they happen in Matthew 26.*

Give 10 children one image / icon or description of the event and then ask, "What happened first in our lesson on chapter 26 of Matthew." Encourage the kids to help each other, even if they are not holding the image / icon or description.

The two kids holding the first event and description will tape them to the white board. Then the two children with the second event and description will tape theirs to the white board - until all of the events are in sequential order on the white board.

1. **Mary, sister of Lazarus, anoints Jesus** in preparation for His upcoming burial. She uses an alabaster flask filled with expensive spikenard oil to pour over Jesus' head and on His feet. Judas Iscariot (John 12:4) asks why this oil was basically wasted when it could have been sold and the money given to the poor. Jesus reprimands Judas and tells him, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. **For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial.** 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.**"

When are some of the times we still anoint our bodies with oil today?

- **At our baptism / chrismation:** the priest will anoint us with oil (Holy Chrism) and say, "The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit."
- **Holy Unction:** anointing with holy oil for physical and spiritual healing
- **When we are sick:** James 5:14, "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."

What is the purpose of a memorial? Fr. Lawrence Farley explains (page 344), "A memorial (Gr. Mnemousunon) was something done or offered as a memorial (*a reminder or a commemoration*) before God, so that He would remember the person thus commended and reward him." As Christians, we always place everything we do within the context of our relationship with God and eternity. The earthly world seeks to remember people for their accomplishments in this world with the use of statues, writings, awards, and so forth. We still read about Mary anointing Jesus with oil today. Obviously, this moment has continued to be a memorial for over 2,000 years.

How do we offer memorials to God for people today? We oftentimes bring kollyva to church and have a short memorial service for the person after they have passed unto the Lord. We also comfort one another by saying, "May his/her memory be eternal!" We do this because we want God to remember this person in His Kingdom when Christ comes to judge the living and the dead at the Second Coming.

2. Judas agrees to betray Jesus to the chief priests. Hundreds of thousands of people have traveled to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover and the crowds of people loved Jesus dearly. He healed countless numbers of them. The Jewish leadership, however, did not feel the same way about Jesus and wanted to get rid of Him. They could not arrest Him publicly because the crowds would likely riot against Jesus' arrest. They had to do it secretly and deceptively - and when Judas came to them asking what he would receive if he told them where to find Jesus, they agreed to pay Judas 30 pieces of silver.

3. Jesus celebrates the Passover with His Disciples. The Passover meal had to be eaten in Jerusalem, but this was an extremely dangerous place for Jesus to be right now given how most of the Jewish leadership felt about Him. During this meal, we read about the very first celebration of Holy Communion. We refer to the icon for this event as "the Mystical Supper."

4. Jesus predicts Peter's denial of Him. During the meal, Jesus tells His Disciples that tonight all of them will stumble because of Him. They can't believe this! Surely not! Peter speaks up and promises Jesus that there's no way he would ever say he doesn't know Jesus! Jesus responds, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." *(No icon provided in this lesson specifically for this moment)*

5. Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus knows that He will be arrested today and all the events that will follow. He willingly allows all of this to happen because He knows that ultimately His death and resurrection is for the salvation of all of humanity. It's a super huge deal! His disciples are tired, however, and fall asleep multiple times while Jesus is praying.

6. Judas Iscariot betrays Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. The chief priests and elders of the people had sent soldiers with Judas to arrest Jesus. It is late at night and extremely dark. In order to make sure they arrest Jesus and not someone else in the dim light, Judas agrees to show the guards who to arrest by giving Jesus a common greeting of the time, a kiss. Peter tries to protect Jesus when he realizes what is happening and cuts off the ear of the servant of the high priest. Jesus stops Peter and insists that he put up his sword. Jesus is teaching us that the Kingdom of God is never taken by force, but rather by voluntarily aligning our will with God's.

7. Jesus then faces the Sanhedrin, the Jewish leadership council. They had to secretly attempt to convict Jesus in the middle of the night when everyone else was asleep, but they also needed a legitimate reason to convict Him guilty of the death penalty when they presented Him to Pilate the next day. All night long, they called up witnesses that would testify against Jesus, however they could not find two people in agreement about Jesus' wrongdoings - and they needed at least two witnesses. Finally, the high priest directly asks Jesus if He is the Son of God. Jesus tells the high priest yes. Surely, Jesus was not actually the Son of God. The Sanhedrin could convict Him for blasphemy!

8. Peter denies Jesus three times. As soon as Jesus was arrested, His Disciples ran off and hid. They knew they were in danger of being arrested too for being associated with Jesus. Peter wants to see what is happening with Jesus even though he could not directly see Jesus being questioned. Peter tried to discreetly hide in the courtyard of the high priest amongst the servants. However, this didn't work because people started recognizing him. Peter wanted to help Jesus anyway he could - he didn't know how, but he knew if he got arrested too then he couldn't help Jesus. So, each time someone asked if he knew Jesus, Peter promised enthusiastically three times that he did not! Then Peter heard the rooster crow and realized what he had done. In his attempt to try and help Jesus in some way, he had actually denied Jesus. He ran off crying bitterly.

