

9

A Dinner Party to Remember

Grace
God's grace transforms us as we trust in Him.

POWER TEXT

"And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. . . . We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:16, 19).

KEY REFERENCES

- Luke 7:36-47
- *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 62, pp. 557-568
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 9, pp. 28-32
- Student lesson on page 102 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 3, The Father
- No. 11, Growing in Christ
- No. 4, The Son

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that the gracious love and forgiveness of Jesus gives the motivation to love others.
- **Feel** accepted and loved by Jesus.
- **Respond** by being alert to God's love in our lives.

POWERPOINT

God's overflowing love motivates us to be loving.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Jesus heals Simon physically, but Simon has not responded on a spiritual level. Simon arranges a great feast with Jesus and Lazarus as the guests of honor. Mary comes quietly into the feast and begins to wash Jesus' feet with tears and perfume, and to wipe them with her hair. Simon is outraged and wants Jesus to condemn Mary. Instead, Jesus gently points out Simon's own sin to him, and says that Mary, who apparently has done far worse things, shows her love all the more. Through Jesus' kindness Simon's heart is touched and he becomes a faithful follower.

This is a lesson about grace.

Mary experienced grace when seven times Jesus cast out devils from her. She allowed the Holy Spirit to use her. Through her expression of love, Jesus was able to extend grace to Simon.

Teacher Enrichment

"Simon was touched by the kindness of Jesus in not openly rebuking him before the guests. He had not been treated as he desired Mary to be treated. He saw that Jesus did not wish to expose his guilt to others, but sought by a true statement of the case to convince his mind, and by pitying kindness to subdue his heart. Stern denunciation would have hardened Simon against repentance, but patient admonition convinced him of his error. He saw the magnitude of the debt which he owed his Lord. His pride was humbled, he repented, and the proud Pharisee became a lowly, self-sacrificing disciple" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 567).

How is God surrounding me with His love? What is my response to that love? How does the love of God motivate me?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the Readiness Activity of your choice.

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at the door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. Love Research*	guest parents from church whom the students can interview
		B. Name the Smell	Bibles, small containers, cotton balls, various strong-smelling liquids, paper, pencils
* Prayer & Praise	15-20	See page 97. Prayer & Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, world map, pushpins, wrapped gift box, paper, pens, large envelope
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story	cotton balls, perfume spray
		Experiencing the Story	Bibles
		Exploring the Bible	Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Scenario*	
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Hearts*	pens, paper
* Closing		A. Prayer and Closing Comments	
		B. Reminder to Parents	
		C. Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:

- ☐ guest parents from church whom the students can interview

Love Research

Invite one or two parents to your Sabbath School class and tell them that the students will be asking them several simple questions.

Tell students to ask these parents the following: **What is love? Whom do you love? Who loves you? How do you think children learn to love? Do your children always act lovingly? Why or why not?**

Debriefing

Ask: **What reactions did you get from the parents?** (Allow students to share their experiences.) **What conclusions can you draw from your interviews?** (Children learn to love by experiencing love.) Say: **Let's say together our power text, 1 John 4:16, 19:**

"And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. . . . We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:16, 19).

Our power point reminds us that:

God's overflowing love motivates us to be loving.

B

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ small containers
- ☐ cotton balls
- ☐ various strong-smelling liquids
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils

Name the Smell

Note to instructors: Prior to this activity, check with the students whether any of them have allergies to certain strong smells. In case students have allergies to particular smells, do not use those substances in the activity.

Bring a number of cotton balls soaked with strong-smelling substances (such as tomato ketchup, vinegar, water, antiseptic, and perfume) and stored in small plastic containers. Number the containers. Give students a piece of paper and a pencil. Ask them to smell the contents of each container and write on the paper what substance they think it is. When all have had a chance to guess, read the answers and congratulate the students with the most informed noses.

Debriefing

Ask: **Which smelled the best for you?** (Accept a variety of answers. Encourage "sweetest" or "strongest" as an answer.) Ask: **What does a dry cotton ball smell like?** (Not much in and of itself; it smells like the things to which it had been exposed.) **What do we "smell" like without God's love?** (Whatever we have been around.) **How can we spread the perfume of God's love to others?** (First we have to be saturated with it ourselves, then others can receive it from us.)

Say: **God supplies both our need to be loved and our need to love others. Let's say together our power text, 1 John 4:16, 19:**

"And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. . . . We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:16, 19).

Our power point this week is:

God's overflowing love motivates us to be loving.

