

Small Group Guide

“What Is the Value of a King?” | Mark 14:1–11

Middle School & High School | 30–35 Minutes

Overview

What matters most to you? Your friends? Your phone? Making the team? Getting into the right college? We reveal what we value through our choices—especially when following Jesus costs us something.

In Mark 14:1–11, religious leaders plot against Jesus, a woman honors Him with an expensive gift, and Judas chooses to betray Him. Their responses challenge us to ask: **Is Jesus simply part of my routine, or is He the King of my life?**

This lesson explores how valuing Jesus changes the way we handle friendships, pressure, priorities, and everyday opportunities to serve.

Leader timing: Opening—4 minutes; Scripture reading and Bible knowledge—4 minutes; four discussion sections—18–20 minutes; application—4 minutes; closing prayer and memory verse—2–3 minutes. Use the first two questions in each discussion section; add the third as time allows. Personal reflection questions are for the week ahead.

Read Together & Bible Knowledge Warm-Up — 4 Minutes

Read **Mark 14:1–11** aloud together. Invite three volunteers to read verses 1–2, 3–9, and 10–11. Students may also simply listen.

As you listen, consider: How do the religious leaders, the woman, and Judas each respond to Jesus?

Then use the Bible knowledge questions below, allowing students to look back at the passage for answers. This is a chance to learn together—not a test!

Bible Knowledge Warm-Up

Let students find the answers in the passage. These questions are for learning together, not putting anyone on the spot.

1. **What feast was approaching?**

Answer: Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (verse 1).

Passover remembered God's deliverance of His people from slavery in Egypt.

2. **Where was Jesus when the woman approached Him?**

Answer: In Bethany, at the house of Simon the leper (verse 3).

3. **What did the woman pour on Jesus' head?**

Answer: Very costly ointment of pure nard from an alabaster flask (verse 3).

4. **How much did some people say the ointment could have sold for?**

Answer: More than 300 denarii (verse 5).

A denarius was a typical day's wage for a laborer. This was an enormously valuable gift.

Bible detective note: Mark does not name the woman here, and he describes her critics as "some." Paying attention to what a passage actually says helps us read the Bible carefully.

Key Takeaways

1. **Knowing about Jesus is different from trusting and following Him.** Attending church, knowing Bible answers, or having Christian parents does not replace a personal response of faith.
2. **Nothing offered to Jesus in faithful love is wasted.** Time spent praying, serving, encouraging, and obeying matters—even when other people do not understand.
3. **Jesus sees faithfulness that others miss.** You do not need a platform, a large following, or an impressive talent to honor Him.
4. **Our choices reveal what we value.** Following Jesus means learning to place His approval above popularity, convenience, and getting our own way.

Remember: We do not earn salvation by giving enough or doing enough. We are saved by God's grace through faith in Christ. Our obedience and generosity are responses to His love.

Discussion Questions

Opening — What Is It Worth?

Ask students:

"You have three free hours on Saturday. You can spend them with friends, gaming or scrolling, practicing something you enjoy, or helping someone. What would you choose, and why?"

- What makes something worth your time?
- Can something good become too important in your life? How would you know?

Leader connection: Enjoying sports, friends, and hobbies is not wrong. The question is whether anything has become more important to us than Jesus.

Diving In: Spiritual Compromise (Mark 14:1–2)

The chief priests and scribes knew religious teaching, but they were planning to arrest and kill Jesus. Religious knowledge had not produced hearts willing to submit to Him.

- How could someone know the right answers at church but make very different choices at school or online?
- **Real-life situation:** A group chat starts making cruel jokes about someone. You do not add anything, but you keep reacting with laughing emojis. What would honoring Jesus look like?
- Why is it sometimes easier to blend in than to speak or act with kindness and courage?

Life application: Faithfulness might mean refusing to share an embarrassing picture, changing the conversation, checking on someone privately, or asking a trusted adult for help with bullying. Courage does not require handling an unsafe situation alone.

Main point: Following Jesus affects who we are when we think no one from church is watching.

Diving In: The Woman's Sacrifice (Mark 14:3–5)

The woman offered Jesus a costly gift. Some people focused on its price and criticized her. Her actions showed that she considered Jesus worthy of extraordinary honor.

- Why might someone criticize you for taking your faith seriously?
- **Real-life situation:** Your friends want you to copy homework so everyone can finish quickly. Doing your own work could cost you time and their approval. How does that choice reveal what you value?
- What is something you might need to offer Jesus: your time, your plans, your desire to fit in, or your need to control what others think?

