

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

Who is the Greatest?

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

What about My Service?

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ copies of the object lesson questions (below)—one copy per student or whiteboard and dry-erase markers
- ✓ pencils or pens
- ✓ paper

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Basin and Towel

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

Thank the Pastor(s)

SUPPLIES:

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

TOTAL 7 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.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Foot Washing

In Jesus' day it was customary for the host at a gathering to provide water for his guests to wash themselves. Since people wore sandals, their feet would become dirty from the dusty roads. The primary means of transportation was on animals so the roads became littered with animal dung, further dirtying travelers' feet. The work of foot washing was a servant's work, not the 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.

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

Who is the Greatest?

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, and 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.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

What about My Service?

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ copies of the object lesson questions (below)—one copy per student or whiteboard and dry-erase markers
- ✓ pencils or pens
- ✓ paper

Distribute copies of the questions to the class or write them on the whiteboard. Review the Bible passage, and then give the children time to write down answers to the questions. Discuss them as a class.

1. What stands in the way of young people serving others?
2. What are some ways you can serve in your local church?
3. How much of your time each week is spent serving your family in ways you are not asked to?
4. What attitude have you had lately when your parents asked you to do a chore that benefits you, such as clean your room?
5. 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?
6. How might the Lord be calling you to grow as a servant?
7. Who do you know that is the greatest example of a servant? Do you ever think about following their example?

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

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.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Basin and Towel

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

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

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

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

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

Thank the 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. Try to think of specific ways your pastor has served your church during the past year. Then have them affix their notes to the poster board. During the week deliver the “card” to the pastor.