Prayer & Praise

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"For God So Loved the World" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 43)
"Wonderful Lord" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 47)
"His Banner Over Me Is Love" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 86)
"It's About Grace" (see music on p. 149 of this guide)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Use *Adventist Mission for Youth and Adults* (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. Using a world map, have the students mark with pushpins the location of the mission story.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ wrapped gift box (with a slot cut in the top)

Say: **Jesus gave up everything for us to show us how much He loved us. We can respond by giving our love offering back to Him, to help other people, both near and far, learn of His love.**

Prayer

YOU NEED:
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pens
- ☐ large envelope

Distribute paper, pens/pencils, and ask students to write down several ways that they personally experience the love of God—different ways they feel God shows His love for them. Have the papers placed in a large envelope. Have volunteers remove one paper at a time, read it, then thank Jesus for never running out of ways to show us how much He loves us.

Close with a prayer for the students' joys and sorrows, for the birthday and other special event celebrants, as well as for the visitors.

Notes

2

BIBLE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ cotton balls
- ☐ perfume spray

Introducing the Bible Story

Note to instructors: Prior to this activity, check whether any of the students have allergies to perfumes. In case any student is allergic to perfumes, introduce the Bible story without spraying perfume. Use the questions included below as discussion starters and to introduce the Bible story.

While you introduce the lesson, offer cotton balls to anyone who wants one. Walk around and offer to spray the best perfume you have available on the cotton balls.

Ask: **What would you think if in the middle of your Sabbath dinner someone started spraying perfume? What would be the reaction? In our story today someone opened a box of perfume and began to pour it on Jesus' feet in the middle of a banquet.**

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles

Experiencing the Story

Have your volunteers read Luke 7:36-47 verse by verse. After each verse, stop them and ask them to close their eyes. Then ask them to tell you how they envisioned the scenes described in these passages. Encourage creative and respectful responses.

Debriefing

Ask: **How did Mary show appreciation to Jesus, who has forgiven her sins? How did Mary's actions reflect her love for Jesus? By contrast, how did Simon show appreciation to Jesus, who has forgiven his sins? What does Simon's judgmental attitude toward Mary tell about his character? How are we sometimes acting like Simon when we point the finger to the sins of others instead of looking inward to our own sins? The story we studied last week reminds us that, just like Mary and Simon, we are all sinners in need of Jesus' grace.**

Say: **Let's repeat together our power point:**

God's overflowing love motivates us to be loving.

3

APPLYING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:

□ Bibles

Exploring the Bible

Say: **Let's look at Luke 7:36-47 again. How would you feel if a woman began crying, wetting your feet with her tears, wiping them with her hair, then kissing your feet and pouring perfume on them?** (Accept responses.) **How did Jesus feel? Why? Why didn't Jesus condemn Mary as others thought He should?** (He had already forgiven her, and she had already accepted His forgiveness. That is why she was showing her love so extravagantly.) **What do you think was Jesus' purpose in telling the parable in verses 41-43? Why didn't He come right out to condemn Simon?** (He loved him too much to embarrass him in public.)

Ask: **With whom do you identify most in this story: (1) the woman—because of your many past sins; (2) Simon, the Pharisee—because you tend to judge others severely; (3) Jesus—because you do not like the hypocritical behaviors of those who feel righteous.**

Say: **Let's repeat together our power text, 1 John 4:16, 19:**

"And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. . . . We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:16, 19).

Remember our power point:

God's overflowing love motivates us to be loving.

Scenario

Divide the students into small groups. Ask each group to create a modern-day scenario similar to the story of Mary, Jesus, and Simon. They should include themselves in the story. (Example: They are Simon, who is suspicious of his sister, Mary, who seems extra-helpful to Dad after she crashed the family car.) Give them three to five minutes to create their story.

Ask each small group to tell their story to the rest of the groups.

Debriefing

Ask: **How do you feel when someone forgives you? How do you feel when you have to forgive someone who has wronged you? What makes it possible for you to forgive others?** (Accepting God's love into our hearts.) **God supplies both our need to be forgiven and loved, and our need to be forgiving and loving of others. Say our power point with me:**

God's overflowing love motivates us to be loving.

4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pens

Hearts

Allow time for students to share what they did during the past week to extend love and forgiveness to someone with whom they had had a conflict. How did that person respond?

Distribute paper. Have students list three people to whom they want to show "love" in tangible ways.

Say: **Now we are going to pray for them.**

Ask students to kneel while holding their paper. Lead them in a prayer. Ask God to supply them with wisdom to share His love with these people. Close by thanking God for supplying their need, as He has promised.

Debriefing

Ask: **What can you do to let God's love and grace flow through you to the people on your paper?** Accept suggestions.

Say: **Let's repeat once again our power point:**

God's overflowing love motivates us to be loving.

Global Youth Day: Continue to plan a project for Global Youth Day. This event will happen on March 15, 2025. To learn more about Global Youth Day you may visit www.gcyouthministries.org. Think of creative ways to participate with your Sabbath School class in a community service project or a mission initiative on that day.

