



DIRTY FEET

Disciples & Early Church • U1# 3 1st-3rd Gr. • June 23, 2024

Concept

Jesus is the perfect example of unselfish love. His personal sacrifice enables us to serve others.

Goal

Students will deepen their understanding of how much Jesus loves them and strengthen their desire to let Jesus teach them how to serve others.

Passage

John 13:1-4, 12-17

Key Verse: "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."

John 13:17

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disgustingly dirty sneakers * • Sandals and another teacher's grossly dirty foot * • <i>Handful of dirt *</i> • <i>Plastic shower curtain or drop cloth</i> • <i>Water pitcher</i> • <i>Large bowl</i> • <i>Towel</i> <p>Learning Activity #1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Individually wrapped candy, 1/child</i> • <i>Paper cups, 3/class</i> • <i>Foam plates, 3/class</i> <p>Learning Activity #2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sets of situation cards, 3/CT class</i> 	<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Children's Illustrated Bible, Selena Hastings</i> • <i>Baby Wipes</i> • "Step Up to Serve" 8 1/2" x 14" paper of various colors, 1/student • Markers

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information (for the teacher)

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Jesus' washed the disciples' feet in the Upper Room at the Last Supper (John 13:3-5). The immediate situation was that they had come to the banquet room directly from the street. Ordinarily on such an occasion the host would have delegated a servant to the menial task of removing the sandals of the guests and washing their feet. Since the meeting was obviously intended to be secret, no servants were present. None of the disciples was ready to volunteer for such a task, for each would have considered it an admission of inferiority to all the others...

"Sometime during the meal Jesus rose, removed his outer cloak, tied a towel around his waist, and began to perform the work of the servant who was not present. It was a voluntary humiliation that rebuked the pride of the disciples. Perhaps it accentuated the tension of the situation, because Luke notes that when the disciples entered the room, they had been arguing about who among them would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Luke 22:24)...

"12-14 A second lesson Jesus wished to impart to the disciples by this act was one of love and humble service... The discernment of the disciples developed slowly. It took them a long time to begin to comprehend the intensity of Jesus' love for them and the nature of his humility in dealing with them. 'Teacher' and 'Lord' are both titles of respect that placed Jesus on a level above the disciples... Jesus emphasized the fact that if he, whom they regarded as their leader, had stooped to serve their needs, they should do the same for one another...

"15 The 'example' does not necessarily imply the perpetuation of foot washing as an ordinance in the church. The only other allusion to foot washing in the NT occurs in 1 Timothy 5:10, where it does not refer to a regular custom but seems to allude to charitable ministrations to the poor. John calls this act an 'example,' which implies that the emphasis is on the inner attitude of humble and voluntary service for others. Perhaps it was the basis for the Pauline exhortation to the Philippians: 'Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, ... and became obedient to death--even death on a cross!' (Phil 2:5-8)."[1]

[1] Gaebelin, Frank E., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 9, © 1981, The Zondervan Corp., pp. 136, 137.

Incorporation Lg. Group

Introduction Lg. Group

Transition

Lesson Lg. Group

Activity Stations:

- **Craft – Step Up to Serve**
 - **Instructions:** Give each student a piece of printed paper. Have students each find a partner. Students remove a shoe and sock from one foot and take turns tracing around each other's foot. Then clean the other person's foot with a baby wipe.
- **Research—"Dirty Feet"**
 - **Instructions:** Look at page 263 of *The Children's Illustrated Bible*. Discuss the cultural need for the "foot bath" and why Jesus washed the disciple's feet.

(Hold up a pair of disgustingly dirty sneakers.) Have you ever had to clean dirty shoes? No one would want to do the gross job of cleaning these stinky shoes if they were asked. Back in the time of Jesus there was another disgusting job that nobody wanted to do. In Jesus' day the roads were made of dirt and people wore only sandals. So their feet got very dirty and gross. When a person entered a house, slaves washed the guests' feet. Slaves were considered less important than other people so they were given the nasty jobs like washing people's feet. Today we will learn about a time when the disciples had dirty feet, but there was no slave to wash them. So let's find out how their feet got clean.

Let's read John 13 together!

Instructions: While one teacher narrates, two other teachers act out the passage using water pitcher, bowl, towel, dirt, sandals, and a teacher's foot sufficiently gross and dirty for exaggeration, humor, and interest.

While the disciples walked on their way to Jerusalem they argued about who was the greatest among them. As they walked in the dusty, filthy roads their feet got very dirty. (Throw a handful of dirt on the foot on shower curtain.)

When they arrived in Jerusalem they went to a room to celebrate Passover, a Jewish holiday. As they got to the door there was a towel, bowl, and water pitcher for washing their feet, but there was no slave. The disciples just slid off their sandals and didn't bother washing their feet. No one wanted the disgusting job. No one wanted to be a servant.

Listen while I read John 13:3-5, 12-17.

The disciples were too busy worrying about who was the greatest. They didn't want to serve each other. They thought they were too good to wash anyone's feet. They were selfish. But Jesus was not proud or selfish. He willingly did the gross, dirty job of washing their feet to show the disciples His love.

Lesson Continued

He also told them if they learned and did what He taught them, they would be blessed. Jesus said that if He, their teacher and Lord, could wash their feet, they ought to wash each other's feet. He showed them by His example that no one is too good or too important to serve others. Now find John 13:17 in your Bibles. This is our key verse. Who would like to read it? "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them" (John 13:17). Jesus served the disciples to show them what real love looks like. And He said, 'Now that you know what love looks like, you will be blessed if you love others in the same way.'

It would be weird if we told our friends we wanted to serve them by washing their feet. But I bet you can think of many ways to serve others that would show love to them. When we learn about opportunities to serve, we can choose to be selfish like the disciples or to serve others as Jesus did. We don't always feel like serving others, but we can choose to believe Jesus' words, "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them" (John 13:17). When we choose to serve others—even when it's hard or we don't feel like it—God will show us His love in ways that we could never have imagined.

Good News

He disciples didn't serve each other because they were selfish and they thought they were more important than the others. The disciples had selfish, proud hearts. Jesus was the perfect example of unselfish love. Our selfish, proud hearts keep us from God. In fact, He sent Jesus to earth to die for us because we have such selfish, proud hearts. If we admit to God that we are sinful and accept God's forgiveness He can change our hearts and teach us how to love and serve others.

Transition

Let's play a game and the winners will serve the rest of the class.

Learning Activity #1 Lg. Group

GAME – Serving Relay

Instructions: Set up a simple obstacle course using 2 or 3 chairs as the obstacles. Form two or three teams. At the signal have the first student pick up the foam plate with a cup of candy and hold it in the palm of his hand at his shoulder (in the same way a waiter carries a tray). While carrying the plate and cup in this way, he is to go around the chairs, back to the line and hand it to the next person in line. The team that completes the course first without dropping the candy is the winner. That team will serve the candy to their fellow students.

Transition

Let's get into small groups and talk about serving.

Learning Activity# 2 Sm. Groups

“What Would You Do?”

Instructions: In groups with a teacher, have 3 or 4 students each choose a situation card. The teacher will read the card and the group will share their thoughts using the following questions for each situation: What is the need? What are some ways to serve?

- What if we know these things but don't do them? Why is it important to know and to do? As we choose to extend the love of Christ to others as He has loved us, sacrificially without expectation of return, God will bless us in awesome ways we could never have imagined.

Missions Prayer: Talk about and pray for the Oasis Giving Campaign.

Let's pray and thank Jesus for coming to this earth to extend His love and forgiveness to us.