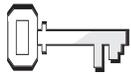


# Jesus, the Servant



### References

John 13:1–17; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 642–651



### Memory Verse

“Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet” (John 13:14, NIV).



### Objectives

The children will: **Know** that we show God’s love when we serve others.

**Feel** willing to serve others.

**Respond** by looking for ways to reveal God’s love through serving others.



### The Message

We show God’s love when we serve others.

### Monthly Theme

God wants us to show others how much He loves them.

### The Bible Lesson at a Glance

In this familiar story of the Last Supper, Jesus takes the role of a servant and washes the dusty feet of His disciples. Peter, as always quick to say whatever is on his mind, at first refuses the service. Jesus patiently explains to Peter what is taking place and then tells the disciples that this is an example for them to follow.

### *This is a lesson about service.*

A community of faith does not live for itself alone. In fact, it would be accurate to say that the purpose of a Christian community is to serve those who are not members of the community and to demonstrate Christlike love, revealing God’s grace to those who do not yet know it. Jesus taught this principle to His disciples and, through the Last Supper and other illustrations, to us as well.

### Teacher Enrichment

“The whole life of Christ had been a life of unselfish service. ‘Not to be ministered unto, but to minister’ (Matt. 20:28), had been the lesson of His every act. But not yet had the disciples learned the lesson. At this last Passover supper, Jesus repeated His teaching by an illustration that impressed it forever on their minds and hearts” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 642).

“So Christ expressed His love for His disciples. Their selfish spirit filled Him with sorrow, but He entered into no controversy with them regarding their difficulty. Instead He gave them an example they would never forget. His love for them was not easily disturbed or quenched. He knew that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came from God, and went to God. He had a full consciousness of His divinity; but He had laid aside His royal crown and kingly robes, and had taken the form of a servant. One of the last acts of His life on earth was to gird Himself as a servant, and perform a servant’s part” (*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 644, 645).

### Room Decorations

Prepare a cross by tying or nailing two pieces of wood or sticks together to create a cross measuring at least 12" high. This cross will be used during Experiencing the Story in Lesson 3. You can use the Communion basin and towel that you will use today during Experiencing the Story as a prop set on a small table. Have a picture of Jesus somewhere near.

## Program Overview

| Lesson Section                     | Minutes  | Activities  | Materials Needed   |
|------------------------------------|----------|---|--|
| Welcome                            | ongoing  | Greet students;<br>hear pleased/troubled                      |  |
| <b>1</b> Readiness Options         | up to 10 | A. <i>May I Serve You?</i><br>B. <i>Serving Tic-Tac-Toe</i>   | dish towels, paper plates, plastic food<br>chalkboard or whiteboard, chalk or marker   |
| <b>Any Time</b> Prayer and Praise* | up to 10 | Fellowship<br>Songbook<br>Mission<br>Offering<br>Prayer       | none<br><i>Sing for Joy</i><br><i>Children's Mission</i><br>clean shoe<br>none   |
| <b>2</b> Bible Lesson              | up to 20 | Experiencing the Story<br><br>Memory Verse<br><br>Bible Study | sand or dirt, Communion basin,<br>large dish towel, pitcher of water<br>paper (optional), scissors (optional),<br>marker<br>Bibles |
| <b>3</b> Applying the Lesson       | up to 15 | <i>The Yuckiest Job</i>                                       | none   |
| <b>4</b> Sharing the Lesson        | up to 15 | <i>At Your Service</i>  | card pattern (see p. 140), heavy paper, scissors, markers or colored pencils   |

**\*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

# TEACHING THE LESSON

## Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Encourage them to share an experience from last week’s lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.



## Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

### You Need:

- dish towels
- paper plates
- plastic food

### A. May I Serve You?

Have the teachers pretend they are waiters/waitresses and drape a dish towel over their arm. They can act pleased about serving the children formally, as though they were in a fancy restaurant, using the pretend food on paper plates.

### Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **What do you think about being served? What are some ways that you serve people every day—at home or at school? In what ways do people in your family serve one another? Have you ever been so sick that someone had to do everything for you? Today we will hear how Jesus served His disciples by doing something a servant would have been paid to do. Jesus wanted them, and us, to continue serving others. The memory verse tells us more: “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet” (John 13:14). Let’s say that together. Today’s message is:**



**WE SHOW GOD’S LOVE WHEN WE SERVE OTHERS.**

**Say that with me.**

### You Need:

- chalkboard or whiteboard
- chalk or marker

### B. Serving Tic-Tac-Toe

Make a tic-tac-toe grid on the chalkboard or whiteboard. Form two teams. Tell them they must name one serving job before their team can mark an X or an O on the grid for their turn. (Examples: nurse, pastor, secretary, waiter, house cleaner, garbage collector, doctor, teacher, cashier, bus driver, etc.)

