

## Lesson 31

Jesus washes His disciples' feet

John 13: 1-17

Optional Memory Verse: "Serve one another in love." Galatians 5:13 c.

Goals: That the students would....

KNOW: That followers of Jesus should look for opportunities to serve others.

FEEL: Willing to serve others.

DO: Practice serving each other in class and have a plan to serve another when they leave class.

### **Attention Getter: (5-10 minutes)**

***Let's think about different jobs that people might have. I'm going to show you a picture of a person, and I want you to see if you can tell me what job that person has. Show visuals 31 A-G. After each picture is correctly identified, ask, What in the picture helped you to figure out what that person's job or occupation was? Let students respond. There was either some clothing—a uniform of some kind—or some equipment—some of the things that person uses to do their job—that helped you to figure out what their job was.***

You can now show your students an assortment of items that you collect before hand, and ask them to decide which thing would be used by which person. Or, you can go back to each picture and ask your students. ***So, what kinds of things would a person with this job use?*** Then on the Visual, you can write their responses.

***In our Bible story today, Jesus seems to have a new job! And He tells us it's our job too! Let me explain...***

### **Bible Lesson: (15-20 minutes)**

***We are now getting close to the time in the story of Jesus' life where He is going to be crucified. In fact, the story we're looking at today happened just the day before Jesus died. You may have heard the story about the last meal Jesus had with his disciples—how he gave them bread and wine, and told them that these things represented his body and blood. The story we're looking at today happened at that same time—probably earlier in the evening. The Gospel of John tells us about something very unusual that Jesus did that night.***

***Before we watch it on the video, I want to explain something to you, to help you understand more about what is going on. To help me explain this part of the story, I brought along some shoes! Hold up a pair of sandals and a pair of sneakers. Which if these shoes protect your feet more? Let students respond. If two people were going on a long walk together, and one was wearing sneakers, and the other wore sandals, whose feet do you think would get dirtier? Let students respond. Sandals don't really keep your feet clean, do they? Now, when Jesus was here on the earth, do you think they had sneakers? Let students respond. No, sandals were about the only shoes they had. And, when Jesus walked on the earth, do you think they had paved sidewalks? Let students respond. No, there were just dirt roads and paths. People walked on them, and horses and donkeys***

*traveled them as well. When it rained, the paths got muddy. When it was dry, the roads were dusty. So, feet got a lot dirtier in those days than they do today.*

*So, when people traveled and went into someone's home, often the host, or the person who owned the home would offer you a basin of water when you came in the house in which you could wash off your dirty feet. Or if he was wealthy enough to have a servant, or a person who worked for him, doing jobs around the house, the servant would bring out that basin and would wash your feet for you. It was a way of showing that you were welcome into this home. But it was not the most pleasant job, so it was a job that servants did, or you did for yourself.*

*OK, with that as background, let's watch the John video to see what Jesus does this night that he is having a last meal with his friends. Show John 13: 1-17 on the John video.*

*How did the disciples react to Jesus washing their feet?... Let students respond. Where they happy? Upset? Surprised? ... Why do you think they were surprised that Jesus was doing this? Let students respond. They looked up to Jesus as their leader, their teacher. Although they knew Jesus often served others by healing them or teaching them, they didn't seem to picture Him doing a very humble, dirty job, like washing their feet. Imagine if you were invited to the White House for dinner, and imagine if the President, instead of sitting at the head of the table, came into the room as one of the waiters, and he was there bringing out the food! You'd say, "Something's not right here!" That's sort of how Jesus disciples felt—Jesus is too important to be doing something like this for me!!*

*But Jesus explained why he was doing it. It wasn't just because his friends had dirty feet! Let me read you what Jesus said to his disciples: "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." Jesus said He was doing this to set an example for us. Not necessarily to actually wash each other's feet—since in our day & age that's not something we need—But He set an example that we should always be looking for ways to serve someone else—to be kind and helpful to them.*

*When Jesus acted like a servant—what was his "uniform"? Let students respond. He wore a towel. Bring out a large towel and wrap it around your waist. What "equipment" did he use? Let students respond. ... Bring out a basin and pitcher. We talked earlier about jobs and how in some jobs, you wear a certain uniform, and use certain equipment. Most people are interested in getting jobs that pay them money and that other people think are important. But Jesus was willing to be a servant...to do the job that no one else wanted to do, because He loved his disciples and he wanted to show them how much He loved them. And He wanted to teach us that we should show our love to other people by serving them...doing even unpleasant jobs that would make their lives easier.*

*Well, before we go on, how about if we act out this story a little bit. Is there someone who would take this towel from me and play the role of Jesus? Let students respond. Is there anyone who would be willing to actually have "Jesus" help you take your shoes off and wash your feet? If no one is willing to do that, tell them*

Jesus can just take off their shoes and give them a “foot massage”! Read verses 1-5 & 12, and have your two students act out what you are reading.

