

Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

Overview



Materials You'll Need

- no extra materials are needed for this lesson



Scriptures

Jn 13:1-7, 34, 35

Bible Truth Objective(s)

Jesus showed His love and His willingness to serve by washing His disciples' feet

Behavioral Objective(s)

To follow Jesus' example to care for each other, and be willing to do things for one other

Memory Verse

"Love one another." (Jn 13:34)



Bible Knowledge

The Sacrament of Footwashing

Jesus demonstrated His love and humility by performing the task of a slave or servant. He removed His outer cloak, wrapped a towel around His waist, took a basin of water, and began to wash the feet of the disciples.

Peter recognized how improper it was for Jesus to perform such a task. Yet, even when he objected, Jesus insisted. Jesus was providing a lesson in humility. He wanted to let them know how important it was to show unconditional love. Jesus' love was a sacrificial love, and He wanted to set this example to everyone who followed Him.

The sacrament of footwashing is one of the True Jesus Church's sacraments. The Lord Jesus Himself instituted the sacrament of footwashing and commanded His disciples to follow His example (Jn 13:14, 15). A Christian needs to have his feet washed after water baptism, for the Lord has said, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean" (Jn 13:10).

Many Christians today feel that footwashing is merely symbolic of certain teachings (e.g. the

teaching of humility). Therefore they feel they can forego the sacrament so long as they embody the teachings of the sacrament. But Jesus' footwashing has a significance beyond mere Jewish customs and practices. Jesus said to Peter, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me" (Jn 13:8). The Bible clearly relates the Lord's footwashing to having a "part with the Lord" and being spiritually clean. In addition, the sacrament of footwashing is the Lord's invitation to participate in His divine nature (see 2 Pet 1:4).

In the True Jesus Church, the person who administers the sacrament of footwashing must be sent by the Lord. As a rule, the elders, deacons, or pastors represent those who are sent (i.e. God's holy workers). The person must humbly pour water in a basin and wash the believer's feet one by one before drying them with a towel (Jn 13:4, 5). The sacrament must be performed in the name of Jesus.

The person who is receiving the footwashing should have first received the sacrament of water baptism. He should also understand the significance of this sacrament, receive it with thanksgiving, and be determined to obey the Lord's teachings. He must be willing to accept and receive continuous spiritual washing.



Understanding Your Students

Children at this age have difficulty empathizing and putting themselves in the shoes of others. They are still very much self-centered, thinking that the world revolves only around them. They don't automatically realize that others' feelings are crucial and that there is a great deal to be learned from giving up something they really want for the sake of someone else. Nevertheless, children can begin to learn sensitivity and unselfishness at a very young age.

The story of Lord Jesus washing the disciples' feet can be a great starting point to introduce the concepts of giving and generosity. There are a variety of ways to motivate the students to imitate the unselfish acts of Christ. Here are some examples:

1. **Praise:** Heap praise on even the smallest signs of selflessness in your students. Selflessness can become quite contagious in a classroom if the students hear about the positive things the other students have been doing. Be specific in your use of positive reinforcement. Instead of simply saying, "Good

job, Charlie " it is much more effective to say something along the lines of, "Charlie, it was so sweet of you to offer your snack to Chris I'm sure you really brightened his day, by sharing something you really liked with him " Let others hear about Charlie's offering to God.

2. **Give responsibility:** A Harvard study pointed out a connection between how much responsibility children were given and their tendencies to be altruistic (selfless and compassionate) and extra-centered. The study showed that children who were given everything but responsibility became people who were quite spoiled. They were also people with the tendency to lose a sense of caring and concern. To foster an environment for your students to be responsible, you can assign various jobs to your students. This will provide them with opportunities to help each other, and this can lead to helpful acts in a larger group later on. Create a chart where the students' names can be changed from week to week. This visual aid can also motivate them to complete their tasks. To encourage consistency, make sure this is something all the teachers are on board with .



Vocabulary

Disciple

Jesus' student; someone who followed Jesus and learned from Him

Servant

someone who serves another person; he has to follow the orders of a master

Basin

a large bowl



Before You Teach

The night before His crucifixion, the Lord Jesus got up to show His disciples the full extent of His love. The Lord stripped Himself of His robes and served His subjects. The Creator bent before His creatures to wash the humblest part of their bodies. It was more than just a farewell ceremony. As He knelt before them one by one and washed the feet of the followers who would abandon Him, the Teacher gave His last, greatest lesson of love.

