



SESSION **2**

# Servant king



**MEETING AIM**

To see the way Jesus turns everything upside down by serving his disciples.



**BIBLE PASSAGE**

John 13:1-20



**BACKGROUND**

Jesus has been in Jerusalem for a few days and has been teaching some challenging things. Miraculous signs are floating about, but the Jewish teachers still don't believe he's the Messiah; the special saviour sent from God. The disciples gather with Jesus for the Passover meal – probably the most important feast the Jewish people shared together – but before the meal even begins, Jesus begins to turn everything upside down.

**+ CIRCLE TIME**



As you begin the session, invite the children to sit together in a circle and pass around a simple object. When a child has the object, they can share their response to the question. Sometimes it's helpful to have a sand timer so that you have time for each person to share if they want to. If a child doesn't want to say anything they can just pass on the object. Ask the children what would make them feel really awkward or embarrassed. Be sensitive to those for whom talking about things like this is difficult.

**+ SERVANT OR KING**



**You will need: two large sheets of paper; marker pens**

Lay the two large sheets of paper on a table or on the floor. In the centre of one, write 'King', and on the other, write 'Servant'. Ask the children to write or suggest things to put on each piece of paper. What do kings do? What do servants do?

If you have a lot of children, have more than one sheet of paper for king and servant. For a small number of children, work together as one group. Have the children come up with anything surprising?

**+ BIBLE STORY**



**You will need: chair; bowl full of warm, soapy water; towels**

Set up your chair and bowl with warm, soapy water and some towels. Explain that the disciples and Jesus were about to celebrate a very special meal together (there'll be more about this in the next session).

They didn't have dining tables in the same way we do. At that time and place, you ate lying down round a low table; more like a coffee table. That meant your feet were pretty close to the food and, since you wore sandals and the roads were dusty and dirty, you needed to wash your feet before dinner. Usually, a servant would wash them for you. In this part of Jesus' story there was no servant, so Jesus got up and started to wash people's feet.

Ask for a volunteer to have their feet washed. It may be tricky to get one, but that's the point. Sit the volunteer in the chair and then wash and dry their feet. Talk to them about how it feels. It's kind of awkward, isn't it? Now imagine if the person washing their feet was their head teacher...or the prime minister...or the Queen! That would be even more awkward, wouldn't it?

Jesus' disciples felt very awkward about him washing their feet. They knew he was God's son and the guy they followed, so really it should've been the other way around. They should've been washing his feet. Peter was especially embarrassed. He told Jesus not to wash his feet, but Jesus said that Peter had to have his feet washed! When Jesus had finished, he explained to his disciples why he'd done it.

Ask someone to look up John 13:14-17 and have them read it. Be sure to use something simple like the International Children's Bible or the Contemporary English Version.

If you have time, and more than one volunteer to have their feet washed, you could repeat the story with different children.

**+ CHATTING TOGETHER**



Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

- Why does Jesus say that he was washing the disciples' feet?
- Do you think it made a difference to the way they behaved afterwards?
- Do you think Jesus liked washing their feet?

- Whose feet would you feel OK to wash?
- Whose feet would you not want to wash?
- Would you let Jesus wash your feet?

**+ CREATIVE RESPONSE**



**You will need: bowls of soapy water; towels (or, for less mess, baby wipes and foot**

**lotion)**

Put the children into pairs (on this occasion, this is important rather than letting them choose someone because it ensures no one is left out). Ask them to wash one another's feet. If there are people who don't want to have their feet washed (or for whom it would be impractical), they can have their hands washed instead.

As they do this, get them to tell the other person what they could pray about for them.

**+ PRAYER**



Once the foot washing is complete, ask the children to stay where they are and pray simple prayers for one another, along the lines of what they've asked for. It might be helpful to demonstrate this with another leader first if the children are not used to praying in this way.