

The Master Becomes A Servant

John 13:1-17

MEMORY VERSE

MATTHEW 23:11-12

"But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A shoe shining kit.

As many sheets of paper as the number of children in your class, scissors, pencils, crayons or markers, or paper plates and plaster of Paris.

Compressed sponges and markers.

A tennis ball.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Can I Give Ya' a Shine?

Bring a shoeshine kit from home and begin to quietly clean the shoes of your students as they arrive back from the worship service. If they object or question you, go about your task until you feel you have adequately made the point.

Explain to your class that cleaning someone's shoes is a very humble job. You must bow down before the person, clean a potentially dirty and even "germy" article of clothing, etc. Explain that in today's lesson, we will see that Jesus humbled Himself to do what was considered a very lowly job to be an example to His disciples. **Jesus wants us to serve one another.**

LESSON TIME!

Jesus was our example in a lot of things, but maybe one of the most interesting ways that He was our example is in how He was such a great servant. Here is Jesus, God in human flesh, bowing down to wash the feet of His disciples to serve them. We should be the ones washing His feet. But in this story today we will learn some valuable lessons. Jesus served us in so many ways, but primarily He served us by giving His life for us.

We will also learn about how Jesus wants us to reflect His servant's heart towards others. If we want to truly be like Jesus then we will be a servant like Him. Let's look at how Jesus was first a servant and learn about how He wants us to be servants just like Him. **Jesus wants us to serve one another.**

JOHN 13:1

Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

Jesus and His disciples were celebrating the Passover. At Passover the Jews remembered the time in Egypt when their ancestors sacrificed a perfect lamb to save their firstborn children. The Passover was a picture of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross to fulfill the Passover Feast.

Notice here how much Jesus loved His disciples. Jesus knew that soon He would be delivered to the Romans and the Jews to be beaten and hung on a cross. Even at this time, His focus was still on others. He loved those who were His own and loved them to the end. No matter what, Jesus is committed to us. He says in another place, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Would we have the same kind of love for others if we were in the same situation? We would probably be very worried about our own lives and not think very much about others. Jesus was always centered on the needs of others. We too should be like Jesus and focus on the needs of others. **Jesus wants us to serve one another.**

JOHN 13:2-4

And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him,

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God,

rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself.

Jesus celebrated the Passover with His disciples. Judas, one of His disciples, was led by Satan to betray Jesus by turning Him over to those who sought to kill Him. Jesus knew His mission on Earth. He knew that He had all authority, that He had come from Heaven, and that He was going to Heaven. He also knew that He would lay down His own life for the sins of the world.

After supper He prepares to serve the disciples. He was the guest of honor at this supper, yet He would now take the position of servant. What an honor for us to be able to serve our Lord when we know that He always has our best interests in His heart. **Jesus wants us to serve one another.**

JOHN 13:5

After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

In Jesus' time the people wore sandals and all the roads were dusty. Their feet got very dirty. When a person had a visitor, his servant would go and wash the visitor's feet to show hospitality. Jesus was taking the place of a servant and washing His disciples' feet. **Jesus wants us to serve one another.**

What do you think must have gone through the disciples' minds? Do you suppose they wondered about what Jesus was doing? Or maybe it wasn't such a surprise to everyone because Jesus had always been a servant in the three years that they had been following Him. Remember at the beginning of class when I (your teacher) began to shine your shoes? Did that seem strange to you?

Helping Hands

Have your class fold a piece of paper to make a string of "paper hands" much like you would make a string of paper dolls. Allow them to color their hands and write down different ways that we can serve one another.

Another option for this activity is to make plaster of Paris casts of your students' hands. You must prepare some plaster of Paris and fill a paper plate of approximately the size of your students' hands with the plaster. Have each of your children put their hand into one of the plaster molds to create an impression. You can etch "**Jesus wants us to serve one another**" on each of the forms.

JOHN 13:6-9

Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?"

Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this."

Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!"

Peter was surprised that Jesus was washing his feet, because that was the job of a servant. Jesus was their Lord, yet He was taking the position of a servant. Jesus knew that they would not fully understand what He was doing until after He had ascended to the Father and the Holy Spirit came upon them.

Peter knew that he should have been washing feet rather than Jesus, so he tried to stop Jesus. Jesus explained that Peter had to take part in the foot washing or he would not be a part of Jesus' ministry. Peter then over reacted and asked Jesus to wash his whole body to show that he wanted to be part of Jesus' ministry. **Jesus wants us to serve one another.**

We need to be washed by Jesus. Peter needed to let Jesus "serve" him because it shows that Peter is receiving Jesus' ministry. It is also a picture of the cross. We must humble ourselves and receive the salvation that Jesus provided on the cross. If we refuse to be cleansed by His "service" to us then we can't have any part with Him.

JOHN 13:10-11

Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you."

For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean."

Jesus said that once you were bathed it is only necessary to wash your feet because that is the part that gets soiled. When we become Christians we are "bathed" or washed of our sins. God sees us as "clean" or righteous. We may sin and need to be cleansed, but we are still saved under the blood of Jesus Christ. Jesus spoke of Judas as being unclean because Judas was not a true follower of Jesus.

JOHN 13:12-15

So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?"

"You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.

"If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

"For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

Jesus explained that He washed the disciples' feet to give them an example of how to minister to others. They were to humble themselves and serve others. We, as Christians today, should also follow Jesus' example and serve others in anyway we can. **Jesus wants us to serve one another.**

When we serve others we are showing Jesus to a lost world. The world doesn't understand, because it tells everyone that you need to be served. Get everything you can from others, don't do anything for others, just yourself. But Jesus' message is completely the opposite from the world. True happiness is found by giving our lives away for the sake of others. The next time we see any

needs let's be servants like Jesus. As a class, join together to think of some ways that you can serve others. This week begin to put them into practice.

Servant Sponges

Hand out a compressed sponge (available at craft or school supply stores) to each of your students. Have them decorate the sponges with markers and write down different ways we can serve one another.

Explain to your class that as we serve one another, our relationship with Jesus and those around us will grow just like these sponges when we place them in water. You can demonstrate with your sponge and encourage your students to try when they get home.

JOHN 13:16

"Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him."

Jesus said that a servant is not greater than his master is. Since Jesus, their master, had served them how much more should they serve each other. Our master, Jesus was an awesome servant to His disciples. How then can we think that we should be served by all of our fellow Christians? It doesn't work like that. We are all part of Jesus' body and have a purpose and ministry (or service) to do. If Jesus is a servant, we need to be one also. **Jesus wants us to serve one another.**

JOHN 13:17

"If you know these things, happy are you if you do them."

Jesus said that if the disciples knew and did these things (served each other), they would be happy. This applies to us today. If we want to be happy, we should follow Jesus' example and serve others. How can we have a full and rich life today? By giving our lives away! So many people today are trying to find happiness. They try to find it through money or sin, but Jesus says if you want to be happy, just serve other people. It really is that simple, but it is sometimes very hard to do. You can pray, and the Holy Spirit will help you to serve others. **Jesus wants us to serve one another.**

Your Serve

Bring a tennis ball and play a game of toss. As you toss the ball to a student, they must tell of a way to serve one another. When they have done so, they must toss the ball to someone else who also must share a way to serve. You can continue this game as long as you have time, or give each student a chance to catch and share.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to be sensitive to one another's needs and to serve one another. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them an opportunity to do so.