In following Jesus' command, we also receive the spiritual teaching He conveyed. "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have

done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him" (Jn 13:15, 16). Just as our Master washed the feet of sinners, we who follow Him are called to shed the outer shell of our ego, to bend humbly in service, and to share Christ's love with others.

Take a moment and reflect on our service to the Lord. Though we may be serving God in various ways, are we working with a humble heart? Is there a feeling of love among the believers? In the church, we are one body. There is no function higher than another. We all work together for the good of God's church. That goal can only be achieved when we work out of love and humility, as Christ has set before us.



Bible Story

Ask the students to line up in the classroom. "Today, let's pretend that we're taking a walk in a garden." Begin to walk around the classroom slowly. As you walk, point out the different things you "see" in the garden such as beautiful flowers, green plants, small animals, etc. As you are walking, you see this muddy area in front of you. Don't slow down, and pretend that you all accidentally walk into the mud and get dirt all over your shoes and pants. "Oh no Look at me Look at how dirty my shoes and pants are. How about you? Does anyone have mud all over their shoes and pants too? (Ask the students to raise their hands if they also got dirty. Allow time for them to respond. At this point, you can ask the students to go back to their seats.) How does it feel to get your pants, shoes, and socks all dirty? It doesn't feel good to be dirty like that, does it? Who usually helps you get cleaned up when you get dirty? (Students might say their parents, older brothers and sisters, babysitters, grandparents, aunts, and uncles, etc.) It's nice of your parents, brothers and sisters, babysitters, grandparents, aunts, and uncles to help you clean up. When people do nice things for us, it makes us feel really good. Today we're going to hear about something our Lord Jesus did for His disciples that was loving and special.

"Did you know that a long time ago, during the time of Jesus, the shoes people wore weren't like the shoes we wear today? The people in the Bible only wore sandals to protect the bottoms of their feet. Sometimes they even went barefoot. There weren't any buses or cars, so people walked everywhere. The roads were dusty and everyone's feet got very dirty all the time. They needed to have the sand and dirt washed off their feet when they went inside a house. And when they washed their feet, the cool and clean water felt good on their tired, dirty feet."

The Last Supper

One night while Jesus was still on this earth, He and His disciples were going to have a special dinner together. Jesus asked Peter and John to get everything ready.

Jesus told them, "When you enter the city, you

will meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him to the house. Then say to the owner of the house that I need to use the guest room to eat a special meal with all of my disciples. Then the owner will show you the room and where to prepare the dinner."

So Peter and John followed Jesus' words and they found the man carrying the water just as Jesus said they would. They followed the man to the house and the owner of the house let them use the room. Jesus had everything planned out for them.

Peter and John got everything ready. They fixed a table and prepared the places to sit. They prepared special food. They probably also set a big jar of water by the door for people to wash their feet.

Soon Jesus and the other disciples came to the house. The disciples sat down around the table and waited for Jesus to start the dinner. Jesus wanted to have this special meal with His disciples because He loved them very much. He wanted to spend more time with them. However, Jesus knew that He was going to die on the cross soon. He wanted to make sure the disciples knew how much He loved them. He wanted to show them that He loved them, even if He was not going to be with them on earth.

Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

So during the dinner, Jesus got up from the table. He took off His outer robe and wrapped a towel around His waist. Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples' feet. After that He dried their feet with the towel. The disciples were surprised They didn't know what to say. They all felt that Jesus should not be touching or washing their feet. That kind of job was only for servants. But Jesus was willing to do a servant's job. He washed His disciples' dirty feet, a job that no one else wanted to do.

Then Jesus came to Peter to wash his feet.

Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?"

Jesus answered, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this."

Jesus was telling Peter that the disciples might not understand why Jesus was washing their feet now. But He said that they would understand later why He was doing this.

Peter said to Jesus, "You shall never wash my feet "

Peter didn't want Jesus to wash his feet. Jesus was his teacher. He could not let Him do this.

But Jesus answered, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

Jesus was telling Peter that if He didn't wash his feet, then Peter could not be with Jesus. When Peter heard that, he changed his mind. He wanted to be with Jesus.

So Peter said, "Lord, then wash my hands and my head too."

But Jesus answered, "Someone who has already bathed only needs to wash his feet. He is completely clean."

