

all-age main course

bible smells

AIMS

To explore the variety of smells we encounter in the Bible and in our lives as a focus for sharing in faith and prayer.

INTRODUCTION

This bible study is in three possible parts. You might want to do all three parts or just one or two parts. This might depend on the ages and abilities of the group members taking part.

- Part one: Daily smells
- Part two: Bible smells
- Part three: Jesus smells

It would all fit into about 2 hours, with breaks for refreshments.

You will need some paper and pencils/pens, some bibles (or have the bible verses written out on cards):

Part 1 Daily smells (about 15 minutes)

Invite people to think about common sayings that are to do with smells like

Put off the scent

Following your nose

A nose for the job

The smell of money

The smell of poverty

To come up smelling of roses

Some cultures may have sayings or proverbs linked to smell. Invite people to illustrate these by drawing a cartoon. Put these up around the room for others to look at.

Part 2 Bible smells (about 10-15 minutes)

In this section participants can look up a particular bible reference about smell and talk about it together. We suggest you do this in twos or threes. Where reading is concerned encourage people to work together across ages and abilities. Give each pair or trio one bible reference to talk about.

Genesis 27 verse 27

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Song of Solomon 4 verse 16

Isaiah 3 verse 24

Daniel 3 verse 27

Psalms 45 verse 8

Psalms 115 verse 6

1 Corinthians 12 verse 17

- Is this about a nice smell or a nasty smell?
- What do people think the bible smell verse is about?

Remember to listen to each other's ideas in the small groups.

Part 3 Jesus smells (30 –45 minutes)

In this section we will encourage people to think of the smells that Jesus would have had around him during key moments in his life. Begin by thinking of some key moments in Jesus life. If you have done the Jesus life-line activity in the booklet or on the website this might help. This time think particularly of smells associated with those times.

Below are listed some of the smells which have been suggested.

Some Smells in the life of Jesus

Stable:	hay, cattle, Mary, frankincense, myrrh, camels, people
Temple:	incense, burning flesh of the sacrifices, people
Wedding:	perfumes worn by bride, groom and guests, seat of the servants, food, wine, people
Wilderness:	dust, cold, goats, maybe cooking from the desert dwellers, his own body, imaginary smells of newly baked bread
Lazarus's tomb:	embalming spices, decaying flesh, the air outside, people
Upper room:	friends, food, wine, feet, betrayal
Garden of Gethsemane:	olive trees, flowers, people, fear
Calvary:	blood, wood, vinegar, sweat, people

You can probably think of lots more.... The fish cooking on the beach when he meets the disciples in Galilee after the resurrection for example.

Invite participants to work in small groups to illustrate their part of Jesus life in smells.

This could be done on large sheets of paper and the papers spaced around the room in a timeline.

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Or you might want to illustrate some of these by having some things like straw, vinegar, perfume, flowers, etc for people to smell.

Strong smells can have particular meanings for people. Where people connect their story and the story of Jesus through smell take time to listen to what they have to say.

Some people might want to make up some stories related to times in Jesus life that they can imagine through smell, like a story about his birth based on the smell of the stable, for example.

Another way of using the timeline is to invite people to walk around it as a focus of prayer. At each part of Jesus life we might use a simple prayer like 'Come Lord, Jesus', or members of the group might like to write their own prayers based on the links to smell.

Finish the session by sharing something tasty to eat that also smells good and saying this smell prayer.

Prayer

Creator God, maker of smells and smellers,

We enjoy your world through our noses.

We understand the lives of other people through these smells.

We connect with Jesus and his life by our common sense of smell.

Where we sniff a whiff of injustice, empower us to root it out.

Where we smell new life, joy and celebration, may we enjoy it together.

Together may we follow our noses to your kingdom.

EVALUATION

Please try to answer these questions for yourself and for others who will use this material:

1. What was the most helpful thing?
2. What was the least helpful thing?
3. What would you like to try now?

THE NEXT STEP

If you want more all-age material please revisit the menu. If you've got some other good ideas about senses and the bible maybe you'd like to send them in.

Acknowledgements

This idea was submitted by Joyce Berry of Manor Road, URC.