



# JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET

John 13:1-17

## Memory Verse

**As I have loved you, so you must love one another. John 13:34**

## Context/Background

This story takes place during Holy Week, on the night before Jesus was crucified. The disciples are gathered with Jesus in the upper room of a house in Jerusalem. They are about to celebrate the Passover. This meal will come to be called the Last Supper, when Jesus instituted Holy Communion.

In this Bible reading, we see the Lord of all washing the feet of the disciples. Feet in the ancient world were fairly disgusting as the streets were filthy. Only the lowest of the slaves washed feet. But feet needed to be cleaned when you went to eat together. Jesus takes on the role of a servant to do what is required.

## Summary

Jesus and his disciples were gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Jesus knew that he was about to die, and that Judas would betray him. He decided to show his love to his friends (even Judas) by washing their feet, which was normally the job of a slave or servant, to make them clean before they shared the Last Supper together. Peter was bothered by Jesus acting like a slave, but Jesus said that no master is better than his servant, and that the disciples should follow his example of humility and service.

## Relevance/Application

**Themes: Caring, Humility, Service**

### Younger students:

- Jesus loves us.
- Jesus showed his love for his disciples by serving them.
- Jesus served all people by dying for our sins.
- We should love and humbly serve each other, just like Jesus.

### Older students:

- The foot washing pointed the disciples to Jesus' supreme act of love and self-giving service, when Jesus died for the sins of the whole world.
- The focus of our faith is on Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified, died, then rose again from the dead. Jesus is more than a role model. He teaches us the way of God and brings us to the heart of God.
- In this story, we learn that God invites us to care for each other especially in providing for each other the most basic of needs. God's way is to humble ourselves and to bless others with the gifts that we have been given. We are not to think of ways to put ourselves first, but to ask what God would have us do for the sake of those around us.

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**Key Idea 2: The person and work of Jesus the Christ is central to Christianity. Christian Living**

**Key Idea 1: Christians believe that God creates people to live in relationship with him and with each other.**

**Key Idea 2: Christians are called to love and serve all people.**

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### Catechism Connection

#### EXPLANATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God's command and combined with God's word.

The water of baptism is "a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit". When we are washed by the grace of God through Jesus Christ, we are made right with God.

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### Discussion/Wondering Questions

#### Themes: Love, Service, Humility

##### Early Years

- Who cares for you?
- What things do people do to show you that they love you?
- What did Jesus do to show his love for the disciples?
- How can you help other people?

##### Primary

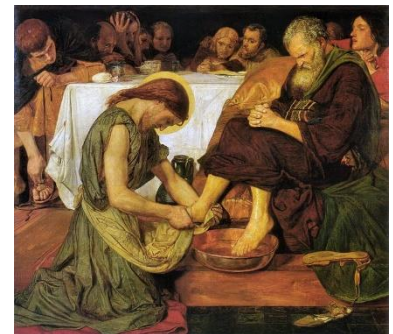
- Do you do chores (jobs) at home? What jobs do you do?
- What's the worst job anyone has to do at home?
- If a special visitor came to your house, would you make them do that job?
- What was Jesus willing to do for the disciples? What did he do for us (and all people)?
- What did Jesus command us to do in this story?

##### Secondary

- 'Actions speak louder than words'. What does this saying mean? What did Jesus' action of washing his disciples' feet speak to the disciples? What does it say to us?
  - Which action of Jesus tells us most loudly that he loves us?
  - What action can you use to speak to a friend about Jesus' love for them?
  - There are people out there who need us. Which people around us need our help? Who is close by to us? What can we do to lend a helping hand?
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### Images or objects to spark discussion

- A basin of water, some soap and a towel



Public Domain: Ford Madox Brown: *Jesus Washing Peter's Feet*

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### Telling the Story

#### Bibles:

The Beginner's Bible  
The Big Rescue Bible  
The NIV Bible

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### Audio Stories/Podcasts

Bible.is - <https://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/audio-bible-resources/bible-is>  
Audio recordings of the Bible in many different languages and several English translations. All four gospels also available in film versions, searchable by book and chapter. Excellent resource for NESB learners.

### Creative Storytelling

Hold a foot-washing ceremony for those willing to participate. Talk about how it felt to serve, and what it felt like to be served. Then read the story.

### Videos

#### Early Years/Junior Primary

[80 Washing the Disciples' Feet - Care Bear's Bible Stories](#)

#### Middle-Upper Primary

[Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet - Saddleback Kids](#)

[Gospel of John Chapter 13:1-18 - LUMO](#)

#### Secondary/Staff:

[John 13 | Washing the Disciples' Feet | Bible Study - Spoken Gospel](#)

[What am I supposed to do? Lutheran Church of Australia Presence Series](#)

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### Invocation

Jesus said: 'A new commandment I give to you:

**Love one another, as I have loved you.'** (*John 13:34*)

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

**Amen.**

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### Prayers

Dear Jesus, you came to earth for us. You helped the sick and the unhappy. You washed your disciples' feet. Please help us to learn from you and to help and serve others because we love you. Be with us as we spread your love around. In your name, we pray. Amen.

OR

God of love,

give me a heart that cares.

When my heart grows cold with selfishness,

send your Spirit to fill me with compassion for the needs of others. Amen

OR

Lord Jesus, change us. Give us hearts that are humble so that we put others before ourselves. Amen.

OR

The prayer of St Francis is an ideal prayer for this week: (You might like to find a version of the song)

Prayer of St. Francis

Make me a channel of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me bring your love.

Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord,

And where there's doubt, true faith in you.

Make me a channel of your peace.

Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope.

Where there is darkness, only light,

And where there's sadness, ever joy.

Oh, Master, grant that I may never seek

So much to be consoled as to console.

To be understood as to understand.

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To be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
in giving of ourselves that we receive,  
and in dying that we're born to life.

**Mealtime Prayer**

Bless, O Lord, this food to our use and us to thy service,  
and keep us ever mindful of the needs of others.  
In Jesus' Name. Amen

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**Blessing**

Go in peace, to love and serve each other, as Jesus loves and serves us all.

**Amen.**

OR

May God give you a humble attitude like that of his Son, and bless you as you serve.

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**Music**

[The Servant King - Graham Kendrick](#) (All Together 261)

[Lord I Come \(Wash my feet\) - David Brackenbury](#)

[Servant Song – Richard Gillard](#)

[Nothing but the Blood](#) Norton Hall Band

Our God is love (Lutheran Hymnal 344)

A new commandment (Lutheran Hymnal and Supplement 853/All Together 65)

Brother, let me be your servant(Lutheran Hymnal and Supplement 855/All Together 191)

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**Activities**

**Early Years:**

- Wash each other's feet, making sure to dry them well
- Act out the story using washable toys to be the disciples
- Draw 'dirt' using textas or washable crayons on feet cut out of ice cream lids and have the children wash it off with soapy water

**Primary:**

- Wash each other's feet, making sure to dry them well!
- Create cartoon storyboards of this story
- Invite a special guest who works in a caring role or who receives caring to talk to the students

**Upper Primary/Secondary:**

- Hold a car wash to raise money for a local charity
  - Wash each other's feet
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