

**WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET**

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: JOHN 12:44 – JOHN 13:17

*Only those who are washed by Jesus have His salvation.***The STORY**

Pray with children to start class.

**Teaching Points for Class Discussion:**

**Jesus served the Father** – Jesus never exalted Himself. All of Jesus' life was spent demonstrating servanthood and being obedient to His Father. Furthermore, Jesus served us. Jesus sacrificed Himself in service to us that we might be freed from sin. Jesus came to save. The world is already condemned because of sin. Jesus came not to judge but to save. Those who reject Jesus as a harsh judge fail to see His wonderful love demonstrated at the cross.

**Jesus washes the disciples' feet** –After supper the disciples got into an argument about who was the greatest (see Luke 22:24). Jesus got up from the meal, and in an outward demonstration of servanthood began to wash the disciples' feet. Luke records the sequence of events. The foot-washing should have been done prior to the meal by one of the servants. If a servant was not present, one of the disciples should have done it. Jesus told them earlier that the greatest should be the servant of all (see Mark 9:35). By washing their feet on the very eve 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.

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### WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

*Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in 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?

### ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

**Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.**

**Bible Passage: Isaiah 52:13**

#### **Connecting the passage to Christ:**

Jesus took on the nature of a servant and became a man. Jesus humbled himself and freely offered His life on the cross. Paul tells us in Philippians 2:9-11, "Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." There is only one to whom every knee will bow: Jesus. Isaiah saw that future exaltation of Christ.

#### **Questions for reflection:**

- What did Jesus do to posture Himself as a servant? (Jesus' sacrifice and death on the cross was the greatest demonstration of servanthood ever.)
- How can we follow Jesus' example as Paul directs in Philippians 2:5? (Every time we serve others, denying our pleasure or comfort, we are following the example of Christ.)

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### SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

#### BE A DOER OF THE WORD

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

### ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

#### THE TRUE PURPOSE OF THE LIGHT

##### Supplies:

- bright flashlight
- building blocks

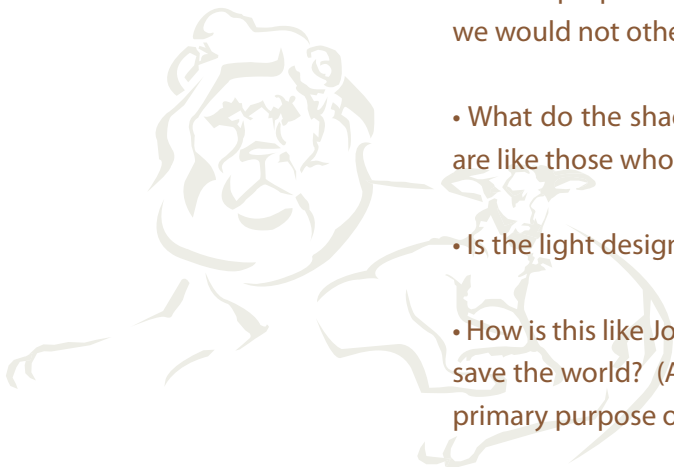
Jesus said that He came into the world not to judge the world but to save it. (See John 12:47 and 3:17-18) This exercise demonstrates this truth. The purpose of a light is to give light, but it also causes shadows or reveals those who block the light.

Set up the blocks and then ask the class what is the purpose of the light? They will say to light up the darkness. Ask them if they are sure it is not to make shadows?

Turn off the light and show them how when the light shines it also reveals 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 to us the true purpose of man is to worship God 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 sin 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.)



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### WHO IS THE GREATEST?

**Supplies:**

- index card for each student in your class
- pencils for writing

At the start of class ask your students who is the greatest person they know and why. Then ask them what is the greatest thing that person ever did. Take note of their answers, then read the passage and talk about true greatness. After they have been reminded of how the Bible defines true greatness, ask if any of them would like to change their answer and why. Note the changes and charge them with pursuing true greatness. Ask them to think of one thing they could do today to pursue true greatness. Evaluate some of their ideas to make sure they have servanthood in mind. Then, have the students write their answers down on the index cards you give them.

### THANK YOUR SENIOR PASTOR

**Supplies:**

- large poster board
- colored paper cut into 3x5 sized notes.

Before class write the words, "The greatest among you will be your servant, Matthew 23:11", on the poster board. After teaching the class, pass out the notes and ask your class to write a thank you to your pastor for demonstrating true greatness through serving your local church. 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 on the poster board. Try to think of specific ways your pastor has served your local church over the past year. Invite other teachers to also contribute, then drop off the card at the church office.



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### PRAYER

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

### IN CLASS PROJECT

#### AN ACTIVITY

**Supplies:**

pencil and paper

Draw a picture of a basin and towel with the words, "Are you ready to do great things for God?" across the top.



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### FOR THE OLDER GRADES

#### WHAT ABOUT MY SERVICE?

**Supplies:**

- pencil and paper

Print the following questions out on a piece of paper or write them on the board. Review the Bible passage, then ask the children to write down their answers to them so that you can discuss them as a class.

- What stands in the way of youth serving others?
- What are five ways youth can serve in your local church?
- How much of your time is spent serving your family in ways you are not asked to do each week?
- What kind of attitude have you had lately when your mom or dad asked you to do a chore that benefits you such as clean your room?
- Would your attitude be different if they asked you to do a chore originally assigned to your brother or sister but which they couldn't do because they were sick? What if it is the dishes?
- How might the Lord be calling you to grow as a servant?
- Who is the greatest example of a servant that you know? Do you ever think about following their example?

### A LITTLE BIT MORE

**Foot washing** – It was customary that the host of a gathering would provide water for his guests to wash themselves. Since people wore sandals, their feet would become very dirty from the dusty roads. The primary means of transportation was on animals so the roads became littered with animal dung, further dirtying traveler's feet. The work of foot washing was a servant's work, not job of the host, and certainly not the work of the teacher or master. This would normally be done before, not after a feast or meal.