

Humble Servant: Jesus Washes His Friends' Feet

#5

Big Idea: By doing a dirty job that no one wanted to do, Jesus showed His followers how to serve others.

Bible Text: John 13:1-17

Pray for Wisdom

Dear Precious Father and Lord, I marvel at Your great love and grace. Thank You for making mankind Your foremost concern. May I learn to emulate selflessness from Your words in this passage.

Please impress these children with the deep meaning behind Your act of servanthood. Help us to be transformed by Your words and example.

In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Supply Checklist

Welcome & Worship Time:

- ☐ variety of shoes

Bible Time:

- ☐ Bible teaching picture #5
- ☐ student activity pages 17-20
- ☐ stickers from sticker page
- ☐ snacks

Disciple Time:

- ☐ Dee-Cy-Paul picture #5
- ☐ puppets (optional)
- ☐ cardboard or poster board, yarn, scissors

Add'l "Learn by Doing" Activities:

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____



Children will:

Know

- Jesus washed His disciples' feet during the Last Supper.

Feel

- Amazed that Jesus did the work of a humble servant.

Do

- Surprise parents by doing nice things for them without being asked.

Lesson Summary

This story took place a few days after Mary anointed Jesus. Now it was Thursday night, the beginning of the Passover celebration, just hours before Jesus' death. The disciples were preparing to eat what would be their last meal together.

Before dinner Jesus showed His disciples with actions, not words, how much He loved them. In His continuing demonstration of greatness and humility, He took off his garment, wrapped Himself with a towel, poured water into a basin, and knelt down. He washed the feet of his disciples one by one. He did the work of a humble servant.

Jesus had already told His disciples, "The greatest among you will be your servant" (Matthew 23:11). Now He was showing them what He meant. The disciples knew that Jesus was the greatest among them—it was Jesus who had fed five thousand people, walked on water, healed the blind and the lame, and raised people from the dead. Now they saw that Jesus was also willing to serve them.

It wasn't easy for Peter to receive this act of service. "Forget it, Lord," he said, "You shall never wash my feet." But Jesus explained that Peter needed cleansing in order to belong to Jesus.

When He was finished, Jesus explained that He had set an example so they would also serve one another. Serving one another with a pure heart does not come naturally, but preschoolers who see models of servanthood and have a chance to practice serving others will be encouraged to follow Christ in acts of service.



Greet Each Child

Welcome each child warmly.

Encourage children to present their offerings to the Lord as they arrive.

Learn by Doing

Enjoy the suggested activity below or refer to the *Additional "Learn by Doing" Activities* on page 33 for alternate ideas to introduce this lesson.

Try on Shoes

You will need: a variety of shoes such as sandals, cowboy boots, hiking boots, clogs, ballet shoes, tennis shoes, ski boots, water shoes, women's high heels or platform shoes.

Bring in as many different kinds of shoes as you can find. (You can find second-hand shoes at a local thrift store.) The children will have fun trying on different kinds of shoes, even if they're too big. Ask them what kind of shoes Jesus and His friends might have worn. Tell them because people wore sandals, or no shoes at all, their feet got very dirty.

Sing with Joy

Move the children from the initial learning activity to the worship time with a favorite song. Select one below or use a preschool songbook or recording.

- *Jesus Loves Even Me* (traditional)
- *I Have Decided to Follow Jesus* (traditional)
- *God is So Good* (traditional)
- *Oh, How He Loves You and Me* (traditional)

Rehearse the Verse

After saying the verse a few times, have the children pretend to be very small and say the verse in a high pitched voice. Then have the children pretend to be big, like a giant, and say the verse in a low, deep voice.

Lesson Memory Verse: John 13:15.

"Jesus said, 'I have shown you what you should do.'"

Monthly Memory Verse: Matthew 26:41.

"It is easy to want to obey God, but it is much harder to do it."

Quarter Memory Verse: Matthew 28:6.

"The angel said, 'Jesus isn't in the grave! He's alive!'"

Seek God's Blessing

Talk with God about your time together with the children today, about the Bible story, and about any special needs.

As you pray, use meaningful and simple words from your heart. The children will learn to pray by listening to you.



Tell the Truth

Open your Bible to the passage and place it on your lap. Show Bible teaching picture #5 as you tell or read the story. (The Bible story is printed on page 32 and on the back of the teaching picture.)

The story "Humble Servant" is based on John 13:1-17. It captures the interest and attention of older preschool children. If you are teaching younger preschoolers, you may want to use the shorter *Summary/Review*.

You may wish to make up simple hand gestures for the refrain. Have fun with the "P-U!" part.

Complete Page 18

Distribute student page 18.

Place the appropriate stickers on the picture as you reinforce the Bible story.