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Say: **When we really believe that Jesus often chooses to love others through us, we will accept His love and be willing to be used by Him. Let's thank Jesus for all the ways He shows that He loves us every day.**

Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **Jesus enters Jerusalem triumphantly. We reflect God's love when we share the good news about Jesus.**

Notes

Student lesson

A Dinner Party to Remember

Have you ever been at an event during which someone has done something very unexpected? Everyone stops and stares. Everything becomes very quiet, and afterward nobody can stop talking about it. Simon held a dinner party, and 2,000 years later people are still talking about what happened.

During the week before the Passover on His way to Jerusalem, Jesus stopped in Bethany and visited the home of His friend Lazarus. Many people who were headed to the Passover came to see Jesus. Some were curious to see the man whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Lazarus was living evidence of Jesus' divine power to raise the dead. To these people Lazarus declared that Jesus was the Son of God. Through these events the influence of Jesus spread among the people who went to Jerusalem for the Passover. These occurrences stirred the priests to envy and anger. They started to plot to destroy Jesus as well as Lazarus, whose powerful resurrection story had attracted so much attention.

Meanwhile in Bethany, Jesus and His disciples were invited to participate at a feast in the house of Simon. Besides his usual prosperous friends, Simon had invited Jesus, His disciples, and Lazarus to the dinner. He hoped to introduce to his friends Jesus, who had healed him of leprosy, and Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. As expected, this celebration attracted many Jews to Simon's house.

Martha, the sister of Lazarus, was invited to cater the dinner. She was efficient, and her food was delicious.

Lazarus, Jesus, and His disciples walked into Simon's home, where Simon was busy welcoming his guests. The servants ushered in Jesus, Lazarus, and the disciples. When Simon came to the table, he asked Jesus to bless the food. Then the servants began to serve the meal.

Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, entered the room while the guests were feasting from their host's delicacies. She passed unnoticed until she reached the place where Jesus was seated. Mary was bringing a costly gift for Jesus. Trying not to be obvious, she rejoiced to see that Jesus sat in a place of honor. She heard people say that He was going to be king! She wanted to be the first to honor Him. He had been so good and patient with her. Seven times He had forgiven her and cast out her demons. Mary's entire focus was on Jesus as she listened intently to every word that He spoke.

Mary didn't care that she had spent her life's savings on that alabaster box of perfumed oil. Jesus was worth more to her! She opened the box and poured the perfume on Jesus' feet. Because she didn't have a towel, she loosened her long hair and wiped His feet with it.

As the scent of the perfume filled the air, people began to search for the source. Soon all eyes were fixed on Mary.

How dare she touch Him! Simon thought, trying not to show his anger and embarrassment. But Jesus read his thoughts and began to tell a story.

"There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?"

"I suppose the one whom he forgave more," answered Simon.

"You have rightly judged," Jesus replied.

Turning toward Mary, Jesus continued to speak to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."

Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

As Jesus spoke these words, the people looked startled. But Jesus spoke to the woman once again, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace" (Luke 7:41-50).

In the end not only Mary was touched by Jesus' words, but Simon's life was also changed forever. He finally understood that in response to Jesus' forgiveness we are to love Him and others as He has taught us.

KEY REFERENCES

- Luke 7:36-47
- *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 62, pp. 557-568
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 9, pp. 28-32
- Our Beliefs, nos. 3, 11, 4

POWER TEXT

"And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. . . . We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:16, 19).

POWER POINT

God's overflowing love motivates us to be loving.







Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 74.

Sunday

READ Read Luke 7:36-38 and this week's story, "A Dinner Party to Remember."

REVIEW Review the power text, 1 John 4:16, 19.

PRAY Ask God to reveal to you the message of this story.

Monday

READ Read Luke 7:39-48.

WRITE Write a modern version of the story in your Bible study journal. Put yourself in the place of one of the characters.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God that He supplies love and forgiveness so that you may be able to love others.

Tuesday

READ Read Matthew 26:6, 7.

COMPARE What is the difference between Matthew's version and Luke's version of this week's story?

THINK Why is Mary's story so well known even today?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for reaching out to others through you.

Wednesday

READ Read Matthew 26:8-13.

REVIEW Review the power text.

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write at the top of a page the power point. Underneath, in two columns, list: (1) ways God surrounds you with His love, and (2) ways He motivates you to be loving to others.

PRAY Praise God through song for things on your list.

Thursday

READ Read Psalm 143:8.

REVIEW Review the power text.

THINK When does David ask for word of God's love?

PLAN Ask God for a supply of His love each morning.

SHARE Share this decision with a friend.

PRAY Ask God to help you remember your decision.

Friday

READ Read Psalm 47:1, 2 aloud, clapping your hands.

DISCUSS With your family, discuss the ways God has shown His love to your family.

PLAN Discuss a way your family can reflect God's love to someone.

REPEAT Say the power text, 1 John 4:16, 19, by memory.

PRAY Thank God for surrounding you with His love and ask Him to reflect His love to others through you.