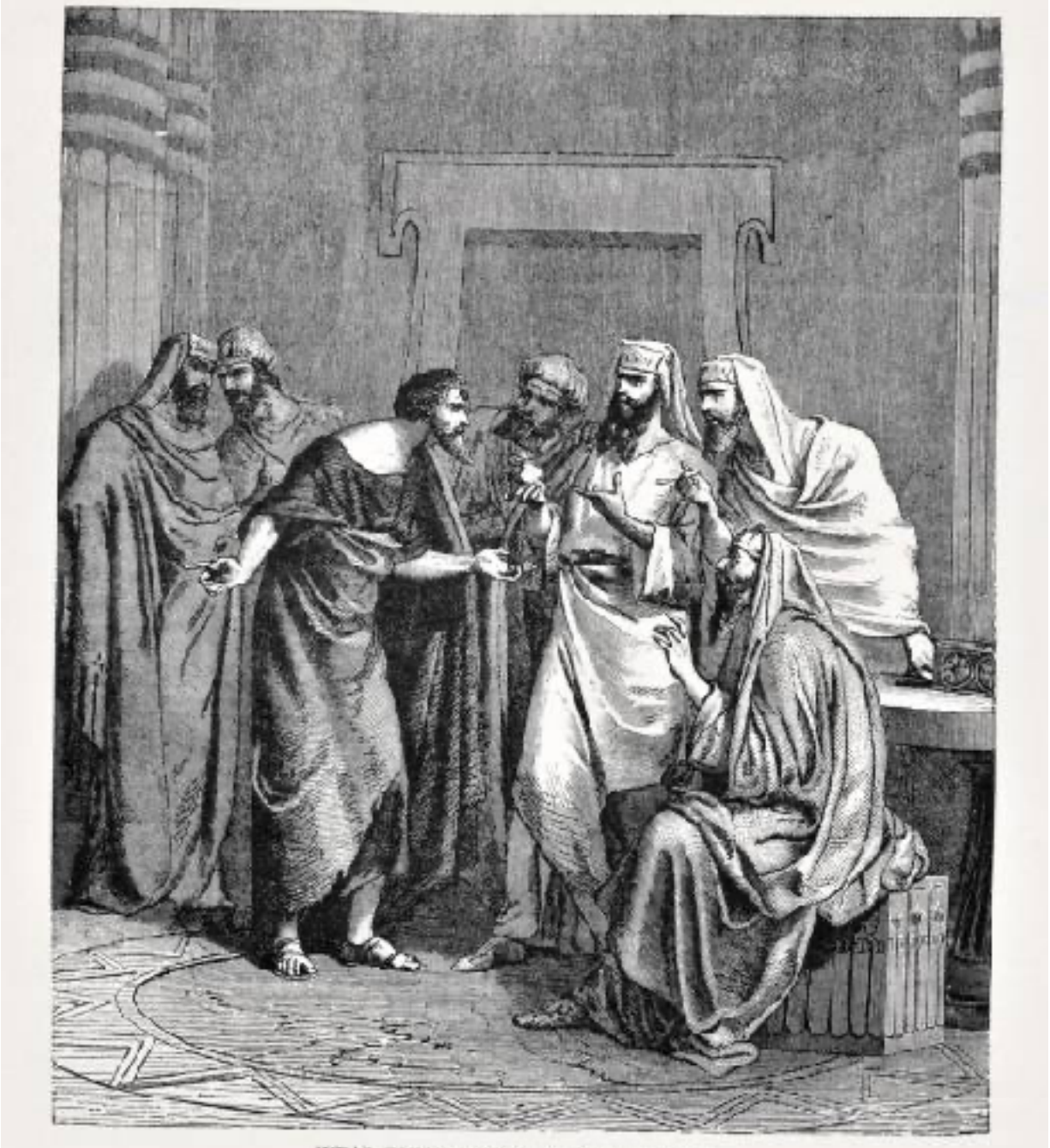
AN ALABASTER FLASK OF OIL

Alabaster is a soft mineral or rock that was used for carving. This flask does not have any openings. The only way to get to the oil inside of the flask is to break the neck of the bottle. You would have to use all of the oil immediately.

Spikenard oil was used to anoint the bodies of the dead and was expensive. Mary, the sister of Lazarus, uses this oil to pour over Jesus' head and to wipe His feet. This event is read in the gospels as a memorial to her.













Mix them up before passing out to the students:

Mary, Sister of Lazarus, anointing
Jesus in Bethany while Jesus is
having dinner with His Disciples

Judas Iscariot asking the chief priests
how much they will give him to betray
Jesus - 30 pieces of silver

Mystical Supper - first Holy
Communion and when Jesus predicts
Peter will deny Him 3 times

Jesus praying in the Garden of
Gethsemane and His Disciples fell
asleep while He was praying

Judas Iscariot betrays Jesus
with a kiss

Jesus is on trial before the Sanhedrin

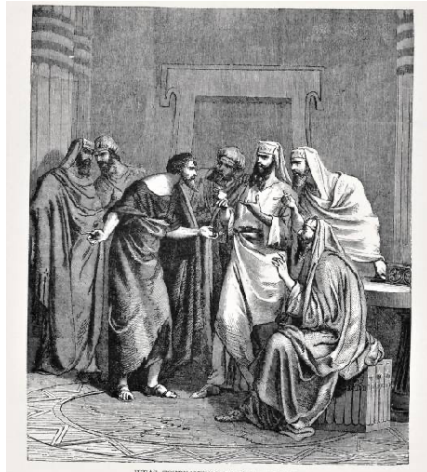
Peter denies Jesus three times in the
high priest's courtyard amongst the
servants

In Matthew 27, Jesus is handed over
to Pontius Pilate

TEACHER KEY



Mary, Sister of Lazarus, anointing Jesus in Bethany while Jesus is having dinner with His Disciples



Judas Iscariot asking the chief priests how much they will give him to betray Jesus - 30 pieces of silver



Mystical Supper - first Holy Communion and when Jesus predicts Peter will deny Him 3 times



Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane and His Disciples fell asleep while He was praying

(Top left): Judas Iscariot betrays Jesus with a kiss

(Top right): Jesus is on trial before the Sanhedrin

(Bottom left): Peter denies Jesus 3 times in the high priest's courtyard

(Bottom right): In Matt. 27, Jesus is handed over to Pontius Pilate