Leader connection: The woman's gift does not mean students should give away all their belongings or make dramatic promises. The question is whether we are willing to obey Jesus when obedience has a cost.

Main point: Instead of only asking, "What will following Jesus cost me?" ask, "Why is Jesus worth following?"

Diving In: Heaven's Perspective (Mark 14:6–9)

Jesus defended the woman and explained that her act prepared His body for burial. She honored Him shortly before His death, even though the people around her did not recognize the significance of what she had done.

- Jesus said, “She has done what she could.” How does that encourage someone who feels too young, untalented, or unnoticed to make a difference?
- **Real-life situation:** You help clean up after a youth event, but someone else gets thanked. Was your service still worthwhile? What makes that hard?
- What is one ability or opportunity you already have that you could use to serve Jesus this week?

Quick Bible connection: When Jesus mentioned that the poor would always be with them, was He saying helping people in need did not matter?

No. In verse 7, He affirmed that they could help the poor whenever they wanted. He was explaining the unique significance of this woman’s act as His death approached.

Life application: You can welcome a new student, help a sibling, encourage a discouraged friend, pray for someone, or serve at church without needing public recognition.

Main point: You do not have to impress people to honor Jesus.

Diving In: Betrayal from the Inside (Mark 14:10–11)

Judas was one of the Twelve. He had spent time with Jesus and heard His teaching, yet he went to the chief priests to betray Him. They promised him money.

- What is the difference between being around people who follow Jesus and personally trusting Him?
- **Real-life situation:** Someone acts one way at church and another way around friends because they are afraid of being rejected. What could help them begin living honestly and consistently?
- How can your friendships influence your choices? What does a friend who helps you follow Jesus actually do?

Leader connection: Struggling with sin or experiencing questions does not automatically mean someone is like Judas. Believers need ongoing repentance and grace. Encourage students to bring their struggles honestly to Jesus and to a trusted Christian adult.

Main point: Jesus calls us into a real relationship with Him, not merely a religious routine.

Reflection Questions for Personal Use

These questions are for journaling or quiet reflection during the week. Students do not need to share private answers aloud.

- If someone watched my choices this week, what would they think matters most to me?
- Do I act differently at church, at school, at home, and online? Why?

- Where am I allowing fear of rejection to influence my obedience to Jesus?
 - What is one ordinary way I can honor Jesus with what I already have?
 - Am I personally trusting Christ, or mostly depending on my family's faith and my church involvement?
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Practical Applications

This week, choose at least one of the following:

- **Give Jesus your attention.** Set aside ten minutes on three days this week to put your phone away, read Scripture, and pray. Begin with Mark 14:1–11.
- **Choose courage over approval.** Refuse to participate in gossip, cheating, or hurtful online behavior. Plan one gracious response you can use when pressure comes.
- **Do what you can.** Complete one quiet act of service: help at home without being asked, welcome someone who is alone, or encourage a person who is often overlooked.
- **Offer Him your priorities.** Identify something that regularly crowds out obedience to Jesus. Make one specific adjustment to how you use your time or attention.
- **Be honest about your faith.** If you have questions about trusting Jesus or following Him, talk with your youth leader, pastor, parent, or another trusted Christian adult.

Before leaving, complete this sentence:

“Because Jesus is worth _____, this week I will _____.”

Be specific. “I will be nicer” is difficult to measure. “I will invite the new student to sit with me at lunch” gives you a clear next step.

Closing Prayer Focus

As you close, pray together over these three areas:

1. That God would reveal where popularity, comfort, or personal desires have become more important than obedience to Him.
2. That each student would trust Jesus and have courage to honor Him in everyday choices.
3. That your group would encourage one another, notice quiet acts of service, and help people feel welcomed and supported.

Optional prayer prompt: Invite each student to silently name one area they need to surrender to Jesus. Allow students to pray aloud if they wish, without pressure.

Memory Verse for the Week

Mark 14:8a (ESV): “She has done what she could.”

The woman could not stop the religious leaders’ plans or prevent Judas’s betrayal, but she could honor Jesus with what she had.

Your challenge: You cannot control everyone else’s choices. What can you do today to honor Jesus?

Repeat the verse together, then invite students to remember it whenever they feel that their faithful choices are too small to matter.