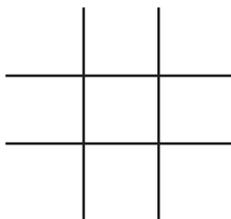
### Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **What do you think about being served? How does it feel to serve others? In what ways do you serve people? Does it make a difference if the person who is serving you is being paid? Today we will hear about how Jesus served His disciples by doing something a servant would have been paid to do. Jesus wanted them, and us, to continue to serve others. The memory verse tells us more: “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet” (John 13:14). Let’s say that together. Today’s message is:**



**WE SHOW GOD’S LOVE WHEN WE SERVE OTHERS.**

**Say that with me.**



# Prayer and Praise

Any  
Time



## Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study and review the memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



## Suggested Songs

"We Are His Hands" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 129)

"I Want to Be" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 124)

"Into My Heart" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 125)

"Jesus Bids Us Shine" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 133)

"This Little Light of Mine" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 134)

"Amigos de Cristo" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 69)



## Mission

Use *Children's Mission*. Emphasize the humility of serving others and therefore showing them God's love.



## Offering

Use the shoe as an offering container. Say: **One of the ways we can serve Jesus is by sharing what we have with others.**

### You Need:

- clean shoe



## Prayer

Ask students to think of one way they can serve people at home and at school. Share with the group, then ask Jesus for help in serving others.

## Bible Lesson

### You Need:

- sand or dirt
- Communion basin
- large dish towel
- pitcher of water

### Experiencing the Story

#### Setting the scene:

Place the basin, towel, and pitcher of water on a table in one corner of the room.

Ask for two volunteers who don't mind taking off their socks and shoes, and have them do it. Ask everyone to hold their feet out in front of them and look at them. Ask: **What kind of shoes are you wearing, open or closed?** Hold up the dish of sand or dirt. Ask: **What does dirt do to your feet when you walk in it?** (Makes them dirty.) Ask: **What happens to the floor when you walk into a house with hot, dirty feet?** (It gets dirty.)

#### Read or tell the story.

One of the customs of people where Jesus lived was having servants wash the feet of people who came to visit. Imagine you've been walking with sandals outside in the hot sand and you've just come in to eat supper. How would it feel to have someone wash your feet in cool water?

It was just about this time of year—in April—when Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. Think for a moment about what the Passover feast meant. Do you remember the Israelites and the 10 plagues? And during the last plague the firstborn son died, unless the blood of a lamb had been put on the doorpost? Every year after that, the Jewish people had a feast to celebrate that miracle—the miracle of the angel of death passing over their houses and leaving their children alive. Jewish people today still celebrate the Passover.

So Jesus is having supper with His

disciples. The meal is ready to be served, but there is no servant to wash their feet. Jesus wants to do something for His disciples before He dies. He also wants to show them that someone truly great doesn't mind being a servant. So He gets up and goes over to the place where there is a basin and a pitcher of water. *[Go to the pitcher and basin.]* He pours some water into the basin *[do so]*. And then Jesus ties a towel around His waist *[do so]*. And Jesus begins washing and drying the feet of His disciples. *[Wash the feet of the two children who have removed their shoes, drying their feet with the towel. Then stop in front of a child with shoes on.]*

And then Jesus goes over to Peter—the fisherman—and kneels in front of him. Maybe Jesus touches Peter's feet and asks him to put his feet into the water. But Peter is shocked. "Lord, are You going to wash my feet?" he sputters. He doesn't think of Jesus as a servant!

Jesus knows what Peter is thinking, and He says kindly, "You don't understand now, but you will."

Peter pulls his feet back. He says, "You're not going to wash my feet!" He loves Jesus too much to let Him be a servant!

But Jesus says, "I have to wash you, Peter, if you're going to be one of My people."

So Peter says, "All right, Lord. Not just my feet, but my hands and my head, too!" He wants to be one of Jesus' people for sure!

Later Jesus tells His disciples, "I am giving you an example." And He tells them to wash each other's feet from then on, as a way to remember how to serve each other.

