Preschool–Grade 6

Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: Jesus served His disciples, and He wants us to serve one another too.
Bible passage: John 13:1–17. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." *John 13:15 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible, a bowl and a towel to show the class (no water needed), a hand towel for the memory verse game, paper, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: put a bookmark in your Bible at John 13:5. Set the bowl and the towel where the kids can see them.

1. Opening game: Helper to the Rescue (5 minutes)

Act out a small problem, and the kids race to show how they would help. Drop a box of crayons on the floor. Try to reach a book on a high shelf. Carry too many things at once. Pretend you can't open a door. Every time, the first helpers to jump up and act it out get a cheer. Then ask: *How did it feel to help? How does it feel when someone helps you?* Say: "Today we will hear how Jesus Himself helped His friends, in a way they never expected."

2. Bible story: Jesus Takes a Towel (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to John 13, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Show the bowl and the towel as you tell it in your own words:

It was almost time for a big feast called the Passover. Jesus knew that very soon He would leave this world. Jesus loved His disciples, His closest friends, and He loved them to the very end (John 13:1).

Jesus and His disciples were at supper together (13:2). Then Jesus got up from the supper. He laid aside His garments, which means He took off His outer clothes, and He took a **towel** and tied it around Himself (13:4). *(Hold up the towel.)* Jesus poured water into a **bason**. A bason is a bowl (13:5). *(Hold up the bowl.)* Then Jesus began to wash the disciples' feet, and He dried them with the towel (13:5).

Read John 13:5 from your Bible: "After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." Say: "Jesus is the Lord, and He washed His friends' feet!"

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The story continues: Jesus came to Simon Peter. Peter was surprised. He said, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" (13:6). That means, "Lord, are **you** going to wash **my** feet?" Jesus said, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (13:7). That means, "You don't understand now, but you will understand later."

Peter said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." That means, "You will never wash my feet!" Jesus answered, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me" (13:8). That means, "If I don't wash you, you can't be with Me." Then Peter said, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head" (13:9)!

When Jesus had washed their feet, He put His garments back on and sat down again. He asked, "Know ye what I have done to you?" (13:12). He said, "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am" (13:13). Jesus really is the Lord! And He said that if He, their Lord and Master, washed their feet, they also ought to wash one another's feet (13:14). Then Jesus said our memory verse: "For I have given you an **example**, that ye should do as I have done to you" (13:15). And He said that if we know these things, we will be happy if we do them (13:17).

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. What did Jesus tie around Himself? *(A towel, John 13:4)*
2. What did Jesus pour water into? *(A bason, a bowl, 13:5)*
3. Whose feet did Jesus wash? *(His disciples' feet, 13:5)*
4. What did Peter say first? *("Thou shalt never wash my feet," 13:8)*
5. What did Jesus say He gave us? *(An example, to do as He did, 13:15)*

4. Memory verse: Pass the Towel (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: an **example** is something to copy, **ye** means you, and **as I have done to you** means the way Jesus served them. Sit in a circle and say the verse together twice in these four parts: *For I have given you / an example, / that ye should do / as I have done to you. John 13:15.* Then pass the hand towel around the circle. Whoever is holding the towel says the next part, and everyone says "John 13:15" at the end. Go around until every child has had a turn.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jesus is the Lord, and He served His friends. That shows us how much Jesus loves us. God loves you very much. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (Acts 2:4)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.
This week: do one helping job at home every day without being asked, like Jesus served His friends.

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Jesus washes the disciples' feet word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/jesus-washes-feet-word-search), crossword, maze or worksheet, the craft (vbshq.com/crafts/jesus-washes-feet-craft), or **Serving Hands:** each child traces one hand on paper. Inside the hand, they draw one way they will serve someone this week: setting the table, helping a friend, picking up toys, carrying groceries. Let a few kids show their hands and tell who they will serve.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that Jesus loved His disciples and served them, and thank You that You love us too. Help us to be helpers and to serve one another, like Jesus showed us. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks why Jesus washed feet: people walked everywhere, and their feet got dirty. Washing feet was a servant's job; in the Bible, Abigail said she would be "a servant to wash the feet of the servants" (1 Samuel 25:41). That is why Peter was so surprised that the Lord would do it.
If a child asks about Judas: John 13:2 and 13:11 say that Jesus knew Judas would turn against Him. Keep it short; this lesson is about Jesus serving.

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