

EMPTY – JAR

ABOUT THIS WEEK

This week your group will explore the anointing of Jesus and consider how we may respond to his emptying of himself for us.

ITEMS NEEDED

- Prayer Journal Bibles Pens

CHECKLIST BEFORE YOUR GROUP ARRIVES

- Pray for the group Print Discussion Guide Refreshments (optional)
 Clean meeting area Clean bathroom Crack open front door

OPENING (5-7 MIN)

Briefly welcome everyone and say: Before we get into today's discussion, we're going to start with a fun question

HAVE YOU EVER RUN OUT OF GAS? PLEASE TELL US THE STORY!

After a discussion, say: Our ice-breaker illustrates two concepts we'll talk about today. One, that we don't have to work very hard to remember a story and two, that it's hard to find good news in the empty. That's two concepts we're going to talk about in our series leading up to Easter that's simply titled *Empty*.

OPENING PRAYER (1 MIN)

Say: But first, can someone start us off with a brief prayer for our time together?

RECREATING THE ORAL TRADITION (15-20 MIN)

After the prayer say: To get started today we're going to take a closer look at the Bible story we heard on Sunday. But we're going to do something to recreate the oral tradition of the early Church.

FIRST, EVERYONE TURN TO MATTHEW 26:6-13 AND LET'S READ IT TOGETHER, EACH OF US TAKING ONE VERSE AT A TIME.

Say: We heard on Sunday that the early Church grew because people told the story of Jesus. It was an oral tradition first, before the eyewitnesses ever wrote it down. But even after writing it down, it was an oral tradition for people who didn't have Bibles to read or Audible to listen to. They told and retold the story to each other. Let's recreate the experience of this idea of the oral tradition together.

EVERYONE CLOSE YOUR BIBLE EXCEPT FOR ONE OF US, AND LET'S HAVE THEM READ MATTHEW 26:6-13 ALOUD FOR US AGAIN WHILE WE ALL LISTEN.

FINALLY, EVERYONE CLOSE THEIR BIBLES AND CAN I GET A BRAVE VOLUNTEER TO TRY AND TELL THE STORY AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE, FROM MEMORY, FROM MATTHEW 26:6-13?

After they tell the story: Say: One of the powerful concepts of the oral tradition is the collective wisdom of the group. Imagine the early Church sitting around in living room and telling the story of the woman anointing Jesus. As one person told the story, the group would include elements the storyteller forgot or correct the storyteller where they got a detail wrong.

OKAY GROUP, LET'S HELP 'EM OUT. WHAT DETAILS DID THEY MISS OR GET WRONG?

After a discussion, say: So that's the concept of the oral tradition.

WHAT INSIGHTS DID THAT EXERCISE GIVE YOU TO THE IDEA OF GOD'S WORD, THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHURCH, OR MEMORIZATION? (OR SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY?)

THE EMPTY JAR

After a discussion, say: Then we get to the application or concepts from the story itself.

AS YOU THINK ABOUT MARY AND JUDAS, ARE YOU CONVICTED BY THE STORY OR ENCOURAGED BY IT, AND HOW SO?

After a discussion, say: The empty jar isn't just an object lesson for Mary and Judas, it's also a picture of Jesus himself who emptied himself for us.

CAN SOMEONE READ PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11 ALOUD FOR US?

After the reading, say: In verse 7 there's a Greek word *kenosis* that's difficult to translate, but it basically means "emptied himself" or "made himself nothing". The empty jar not only prepared Jesus' body for his death, but also serves as a picture of Jesus himself, who poured himself out for our salvation.

WHAT SORT OF RESPONSE DO YOU HAVE CONSIDERING JESUS BEING COMPLETELY EMPTIED OF ALL COMFORT, POWER, AND LIFE IN YOUR BEHALF?

After a discussion, say: There's one more angle for us to consider with the empty jar—ourselves. We're pouring ourselves out for something, be it our kids, our career, our spouse, our church, our health, our social media platform, our bank account, our retirement, our status... the list is endless.

IF YOU'RE COMFORTABLE SHARING, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY YOU ARE BEING Poured OUT AND EMPTIED OUT FOR IN THIS SEASON OF LIFE?

AS A FINAL QUESTION FOR TODAY, HOW DOES TODAY'S STORY OF THE EMPTY JAR PUT THAT IN PERSPECTIVE OR CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT IT?

ANNOUNCEMENTS TO SHARE (2-3 MIN)

Say: Before we get to our prayer requests, we've got quite a few announcements—

- Palm Sunday – Sunday, March 24, 8:00, 9:30 and 11:00 AM
- Maundy Thursday Service – Thursday, March 28, 6:30 PM
- 24-Hour Prayer Vigil – Thursday, March 28 through Friday, March 29. There's only a few spots left!
- Good Friday Service – Friday, March 29, 6:30 PM
- Easter Egg-Stravaganza – Saturday, March 30, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM. Petting zoo, games, Easter egg hunt. Bring your kids and invite kids you know!

CLOSING PRAYER (5-7 MIN)

Say: Let's close in prayer.

ARE THERE ANY OTHER PRAYER REQUESTS TODAY?

After prayer requests have been taken and written in your prayer journal, ask if someone would like to close the group in prayer. If not, Host, close the group in prayer.