You've probably seen your parents practice this special ceremony in church. Now you know why we do it. Because of

Jesus' example, we want to serve others. Think about ways you can serve your family and others today.

### Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:

**Why didn't any of Jesus' disciples offer to wash everyone's feet? Why did Jesus do it? Why didn't Peter want Jesus to wash his feet? What did Jesus say to him?**

**What do you think about my kneeling in front of you and washing your feet? Why does Jesus want us to continue to do this? What are some ways we can serve others, or put others first?**

**Jesus wants us to remember to live our lives serving others as He showed us. By doing this, we are showing others how much Jesus loves them. Let's say our message together:**



**WE SHOW GOD'S LOVE WHEN WE SERVE OTHERS.**

### Memory Verse

In advance, cut out paper in the shape of a footprint and write one word of the memory verse on each footprint. (Don't forget the reference.) Mix them

up, place them on the floor, and have the children put them in the correct order. Repeat the memory verse together. Mix the footprints again and repeat.

Repeat the memory verse together.

#### You Need:

- paper (optional)
- scissors (optional)
- marker

The memory verse is: **"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet" (John 13:14).**

### Bible Study

Say: **Jesus spent His whole life serving others. Before He was crucified, His last loving act for His disciples was washing their feet. Let's read a few texts that describe some other ways He served others.** List the texts on the board. Form six groups or ask six students to read the texts and report what they found.

Luke 2:51 (obeyed His parents)

Luke 4:40 (healed the sick)

Luke 7:12-15 (brought dead back to life)

Luke 9:14-17 (fed hungry people)

Luke 8:1 (taught people about God)

Luke 18:15, 16 (blessed children)

#### You Need:

- Bibles

### Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Can you think of any other ways the Bible tells us that Jesus served others?**

**Did serving others make Jesus an unimportant person or a great person? Why?**

**Let's say our message together to remind us that serving others is sharing God with them.**



**WE SHOW GOD'S LOVE WHEN WE SERVE OTHERS.**

# 3

## Applying the Lesson

### The Yuckiest Job

Ask the students to think about the most unpleasant task at their house. Ask for volunteers to act out the job without saying anything and have the others guess what it is.

### Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:  
**Why is it such a bad job? Who has to do that chore at your house? Why?**

**Do you think if Jesus were here today, it would be just as shocking for Him to come to your house and do**

**that job as it was for Him to wash His disciples' feet? Why?**

**If you did the yuckiest job for someone else, do you think they would be surprised? What would they think of you? What would Jesus think of you?**

**Let's say our memory verse together again: "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet" (John 13:14).**

**When we do things that may be unpleasant for others, we are showing them God's love because . . .**



**WE SHOW GOD'S LOVE WHEN WE SERVE OTHERS.**

# 4

## Sharing the Lesson

### At Your Service

In advance, reproduce the “At Your Service” card (see page 140) on heavy paper for each child.

Give the children markers or colored pencils and have them decorate and write their names and the date on their card. Then have them fill in the blank on their cards with a household chore that they usually don’t like doing but are willing to do for a week. Encourage them to give this card to the person who usually does that job.

### Debriefing

Allow responses as you ask: **Did you**

**think of a really yucky job? How do you think that person is going to feel? How are you going to feel?**

**Do you remember our memory verse? Let’s say it. “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet” (John 13:14). Remember . . .**



**WE SHOW GOD’S LOVE WHEN WE SERVE OTHERS.**

**Say that with me.**

### Closing

Pray that God will bless the children as they follow Jesus’ example in serving others.

#### You Need:

- card pattern (see p. 140)
- heavy paper
- scissors
- markers or colored pencils

## Jesus, the Servant

### References

John 13:1–17; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 642–651

### Memory Verse

“Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet” (John 13:14, NIV).

### The Message

We show God’s love when we serve others.

*Do some chores you have to do seem unpleasant? Jesus did one of those jobs for His disciples. He wanted to show His disciples how much He loved them, and how they should serve others.*

Jesus and His disciples had gathered to celebrate Passover. Jesus knew this was the last meal He would eat with them before He died. And there was still so much He wanted to teach them.

His disciples could feel that something was about to happen. But they were expecting Jesus to take the throne and become the ruler of the country. They were waiting for Him to set up a kingdom on earth. And each one wanted the best place in it. Every one of them believed he deserved the most important position.