*1 It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.*

*2 The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. 12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place.*

Now go over and stand beside “Jesus”, putting your hand on his/her shoulder, as you read these verses, which have lines Jesus said.

*"Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 Very truly I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."*

### **Application: (10-20 minutes)**

***So Jesus tells us we are to follow His example and serve others. What do you think are some reasons that we don't serve or help other people as much as we could?*** Let students respond.

***I have some ideas here that might show us why we don't help others quickly.***

- ***Maybe we have other things we'd rather do—we're busy doing what we want to do, and we don't want to stop to help someone else.*** Show Visual 31 H. ***Like when someone at your house asks you to help set the table or to move your things off a chair. Maybe you say "I'm watching TV right now...I can do that later." Is that acting like Jesus would?*** Let students respond.
- Show Visual 31I –***Here's another reason I think many of us don't serve like Jesus would want us to. We think since we can't do a job perfectly, we don't want to even try. Maybe someone asks you to help clean up the yard. But you think, "I don't think I'd be good using a rake," so you don't do anything. But you could pick up trash that has blown into the yard, or hold the trash bag for someone else who is picking up trash! So, we need to be willing to help, even if we can't do it all.***
- ***Another reason we don't like to serve is that, sometimes, it's just plain work and not a lot of fun.*** Show Visual 31J. ***Do you think it was fun for Jesus to wash his disciples' dirty feet?*** Let students respond. ***No, but he wanted to do something to show them how much he cared about them. Serving may not be fun, but it will bring us joy to know that we are following Jesus example!***

**Today I have some equipment that we can use to serve each other.** Bring these items (or others you think of):

- eyeglass cleaner sheets or eyeglass cleaner spray and cloth
- hand lotion
- cloth that can be used to buff shoes (don't try to polish shoes—too messy!)
- set of shoe laces for sneakers (someone could probably use a new set of laces)
- very basic make-up—blush!

Explain how each item could be used to serve someone. **Now, we are going to each have the opportunity to choose how we would like to be served—do you want your glasses cleaned? Hand lotion applied to your hands? Your shoes buffed? A new set of laces put in your shoes? A little make-up applied? You can tell us what you'd like, and then I want someone else to volunteer to serve you and do that for you. We'll all watch, and help you, if needed. Everyone will get a chance both to serve and to be served. No one serves twice—everyone serves someone and gets served once.** (Depending on the size of your group, you may need to have more than one act of service happening at a time.)

**How did you feel when someone was serving you?** Let students respond. **How did you feel when you were serving someone?** Let students respond.

**Jesus knew that serving others is a good thing. It's important both for those serving and for those being served. God's ways are always the best ways!**

### **Closing: (5 minutes)**

**Today, I want to send you all home with some equipment you can use as you are looking for opportunities to serve others.** You can make this as simple as giving each student a handi-wipe or sponge that they can use to help clean up at home, or you can provide them with dish towels or dust clothes. You might want to write "Serve one another in love" on the cloth with a permanent marker. If you really want to go all out, you could make T-shirts with this verse printed on the front or back. (You can get kits at Staples that allow you to print a graphic from your computer and then iron it onto cloth.)

**What are ways you could use this to serve someone?** Let students respond. **You might be tempted to come up with one of the excuses we talked about.** Show Visuals 31 H-J. **We're going to pray right now that God will help us not to use these excuses.** Pray something like, "Lord, help us not to be too busy doing our own thing to stop and serve..." and then rip that excuse. Do the same with the three visuals!

**Now let's hold these items in our hands, and hold them up. Pray after me:**

**Lord, help me to use this**

**To serve someone else.**

**I want to follow your example**

**And serve someone this week.**

**In Jesus name Amen.**

## Supplies Checklist:

- **Attention Getter:** Visuals 31 A-G, and either an assortment of items, used in the occupations pictured, or a marker to add list of items to Visuals A-G.
- **Bible Lesson:** pair of sandals & pair of sneakers, TV/DVD unit, Visual Bible John, set to John 13:1, towel, basin & pitcher
- **Application:** Visuals 31: H-J, equipment for in-class service, such as eyeglass cleaner sheets or eyeglass cleaner spray and cloth, hand lotion, cloth that can be used to buff shoes, set of shoe laces for sneakers, and blush.
- **Closing:** Whatever take-home items for use in serving others you decide to give your students.















**“I’m too  
busy to  
do that!”**

**“I don’t  
think I  
can do  
that very  
well!”**

**“I don’t  
like to do  
that—it’s  
not fun”**