



Extravagant Worship.

Adapted from Substance vol 3 published by Scripture Union.

Copy available for loan from Pauline Burdett.

AIMS AND OUTCOMES

- To explore what extravagance means both in terms of God's grace and our response to that grace.
- To study Luke 7:36-50 (Matt 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9) and to imagine being there.
- To ask and respond to the question, 'How should this story affect the way we worship?'
- To consider how we can worship God extravagantly.
- To consider what it means to love much because you have been forgiven much and to praise God for his forgiveness

This session is divided into 3 sections, **Begin, Explore and Respond**. Choose 1 from each section to make up your session. (More options can be found in the book or online at www.lightlive.org)

RESOURCES

- For **Loaded!** a few catalogues, plus three sheets of paper and some glue per person.
- For **Extravagance** 12 letters of the word written on 12 separate pieces of paper, newspapers and magazines
- For **Scene Setter** a selection of finger foods, low table or blanket. A copy of the journal page for each person which can be photocopied from the book or use the Resource page at the end of this document .
- For **Forgiveness**, paper and pens
- For **Forgiven Much** a card with Luke 7:47 written on it, sprayed with some perfume or aftershave for each YP

BEGIN

Loaded!

1. Divide the young people into threes and ask everyone to imagine they have been given £1,000 to spend on whatever they liked. Give each small group a few

catalogues, three sheets of paper and some glue. Ask them to browse through the catalogues and discuss together what they might buy. Then get each person to make a collage of the items they would purchase.

2. When each person has created their collage, bring the groups together to share what they have come up with. Are there any surprises?
3. Now ask everyone to imagine what they would think and do in one or more of the following scenarios:
 - You were asked to donate all these items to the church youth group or local homeless shelter.
 - Instead of buying these items you were asked to buy a giant jar of perfume to pour into a bath for the Queen as a mark of respect.
 - You were asked to permanently donate these items so the church could create a display entitled 'Thank God for his good gifts'.
 - Instead of buying these items you were asked to donate the money to a children's hospital in Africa.
4. Explain that in this session we are going to read about a woman who spent a lot of money on some perfume for Jesus. In fact, the Bible tells us it was worth about a year's wages. That's the equivalent of about £20,000 in today's money! In this session we are going to investigate why she did such a crazy thing.

Extravagance

1. Write the letters of the word 'extravagance' individually on 12 sheets of paper and place around the room.
2. Ask the group to discuss what this word means to them. Then get them to think of examples from films and their own experience of extravagant actions. You may also like them to flick through a selection of newspapers and magazines and pull out any stories involving extravagance.



3. Explain to your group that one definition of extravagance is, 'to do something that exceeds what is reasonable or appropriate'. It can also be defined as 'the lack of restraint in spending money or using resources'.
4. Challenge the group to come up with an example for each letter. For example, for 'E' they could have, 'Eating caviar for breakfast everyday' or, 'Educating the dog at university'! (You can bend the rules for the 'X'. For example, 'an eXtra room added to the house just for shoes'.) Get the young people to write their ideas around the appropriate letter and see how many they can come up with. You may like to award a small prize for the most imaginative idea!
5. Introduce the session by explaining that we are going to explore a story about one woman's extravagance towards Jesus and consider how this should affect how we worship him.

EXPLORE

Scene setter.

1. Recreate the scene by having a selection of finger foods in the middle of the room, either on a blanket or low table. Get everyone to recline and enjoy the food.
2. Ask someone to read Luke 7:36-50. After this, play some quiet music and encourage the young people to spend a few moments reflecting on the story.
3. Ask everyone to sit up and chat about how they might have felt had they been at Simon's dinner party. Then give everyone a copy of the journal page, and in pairs get them to consider how they think Simon, Jesus and the woman would have been feeling as these events unfolded.
4. Gather the group together, and ask people to share their thoughts. Then, ask each pair to come up with a modern day scenario of this situation For example, a known drug dealer comes into your church, cries during a prayer of confession, places £1,000 on the offering plate and sings songs thanking Jesus for his forgiveness at the top of his voice.
5. As each pair shares their scenario with the group, chat about how the various people involved might feel. Then, discuss the questions on the journal pages - either all together



or in their pairs.

