

Life of Christ

Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

John 13:1-30

Younger Verse

You should do as I have done for you. John 13:15 (NIRV)

Older Verse

I have given you an example. You should do as I have done for you. John 13:15 (NIRV)

Bible Story

The following is a summary of the Bible story to help supplement your preparation. In your personal study time, use this summary as a guide, and make notes to help you remember your plans for the lesson. Please do NOT read to the children.

For the last couple of weeks, we have talked about Jesus knowing that He was going to die. He talked with His disciples, trying to prepare them for His death. Who remembers when all of this took place? Well, we learned that the special dinner Jesus had with His friends, Martha, Mary and Lazarus, was six days before the Passover. The Passover is a festival that is celebrated in March or April every year to remember how God freed them from slavery in Egypt. We also learned that on the next day, five days before the Passover celebration, Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem. That was when the people waved palm branches for Him. Jesus went back to Jerusalem knowing that the leaders were trying to kill Him. He knew it was time for that. During that week, starting with the Sunday that Jesus entered on a donkey, Jesus made preparations for His death. We have not talked about this yet, but that week would be Jesus' last week before His death.

During that last week, Jesus planned a meal to share with His disciples. He planned it for Thursday evening. He knew that He would die the next day, on Friday. He wanted to eat this last meal, the "Last Supper," with His friends. They ate in an upstairs room. They all entered and sat down around the meal. There were no servants there with them to wash their dirty feet or to serve the meal. They all ate together, with the disciples still not understanding that this was it, that Jesus was about to die for them. Jesus loved these men, but there was still a lot that He wanted to say to them.

Jesus got up from supper, took off His outer robe and wrapped a towel around His waist. Then, He poured water into a bowl and began to go from one disciple to the other, washing their dirty feet and drying them with the towel. He washed them all, but as He came to Peter,

Lesson Goals

To teach the importance of placing others first, of caring for others and serving them.

Peter said “No, Lord, don’t wash my feet!” Peter understood that washing feet was the job given to the least important servant in the house. He didn’t think Jesus should be doing what a servant should have done.

Jesus was teaching them something as He washed their feet. Jesus asked His disciples, His followers, if they knew what He had done. He explained that it was right that they called Him “Teacher” and “Lord.” But He also explained that if He, their Teacher and Lord, had become like the lowest servant who washed feet, that they should do the same thing. Jesus was talking about washing feet, but He was also talking about much more. Jesus was telling His followers that if they wanted to be like Him, they needed to serve others. Jesus did not want them only to think about what was good for themselves. He did not want them to walk around doing only what they wanted to do. Jesus wanted them to see the people around them. He wanted them to see the need, just as Jesus saw that His followers needed their feet cleaned.

That same night, while they were eating supper together, someone was being selfish. Someone had already decided to betray Jesus to the very leaders who wanted to kill Him. Judas, one of Jesus’ followers, was the one. He had walked with Jesus as long as the others. Not one of the other followers suspected Judas as the one who would betray Jesus. Judas had even been with the others that night and allowed Jesus to wash his feet. He was there when Jesus talked about serving others. But Judas chose to serve himself. What Jesus wanted was not important to him and he left that upstairs room that evening to turn Jesus over to men who hated Him.

How about you? Whom do you serve? Do you serve yourself, as Judas did, only wanting to do what makes you happy? Or, do you serve God, following Jesus’ example of serving others and thinking of others’ needs first? Will you choose God today? Unlike the regret that Judas felt after his selfish decision, you will never regret choosing God!

**Memory Verse
Activity**

Teach the memory verse by repetition. Say short phrases of the verse and have your students repeat after you. Continue with longer phrases until the entire verse can be said.

Prayer Time

Pray, thanking God for teaching us what we need to know. Thank Him for giving us examples of how to live.

Preparing for Next Week

Lesson 31
A New Commandment
John 13:31-35

Preschool Lesson

Jesus Teaches a Different Way

Sing: “Oh, How I Love Jesus!”

Bring a bag of candy, or something equally appealing, to class today. Before the lesson, open the bag and watch the reactions, allowing your students to do whatever comes naturally.

Teach: How many of you, when you saw my bag of candy thought, “Oh, my friend, Mary, would like that piece and my brother, James, would like that other piece”? Or were you thinking, “Yummy, I’m going to grab that really good piece of candy before anyone else does!” To tell the truth, I think many of us think of ourselves first. We think, “That is the piece of candy I would like!” Our lesson from the Bible tells us a different kind of story.

We have learned that Jesus is in the big city of Jerusalem. When He entered the city, the people were excited to see Him and waved palm branches. We have also learned that Jesus knew that He was about to die. That sounds very sad, but Jesus came to die for sinners.

In that same week that Jesus entered Jerusalem, He planned a supper with His followers. They all met together, the twelve followers and Jesus. They ate supper together and then Jesus got up from the table. You see, in the times when Jesus lived, people walked around in sandals on dusty dirt roads. Even if they just walked down the street for a visit, their feet would get very dirty and dusty. There were usually servants in each home to take care of things like washing a visitor’s dirty feet. But this night, this Thursday night, as Jesus ate with His friends, there was no servant to wash His feet or His disciple’s feet. Jesus got up from the table after eating because no one else had offered to wash His feet. Jesus took a bowl of water and a towel and washed His follower’s feet. Cool water on their hot, dry, dusty feet! Jesus dried their feet with the towel.

Jesus, their Teacher and Leader, had just done what only servants do! Jesus wanted to teach His friends to think of other people first. He wants you to think of someone else to help before you help yourself. And He wants me to do the same. How can you help someone else this week?

Pray: Oh God, thank you, for serving me and showing me how to serve and help others.

Activities

- Provide coloring pages and word puzzles that will enhance what you have taught today.
- Weave a “towel” from construction paper, strips of fabric or even ribbon.
- Make sandals out of cardboard and jute.
- Make small bowls out of modeling clay or play dough. Glue them to cardstock or cardboard and print the memory verse from John 13.
- Make footprints. This can be done in miniature with an ink pad and the side of one’s fist or with tempera paint and your student’s feet.
- Reenact the Last Supper with grape juice, flat bread and even Passover herbs, etc. Continue into a foot washing service where you, their leader, wash your student’s feet. Talk about Jesus’ teaching to His disciples regarding servanthood.
- Take your students to visit someone who cannot come to church or who has not yet. Share some candy with them and sing for them songs that you sing when together.