

An appeal to the olfactory nerve can stimulate memory and alter behavior. Further, the study of aromacology — a body of research on the behavioral effects of fragrance — suggests that fragrances can do a lot: relieve stress, elevate mood, increase alertness, stimulate and suppress the appetite, and increase performance.

From antiquity, people believed that whatever delighted the human senses must also be pleasing to the gods. They believed that through ascension of smoke, burned sacrificial offerings were transported into the realm of divinity. In Exodus, we read that in addition to the ten commandments, Moses brought down from Sinai specifications for the Ark and the Temple, directions for religious ceremonies, and recipes for

sacred incense made with frankincense and sacred anointing oils based on myrrh. The Magi brought costly gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the long-awaited Messiah. All were rare and costly commodities of the ancient world.

Incense, as it is still used in the Church today, is rich in symbolism. The rising smoke suggests the ascent of the prayers of the faithful. The ritual censuring of religious objects symbolizes sanctification, and the censuring of the worshipers not only implies sanctification but also celebrates their participation in the liturgical ceremony. Our sense of smell affects the source of our most powerful emotions. Potpourri, bath salts, atomizers, incense, and sachets are all delightful appeals to the senses.

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### HOMEMADE AIR FRESHENER

*You will need:*

- small spray bottle with capability for fine mist
- essential oils
- water

Get a spray bottle from the cosmetic department of your local grocery or pharmacy. You want one that will spray a fine mist. Fill your bottle with water. Add a few drops of your favorite essential oil or oil mixture.

To use, shake bottle and mist inside a room whenever you want a nice smell. Make certain you mist only over things that aren't hurt by water.

Try one or all of the following oil combinations:

- 10 drops lemon and 5 drops rose fragrance
  - 10 drops lemon and 2 drops lavender
  - 8 drops sweet orange and 6 drops sandalwood
  - 8 to 10 drops patchouli (this fragrance is strong; don't mix with anything else)
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