In those days a servant usually washed the guests’ feet before dinner, especially an important dinner like the Passover. And everything was there in the room where they had gathered—the pitcher, the bowl, the towel. Everything except the servant. Dinner was ready. If someone would just come and wash

their feet, they could begin the Passover feast.

The room grew quiet as they waited. Uncomfortably quiet. None of the disciples would look at the others. Each of them knew what needed to be done, but none of them would do it. *I’m*

*not going to do the work of a servant, each one probably thought. After all, I deserve the most important job in Jesus’ new kingdom. I am not going to get down on my knees and wash the others’ feet.*

Jesus knew what His disciples were thinking. He desperately wanted to teach them that His kingdom was built on love. The way to show His love to others was to unselfishly put others first. Jesus’ disciples had spent three years with Him. But they still had not learned the most important lesson. Greatness in God’s kingdom comes through humble service to others.

So Jesus gave them one last example. Quietly He got up from the table and took off His coat. He wrapped the towel around His waist. He poured water into the bowl. Without saying a word He began to wash the disciples’ feet. He didn’t lecture. He just did the job they each thought they were too important to do. Can you imagine how embarrassed they felt? He was their Master, the Son of God, the Creator of the universe. And He was doing the work of a servant.

It was more than Peter could bear. “Lord, You’re not going to wash my feet!” he exclaimed.

“If I don’t wash you, you have no part with Me,” Jesus replied.

Jesus was washing more than the dust from His disciples’ feet. He was washing away their pride and selfishness. He was teaching them to serve one another. He was showing them how to reach those to whom they would soon be preaching the good news.

Jesus finished and sat down. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” He asked His disciples. “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have given you an example. You should do as I have done for you.” Serve others, Jesus was saying. Do not be ashamed to do anything that will show My love.

Humility is the sign of true greatness.



That night Jesus' disciples learned a lesson they would never forget. Jesus wants us to learn that lesson too.

When Jesus was finished, He gave another promise. He said, "I will not have another service like this until I share it with you in heaven."

Someday we will be with Jesus. And we will share in that special service. But for now, Jesus wants to help all of us live a life of helpfulness to others. That's one way to show God's love to others.

## Daily Activities

### Sabbath

- If possible, go with your family to a quiet place outdoors. Read John 13:1–17 together. Talk about Peter's actions. Why did he change his mind?
- Teach your memory verse to your family. Stand up and take one step for each word you say. Have them do the same.

### Sunday

- Read and discuss John 13:1–5 during family worship. What did Jesus know about His future? What did He do for His disciples?
- Ask for permission to prepare a simple snack or meal. Serve it to your family as if you were a servant. What else can you do to serve your family? Why will you do it?
- Think of three more ways to be a servant for Jesus this week. Is there a lonely child in your class? Ask Jesus to help you be friendly to that child.

### Monday

- Remember to do the yucky household chore that you promised to do in Sabbath School. Give the "At Your Service" card to someone today.
- While washing your feet today, notice how dirty (or clean) they are. Think of how the disciples felt when Jesus washed their dusty feet.
- Ask Jesus to make you clean all over and take away your sin.

### Tuesday

- Make a card or craft to thank the janitor at your school or church for keeping things clean. If possible, pick up papers to help.
- Get a book from the library about Middle Eastern customs. Read about the way of life there.

- Think of some people who are famous in the world today. Is serving others what makes them famous? Or do they live a selfish life? For what way of life would you want to be famous? Ask Jesus to help you live for Him.

### Wednesday

- Read and discuss John 13:5–9 with your family. Why did Peter say, "Wash my hands and my head too"?
- Sing "This Little Light of Mine" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 134). Then thank Jesus for showing us how to serve others. Tell Him how you served someone today.

### Thursday

- During worship today, read and discuss John 13:12–17. Read verse 16 again. What did Jesus mean?
- Draw around your foot five times and cut out the footprints. Divide the memory verse into five parts. Write each part on a paper footprint. Mix up the footprints and see how quickly you can put them together to form the memory verse. Ask your family to do this too.
- Clean your room for Sabbath before you are asked to.

### Friday

- Act out the lesson story with your family. Whose feet will you wash?
- Give your mom or dad a surprise foot massage after you wash their feet. They will love it!
- Say your memory verse together. Then sing a song about serving others. Ask God to help you show His love by serving others willingly and cheerfully.