Talk and Snack

Consider making and serving chocolate or butterscotch pudding to represent the dirty water after Jesus washed his disciple's feet. You can make instant pudding by pouring the pudding mix and milk into a plastic container with a tight-fitting lid. Allow the children to help stir the pudding or shake the container until the pudding has thickened. Serve in small disposable drinking cups with plastic spoons.

While you eat, talk about the Bible story. These questions will help you get started.

- Why were the disciples' feet dirty?
- Who usually washed the dirty feet?
- Who washed the disciples' dirty feet?
- Does Jesus want us to serve other people like He did?

Wash Up

Allow time for your children to clean up and use the rest room.

Play and Move

With the children, pretend to take off your shoes and walk in cool soft grass, on rough rocks, on hot sand, in water, through squishy mud, etc.

Complete Page 19

Distribute student page 19.

2 & 3 Year-olds: Ask the children if they have ever surprised their parents by doing something nice for them without being asked. Have them place a heart sticker (found on sticker page) next to the nice things they would like to do for their parents this week.

4 & 5 Year-olds: Ask the children if they have ever surprised their parents by doing something nice for them without being asked. Have them place a heart sticker (found on sticker page) next to the nice things they would like to do for their parents this week.

Learn by Doing

Enjoy the suggested activity below or refer to the *Additional "Learn by Doing" Activities* on page 33 for alternate ideas to reinforce the Bible story.

I'll Serve and Wash Your Feet

Encourage the children to sing the following refrain to the tune, "Farmer in the Dell," while holding hands and walking around in a circle.

*I'll serve and wash your feet.
I'll serve and wash your feet.
To show how much God means to me, I'll serve and wash your feet.*

*I'll make my bed each day.
I'll make my bed each day.
To show how much God means to me, I'll make my bed each day.*

*I'll pick up my toys when asked.
I'll pick up my toys when asked.
To show how much God means to me, I'll pick up my toys when asked.*

*I'll dress myself each morning.
I'll dress myself each morning.
To show how much God means to me, I'll dress myself each morning.*

*I'll wash with soap and water.
I'll wash with soap and water.
To show how much God means to me, I'll wash with soap and water.*

Pray for People

Ask for prayer requests. Pray for each personal concern.

Pray that each student will be eager to do some kind thing for a family member without being asked.

Bible Story: "Humble Servant" (based on John 13:1-17)

Jesus and His friends were walking down a dusty dirt path. What a hot day! What a long day!

They were hot. (Show me how you look when you're hot.)
They were tired. (Show me how you look when you're tired.)
Their muscles were sore. (Pretend you have sore muscles.)
They were hungry and ready for dinner. (Rub your tummies to show me how hungry you are!)

And since they all wore sandals, their feet were dirty and stinky. (Hold your nose and say, "P-U!") They needed someone to say...

*I'll serve you and wash your feet, to show how much God means to me.
I'll serve you and wash your feet, to show how much God means to me.*

They finally arrived at the house where they would eat. Peter and the other disciples relaxed on the floor around a short table. They were glad to share the special Passover meal together. But they were dusty and smelly. No one had taken time to clean up. Not one of them had said...

*I'll serve you and wash your feet, to show how much God means to me.
I'll serve you and wash your feet, to show how much God means to me.*

Then Jesus did something surprising! He stood up, took off His coat, filled a little jar with water, and tied a towel around His waist. Then Jesus began to wash His friends' smelly feet. As He dried their feet with the towel He said...

*I'll serve you and wash your feet, to show how much God means to me.
I'll serve you and wash your feet, to show how much God means to me.*

Peter couldn't believe it! Usually, a servant did that job. Nobody liked to wash feet! It was messy and dirty and stinky. (Hold your nose and say, "P-U!")

Finally, it was Peter's turn. But Peter shook his head. "Lord, are You going to wash my feet?"

"Yes. Later you'll understand why I'm doing this," said Jesus.

"No, I won't let You wash my feet!" exclaimed Peter.

"If I don't wash your feet, Peter, you and I cannot be close friends," explained Jesus.

"Okay, Jesus!" said Peter. "If that's what it takes to be Your friend, give me a bath!"

Jesus smiled and said, "Just your feet, Peter."

When Jesus finished washing the feet of all His friends, He said, "I've just served you. From now on, do what I did and serve others, too."

*I'll serve you and wash your feet, to show how much God means to Me.
I'll serve you and wash your feet, to show how much God means to Me.*

Jesus still wants us to do like He did and serve other people. Even if the jobs are stinky! ("P-U!")

"Humble Servant" (Summary/Review)

Jesus and the disciples were glad to share the Passover meal together. But they were dusty and dirty. No one had taken time to clean up.

So Jesus filled a jar with water and tied a towel around His waist. He began to wash His friends' feet. He said, "I'll serve you and wash your feet, to show how much God means to Me."

But Peter said, "No, I won't let You wash my feet!"

