



**Faith Talk:**

Discuss in your household or small group:

- What is the best gift you have ever given? Ever received?
- Mary anointed Jesus' feet with very expensive perfume (read John 12:1-8). Why do you think she did this?
- If you could see and touch Jesus today, what gift would you give to him? Why?

**Devotional Practices:**

In Sunday's Gospel reading we hear that Mary (sister of Martha and Lazarus) anointed Jesus' feet with nard, a very expensive perfume imported all the way from the Himalayas. Nard was used to prepare bodies for burial. By anointing Jesus, Mary was pointing forward to his sufferings and death soon thereafter.

Purchase a bottle of perfume or scented oil. As part of your home devotion times this week, "anoint" one another's hands with the perfume or oil. Say together this prayer: *"Lord Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross for us. Make our lives to be like a sweet perfume, attracting others to you. Amen."*

**Service:**

Mary surprised Jesus with a special gift of love. Prepare a special gift of love for a friend, neighbor or relative (money need not be spent).

**Rituals and Traditions:**

Next Sunday (28 March) is Palm Sunday. Prepare for this day by decorating your home with palm fronds or paper palm leaves, or with woven palm crosses. Make a centerpiece for your meal table from palm fronds, and add the donkey from your Christmas crèche. A banner with the words "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" could also form part of your celebration. Then after Palm Sunday is over, set aside the palm fronds to dry. Burn them in a few weeks time to make ashes to use next Ash Wednesday (if you have made paper palm leaves then burn these). Talk about how the joy of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was soon replaced by sorrow over his sufferings and death.

**Parent Toolbox:**

**Pressing On Towards the Goal**

In Philippians 3, Paul recalls that he has given up everything to make room for Christ in his life. He knows this isn't easy to do this, but he also knows what will result - a share in Christ's Resurrection. That is why Paul describes himself as a runner, pushing on toward the finish line. Following Christ will sometimes mean making difficult choices about our priorities and goals. There are, for instance, many demands upon household time and energy. Without intentional planning and goal setting, the practice of faith in the home can easily become crowded out by other things. Could your spiritual life do with some re-evaluation? Take some time in this pre-Easter period to think about making more room for Christ in both your personal and household life.



FOUR KEYS FOR THE HOME



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