Jesus explained that only the feet needed to be washed. The rest of the body was clean already. So Peter let Jesus wash his feet.

After Jesus finished washing all of His disciples' feet, He put away the bowl and came back to the table. He sat down and explained why He had washed His disciples' feet.

"I showed that I cared for you when I washed your feet. From now on I want you to show that you care for others too by washing each other's feet. I have already set the example for you. You should do as I have done."

Jesus wanted His disciples to follow His example. He wanted them to wash each other's feet and show love to one another.

Let's Follow Jesus' Example

Jesus wants us to follow His example and show love to others. We probably won't be washing each other's feet. But there are many other ways to show love. How can we show our love? Does anyone have any ideas? (Wait for students to respond.) We can show our love by being kind and helpful. We can be polite, and serve each other. What does it mean to serve each other? (Write the students' ideas about serving others. Try to gather at least five to six things the students can do to serve others.)

This is what we are going to do with all the ideas. I want you to take a look at the ideas about serving others that are written on the board and pick one that you can do next week. (Go over each item again, and have the students pick one that they can do to serve others. Write their names down by their action to hold them accountable, and do not erase this section of the board until next week.) When you come back next Saturday, next week's teacher will check with you to see if you have been able to serve others by doing what is written on the board. Feel free to do more helpful things for others. Let's pray and ask God to give everyone power and love to serve the people around us.



Check For Understanding

1. **What did Jesus ask Peter and John to do?** (He asked them to prepare a special meal for all the disciples.)
2. **What did Jesus do during the dinner that surprised His disciples?** (He washed their feet.)
3. **Why did Jesus do that?** (Jesus was going to die on the cross soon. He wanted to show His disciples that He loved them even though He could not be with them.)
4. **What did Peter say to Jesus when Jesus**

was about to wash his feet? ("You shall never wash my feet.")

5. **How did Jesus answer Peter?** ("If I do not wash you, you will have no part with Me.")
6. **Did Jesus need to wash other parts of Peter's body?** (No, he only needed to have his feet washed.)
7. **How could the disciples show people that they were Jesus' disciples?** (They could show it by loving each other.)
8. **Why do we have footwashing today?** (Jesus set the example for us to follow.)
9. **How can we love one another, as Jesus commanded?** (Allow students to answer.)



Life Application Story

Helping Each Other Out of Love

Tommy got a brand new bike for his sixth birthday from his grandparents. He was really excited to finally learn to ride a grown-up bike with just two wheels. So on Sunday morning Tommy told his mom that he wanted to go to the park across the street to learn how to ride his new bicycle. Mrs. Lewis said that it would be okay since she would be outside working on her garden. She would be able to keep an eye on him as he practiced.

Tommy took the bike out of the garage and walked it to the curb. Then he looked both ways. When he saw that there were no cars, he crossed the street. Once he was on the grass, Tommy looked for a nice open area where he could practice on his own. Tommy stopped rolling the bike and tried to get on. Once he got on, Tommy found it really hard to balance the bike. He kept falling to the left, and then to the right. He couldn't even keep the bike straight. How was he ever going to start riding it if he couldn't even keep it upright? Tommy was starting to feel frustrated. He decided to get off the bike and rest for a minute. As he was resting, he saw Lisa, who also lived in the same neighborhood, riding her bike towards him.

"That's a cool bike you have," Lisa said as she laid her bike on the grass.

"My grandparents gave it to me. But it's no use because I can't even ride it," Tommy said sadly.

Lisa smiled and said, "I remember when I first learned how to ride my bike, I just kept falling. It felt like it took forever for me to really learn how to ride mine. Don't worry, Tommy, you will get it soon. All you need is practice and a little help from someone who knows how to ride a bike."

Suddenly Tommy had a great idea.

"Lisa, you ride well. Do you think you can teach me?" Tommy asked excitedly.

"Sure, Tommy," Lisa said willingly. "I was just out riding anyway. Come on, let's get you on your bike."

For the next hour, Lisa taught Tommy how to ride a bike. Whenever Tommy fell, Lisa helped Tommy up patiently. Lisa kept telling Tommy not to feel bad, and just to keep trying. They just kept try-

ing until the magical moment happened--Tommy could finally keep his balance on his bike. At first, he could only go halfway around the park without falling, but eventually Tommy stayed on his bike the whole time. Lisa and Tommy were so excited that they cheered out loud together.

