

LESSON 32

# Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

JOHN 13:1-15



**BIBLE TRUTH**

ONLY THOSE WHO ARE WASHED BY JESUS ARE SAVED

**LESSON SNAPSHOT**

**1. OPENING REVIEW . . . . . 5 MIN**

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

**2. BIBLE STORY . . . . . 10 MIN**

Read John 13:1–15 from the Scriptures or read story 110, “Jesus Washes the Disciples’ Feet,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

**3. OBJECT LESSON 1 . . . . . 10 MIN**

**Dirty Feet**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ charcoal dust (scrap a knife against a piece of drawing charcoal or a charcoal briquette)
- ✓ old sandals or flip-flops (for you)
- ✓ basin with water, soap, and towel
- ✓ five slips of paper with the words “You don’t have to wash my feet”

**4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION . . . . . 10 MIN**

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

**5. OBJECT LESSON 2 . . . . . 10 MIN**

**The True Purpose of the Light**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ bright flashlight
- ✓ building blocks

**6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5 MIN**

**7. ACTIVITY TIME . . . . . 10 MIN**

**Color a Picture**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 32—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

**8. CLOSING PRAYER . . . . . 5 MIN**

**9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON . . . . . 10 MIN**

**Thank Your Pastor(s)**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ large poster board
- ✓ colorful index-card-size sticky notes

**TOTAL 75 MIN**

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

**Jesus served the Father**—Jesus never exalted himself. All of Jesus’ life was spent demonstrating servanthood and living in obedience to his Father. Paul tells us that Jesus took the “form of a servant” and became obedient to his Father’s will to leave his heavenly throne and die upon the cross for our sins (Philippians 2:7–8). He gave up his glory in heaven to come to earth and die for us.

**Jesus washed the disciples’ feet**—After supper the disciples argued about which of them was the greatest (Luke 22:24). Jesus rose up from the meal and in an outward demonstration of servanthood began to wash the disciples’ feet. The foot-washing should have been done prior to the meal by one of the servants. If a servant had not been present, one of the disciples should have done it. Jesus told them earlier that the greatest should be the servant of all (Mark 9:35). By washing their feet on the very night of his arrest, Jesus demonstrated true servanthood. Jesus showed that he was indeed the suffering servant prophesied in Isaiah 52:13.

**Jesus commissioned the disciples to follow his example**—After the Master washed their feet, the disciples would have been ashamed of their arguments about who was the greatest. Just to be sure they understood what he meant by this act, Jesus charged them to do as he had done. He did not intend to institute Christian foot-washing ceremonies but to remind them that the greatest among them would be the servant of all.

## Where Is the Gospel? \_\_\_\_\_

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Jesus' greatest act of service was not washing feet. Paul tells us in Philippians 2:7–8 that our attitude should be the same as that of Jesus who "made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

Jesus—God himself—performed his greatest act of service for us by giving up his life for us. The events in the upper room were pointing ahead to what would soon happen in the crucifixion. It was demeaning for Jesus to wash the disciples' feet. He was washing away the outward dirt with water and a towel. How much more demeaning was it for him to wash filthy hearts, taking upon himself all our vile sin and shedding his own blood as an atoning sacrifice to wash our sin away?

### THE LESSON

#### OPENING REVIEW . . . . . 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

#### BIBLE STORY . . . . . 10 MIN

Read John 13:1–15 from the Scriptures or read story 110, "Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

#### OBJECT LESSON 1 . . . . . 10 MIN

##### Dirty Feet

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ charcoal dust (scrap a knife against a piece of drawing charcoal or a charcoal briquette)
- ✓ old sandals or flip-flops (for you)

- ✓ basin with water, soap, and towel
- ✓ five slips of paper with the words “You don’t have to wash my feet”

Prior to class, dust your feet with the charcoal powder and put your sandals on. Set the basin with water, the soap, and towel, in the room where everyone can see them.

In class have five volunteers come forward and explain to them (loud enough for the whole class to hear) that you have been wearing sandals and your feet have gotten dirty. (Show them and the class your feet.) Tell them that today’s lesson is about Jesus washing the disciples’ feet so you thought you would choose five children to see who would get the privilege of washing your feet. Tell them that they are going to choose a piece of paper. If they get one of the papers that say “You don’t have to wash my feet” then they can sit down. The child who gets the paper that says “You get the place of greatest honor” will get to wash your feet. (There is no such paper.) Interview the children in front of the class to see if they are really looking forward to picking the winner and getting the opportunity to wash your dirty stinky feet. Play this up.

One by one, have the children pick a slip of paper, and as the field is narrowed down, continue the interviews. Finally, when there is only one person remaining, draw them out and ask them if they are really looking forward to washing your feet. Tell them to pick the last slip of paper and read it to the class. After they read it, explain that since they didn’t get the winning paper, they are going to have to sit back down. Do one last round of questioning to see if they are glad and why.

Use this exercise to help the children see how undesirable washing feet is and what a great example Jesus set for us. He didn’t wash the feet of the disciples to institute Christian foot washing. He washed their feet to teach them servanthood and to point to the greater service he was about to perform by taking their dirty, stinking, sinful, sins upon the cross.

**TEACHING/DISCUSSION . . . . . 10 MIN**

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

**OBJECT LESSON 2 . . . . . 10 MIN**

**The True Purpose of the Light**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ bright flashlight
- ✓ building blocks

Jesus said that he came into the world not to judge the world but to save it (John 3:17–18; 12:47). This exercise demonstrates how light illuminates, but also causes shadows and reveals what blocks the light.

Build a tower out of the blocks on a table near a blank wall. While you work, ask the class if they can tell you the purpose of light. (to light up the darkness)

Turn off the room light and shine the light on the tower of blocks to demonstrate how light produces shadows.

Turn on the light and ask the students the following questions:

- **How is the light a good illustration of Jesus’ ministry?**  
*(Jesus’ message reveals that our true purpose is to worship him just as the light allows us to see things we would not otherwise be able to see.)*
- **What do the shadows or darkness represent?**  
*(The shadows represent sin. They are like those who block the light of Jesus with their unbelief.)*
- **Is the light designed to cast light or make shadows?**  
*(cast light)*
- **How is this like John 12:46–47 where it says that Jesus came not to judge the world but to save the world?**  
*(All those who reject the light are condemned, but that is not the primary purpose of Jesus’ mission. He came to save.)*

**WORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the WORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

**ACTIVITY TIME . . . . . 10 MIN**

**Color a Picture**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 32—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **What is happening in the picture?**  
*(Jesus is trying to wash Peter's feet but he is refusing.)*
  
- **Who should be washing feet?**  
*(The disciples should be the ones to wash the feet, not Jesus.)*
  
- **What is Jesus trying to teach the disciples?**  
*(The disciples had just been arguing which one of them was the greatest. Jesus was trying to teach them that the greatest is the one who serves.)*

**CLOSING PRAYER . . . . . 5 MIN**

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

**BONUS OBJECT LESSON . . . . . 15 MIN**

**Thank Your Pastor(s)**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ large poster board
- ✓ colorful index-card-size sticky notes

Before class, write Matthew 23:11 on the poster board: "The greatest among you shall be your servant." At the end of class, pass out the sticky notes and ask your class to write a short sentence thanking your pastor for demonstrating true greatness through serving your church. Then have them affix their notes to the poster board. Help the children with what to say. If you have a class too young to write individual notes, have them sign their names and write a note yourself on behalf of your class. Try to think of specific ways your pastor has served your church over the past year. During the week deliver the "card" to the pastor.

LESSON 32 - JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET

