



The servant king



MEETING AIM

To better understand the metaphor behind Jesus' words and actions, and to engage with it.



BIBLE PASSAGE

John 13:1-20



BACKGROUND

Washing someone's feet is an odd thing to do these days. In biblical times it was looked down on as a dirty job, but it was a normal part of life. The streets were dirty and people would have worn open sandals. Remember how dirty your feet get when you wear flip flops on holiday!

This is a famous story, but the aim is to explore why it's so symbolic. Look particularly at the part when Peter asks to be completely washed. It shows that even someone as important as Jesus can and should be humble enough to act as a servant to others. But it is also a picture of the gospel. When we become Christians, we are forgiven and baptised; spiritually 'washed.' From then on, we no longer need to be baptised again. We just need to regularly come to God in prayer to confess our sins and 'get right' with him again, remembering that we are forgiven!

+ GATHERING TIME



Play a game similar to 'Grandma's shopping list' to hear about everyone's week. Instead of shopping items, have an itinerary of places they've been, things they've done and people they've spoken to.

Start the sentence with: "This week has been amazing. First off, I went to..." Each person in the circle repeats it and adds something from their week, for example: "Then I won a race at my athletics meeting", "Then I got a D for my English homework" or "Then I went to Pizza Express for my dad's birthday, but the car broke down on the way".

+ INTRO ACTIVITY



You will need: a large sheet of paper; marker pen phones

Draw three columns on the sheet of paper. For the first, ask the young people what jobs and chores they have to do at home. For the middle column, ask about chores that young people around the world might have to do that they don't. In the right-hand column, list chores your young people may have to do in the future!

+ BIBLE EXPLORATION



You will need: washing-up bowls, jugs of warm water; soap; chair; towels

Gather the young people together and read out John 13:1-20. Then wash their feet. Be brave! This is a great opportunity to create a powerful moment that they will remember. These days we get icky about people washing our feet, so here's how to do it in a hygienic, approachable way!

Kneel with an empty washing up bowl and a big jug of warm water. One by one, have them sit on a chair in front of you. Apply some soap to their feet and then tip warm water into the bowl and rub the soap away. Give them a towel to dry their feet.

+ CREATIVE RESPONSE



You will need: a paddling pool; watered-down poster paint; newspaper; felt-tip pens; cover-up and clean-up equipment; chairs; warm water in bowls; towels

Lay down newspaper in the middle of your space (or outside, if possible). Put the paddling pool on top and the paint inside. Place chairs around the edge and allow the young people to push their feet in and get them really messy. Read out the passage again.

Encourage the group to make a footprint on the newspaper and list around it the ways people need serving as well as the needs, both obvious and hidden, Jesus wants us to care about.

Ask the young people to wash their feet. As they do so, invite them to think about the story and what they have discussed and experienced. What conclusions have they come to about Jesus' actions, and how we might put this attitude into action in our own lives?

+ CREATIVE RESPONSE



Chat about the story using these questions, encouraging everyone to join in if they want to:

- Why is washing someone's feet such a shocking thing to do?
- How does it feel to have someone wash your feet or offer another humble act of service?
- What might be similar to washing someone's feet in our culture?
- Which people in modern society need God's love and our service?
- Do you feel we serve our communities as much as Jesus would like? How can we serve the people who live around us more?

+ PRAYER



Continuing on from 'Creative response', invite the group to be quiet. Share how God can be found in the small, quiet, humble things in life. He is not often found on billboards or in Hollywood films, but in a kind word spoken to someone at school, through a foodbank a family is in great need of, in the beauty of a spider's web on a frosty morning. Invite prayers of similar examples from their own experience.

Pray to close, and ask them to all repeat the final phrase "Thank you, God, for being with us" at the same volume as you say it. Say it up to ten times. Start off very quietly and reflectively, building up to a shout, then bring it back down to a whisper again and end with a normal level "Amen".

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