Just as they were getting off their bikes, Mrs. Lewis came up to them.

"Tommy, I am so proud of you. I saw that you kept trying, even though it was hard. And you finally learned how to ride a two-wheeler. Wait until your dad hears about it," Mrs. Lewis said, patting Tommy on the shoulder.

Then she turned to Lisa and handed her a cold glass of lemonade.

"Thanks, Mrs. Lewis," said Lisa.

"How come I don't get one, Mom?" asked Tommy.

"Yours is waiting for you in the house. I had to give Lisa a drink first because she worked hard all afternoon helping you. That is a great teacher and friend," Mrs. Lewis said, thankfully. "Even though I couldn't hear what you were saying, I could tell that you were very patient. It took Tommy a long time to learn how to ride the bike but you just kept encouraging Tommy to stay up and keep going. I am very thankful for that."

"Well, that's what you taught me last week in class, remember?" laughed Lisa.

"Yes, that's true. We did talk about ways to show love to others. That is the best way, following God's command," Mrs. Lewis said.

"See, we do listen to our teachers," Lisa said.

Finally, it was time for Lisa to go home.

"Lisa," Tommy said, "I had fun learning how to ride my bike. Thank you so much for your help."

"You're welcome, Tommy. I had lots of fun, too. I hope to see you around with your new bike," Lisa said and waved goodbye to Tommy.

Questions to Think About

1. **Was Lisa nice or mean when she taught Tommy how to ride a bike?** (She was patient and nice, even though it took a long time.)
2. **What is the nicest thing a friend has ever done for you?** (Allow students to answer.)
3. **What is something that you can do to serve others and show the love of God?** (Allow students to answer.)



Activity 1

What Did Jesus Say to Peter?

Look at each picture. What did Peter say to Jesus? How did Jesus answer? Use the words below to help you.

1. "Do not wash my _____ (feet)."
2. "Unless I wash you, you will have no part with _____ (Me)."
3. Then _____ (wash) my hands and feet."
4. Jesus says to Peter, "Your body is (clean) _____, only your feet need to be washed."



Activity 2

Helping and Serving

How can the girl help and serve? Begin at *START* and help her find the people who need help along the way. How does each person need help? Can you get to the *FINISH*? (Please discuss with the students how each person needs help. Talk about specific things they can say or do to help and serve.)

1. An elderly person is carrying a heavy bag of groceries.
2. A person is hurt.
3. There is a lot of garbage on the ground.



Activity 3

Word Search

Can you find the word *SERVE* in the word search? The word is hidden five times.

Activity 1:1

What Did Jesus Say to Peter?

Look at each picture. What did Peter say to Jesus?
How did Jesus answer? Use the words below to help you.

Me, feet, clean, wash.

“Do not wash my _____.”



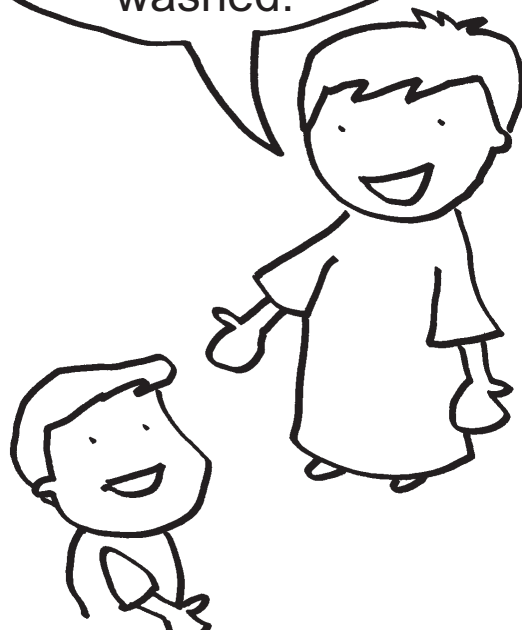
“Unless I wash you, you will have no part with _____.”



“Then _____ my hands and feet.”



“Your body is _____, only your feet need to be washed.”



Activity 1:3

Word Search

Can you find the word SERVE in the word search?
The word is hidden five times.

S	E	R	V	E	T	G
F	T	Z	X	P	O	L
K	S	E	R	V	E	H
J	M	E	P	K	Y	S
R	T	G	R	B	N	E
P	O	W	Q	V	H	R
O	L	H	J	N	E	V
S	E	R	V	E	J	E