6. Chat through any questions that arise and conclude by explaining that this extravagant act of worship was extremely sacrificial.

7. Discuss ways in which we can worship Jesus in an extravagant and sacrificial way.

Forgiveness

1. Ask a volunteer to read Luke 7:36-50 and then ask each young person to say one word that, for them, summarises the story. It's likely that the word 'forgiveness' will come up. If not suggest that 'forgiveness' is a key theme in this story.

2. Read verses 39-43 again and then, in pairs, get the group to create modern day stories that communicate the same message as the one Jesus told in verses 41 and 42.

3. Get the group to chat about why they think Jesus told this story and what message it communicates to us today. Challenge the young people to consider whether they approach God like the woman or like Simon.

4. Give the young people a few moments to reflect on verse 47 before discussing the following questions:

- How do you think Jesus' forgiveness made the woman feel?
- How does the fact that Jesus is willing to forgive you make you feel?
- How do you feel about the fact that Jesus is willing to forgive everyone, however seemingly big or little the sins they've committed are?

5. In pairs, get the young people to look through the passage again and pick out what things the woman did to show her love to Jesus. Ask them to summarise what they think we should learn from this story and discuss the following two questions:

- How should we respond to Jesus' forgiveness?
- How can we show Jesus that we love him?



6. Gather the group together and chat about any questions that have arisen.

RESPOND

Me? Extravagant?!

1. Explain to the group that in this session we've seen a woman's extravagant worship of Jesus. If you haven't already done so discuss what was so extravagant about her worship. As you discuss this encourage them to draw out what they can learn from this in terms of their own worship of God. During the discussion, draw out the following three points:

- The primary aim of the woman's actions was to honour Jesus - this must be the primary aim of our worship.

- The woman's actions were extravagant because she had gone beyond what she could afford as an expression of her love - likewise our offerings should be costly and should demonstrate that Jesus is more important to us than anything else.

- Although she had an audience, the woman was not interested in what other people thought - it was all about Jesus. Similarly, although others might be present when we worship God, we should be careful not to do it as a performance or to gain approval from others.

2. In threes, ask them to come up with three 'top tips' as to how we can ensure our worship is focused on Jesus, is extravagant and is not a performance.

3. Bearing all these things in mind, challenge the group to come up with some ideas of what they could do to worship Jesus extravagantly - things that will cost them something and might appear outrageous to other people. Your ideas might include giving money to a Christian charity (and/or raising it by holding an outrageous fundraising event!), inviting your church leaders to your next session and making them dinner, giving up time to serve a Christmas meal to homeless or elderly people.

4. Once you've come up with a list, decide which one (or possibly two) things you will commit to as a group and draw up an action plan.



5. Conclude by asking each person to say a short, one sentence, prayer thanking God

Forgiven much.

1. Spend some time reflecting on how much our forgiveness cost Jesus and praise him for this.

Use a few of the following ideas to do this - you may also like to share communion together.

- Read the following Bible passages over some quiet music:
Romans 3:22-24 , Ephesians 2:4-10 , Titus 3:4-7 , 1 Peter 2:22-25
- Get everyone to write a letter or poem expressing their thanks to God for forgiving them.
- Sing or listen to one or more of these songs:

'Your love is extravagant' (Casting Crowns)

'Healing Rain' (Michael W. Smith)

'Lost in Wonder' (Martyn Layzell)

'Thank you for saving me' (Martin Smith)

'Happy Day' (Tim Hughes)

- Get everyone to write down something they want God to forgive them for on either some rice paper, then drop it into water and watch it dissolve or on a slip of paper which can then be burnt if you have the outside space or an open fire in your meeting place.
2. Give each YP a card with Luke 7:47 written on it, sprayed with some perfume or aftershave, as a reminder.



RESOURCE PAGE

How do you think the 3 main characters felt as the events in Luke 7:36-50 unfolded?

- Before the meal (36-37)

Simon the Pharisee:-

Jesus:-

The woman:-

- At the start of the meal (36-37, 44-46)

Simon the Pharisee:-

Jesus:-

The woman:-

- As the woman washed Jesus Feet (37-39, 44-47)

Simon the Pharisee:-

Jesus:-

The woman:-

- After Jesus Words (43-50)

Simon the Pharisee:-

Jesus:-

The woman:-