Jesus explained, "If I don't wash your feet, Peter, you and I cannot be close friends."

"Then wash me all over!" Peter said.

Jesus smiled and said, "Just your feet, Peter."

When Jesus finished, He said, "From now on, do what I did and serve others, too."

Additional “Learn by Doing” Activities

All three *Learn by Doing* sections in this lesson include a suggested learning activity. However, you may want to substitute one or more of the activities below to capture the specific interests and needs of your children.

Select activities based on the age of your children, their learning style preferences, and their developmental needs.

Coloring Page

(for all preschoolers)

Provide copies of the reproducible Bible story picture for this lesson (#5) for children to color. (See page 88 of this *Teacher Guide*.)

Feet Washing

(for older preschoolers)

You will need: small tubs of warm water and towels.

You may want to invite some parents to help you with this activity. Reenact the Bible story by washing the children’s feet. Tell the children they will play the part of the disciples and you, along with your “helpers,” will wash their feet, as Jesus did in the story. Have the children sit in chairs and ask them to take off their socks and shoes. If some children do not wish to participate at first, encourage them to sit and watch; they may change their minds! As you wash the children’s feet, tell them how Jesus washed the feet of His disciples as a way to show them how to serve others. Remind the children that this is not a time to be silly, but a time to think about the Bible story. As you finish, ask the parents to help the children put their socks and shoes back on.

Before the children put their shoes back on, you may wish to do the Shoe Scramble activity next, so the children only have to take their shoes off once!

Shoe Scramble

(for all preschoolers)

You will need: all the children’s shoes.

Have the children remove their shoes and place them on the floor in the center of the room. Mix the shoes up so matching shoes are not together. Have the children stand in a circle around the shoes and when you say “go,” they should find their shoes, sit down and put them on their feet. The first one to get his or her shoes on (without tying or buckling them) wins the Shoe Scramble.

Note: The younger preschoolers may not be able to put their shoes on by themselves, so when they find their two shoes, have them sit down and hold their shoes in the air.

Shoe Talk

(for all preschoolers)

You will need: several different types of shoes (you may use the same shoes used in the Learn By Doing activity on page 31.)

Have the children sit on the floor or at the table. Hold up a pair of shoes and talk about who might wear them and why they would want to wear them. For example: cowboys wear boots for working on a ranch with horses; ballerinas wear ballet shoes for dancing; skiers wear ski boots for skiing down a snow-covered mountain. Show a pair of sandals and talk about why Jesus and his disciples wore sandals instead of water shoes or hiking boots!

Water Relay

(for older preschoolers)

You will need: cups, pitcher of water, towels.

You may want to do this activity outdoors; however, it can be done inside with plenty of towels for clean up. Have the children stand behind one another in two lines. Hand the first two children a full cup of water. When you say “go,” the two children should walk as quickly as they can, without spilling any water, to a designated spot and back again to their line. The next two children should be ready to take the cup from the first runner and repeat the activity. Tell the children we use water for lots of different things. Remind them how Jesus used water to wash the disciple’s feet to show them how to serve others.

Make Bubbles

(for younger preschoolers)

You will need: large basin of water, dish soap, paint smocks, towels. (See page 27 for smock ideas)

Put a paint smock on each child and let them help you make bubbles. Pour a small amount of dish soap into the basin of water and let the children swish the water around to make bubbles. If you do this with older preschoolers, you can provide straws for the children to blow through to make bubbles. Instruct them not to drink through the straws because of the soap in the water. It’s best not to use straws with the younger preschoolers for this reason. Discuss how Jesus used water to wash the dirt from the disciples’ feet.

See *Learning Centers* on pages 80-81 for ideas that can be used as additional “Learn by Doing” activities.

Humble Servant

Jesus Washes His Friends' Feet
John 13:1-17

Name: _____

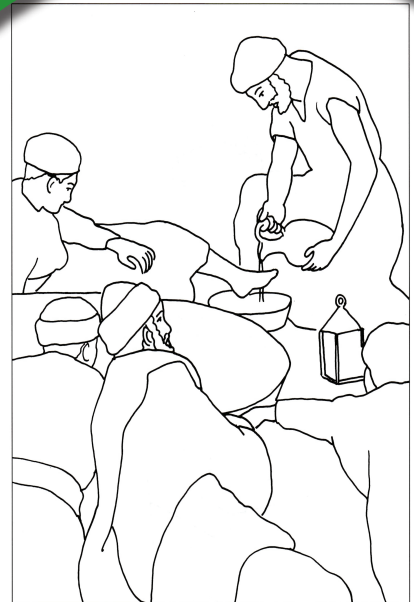
Jesus showed His followers how to humbly serve others.

The Passover meal was ready, but the disciples needed to clean up. Jesus poured water into a bowl. Like a common servant, He began washing the disciples' dirty, smelly feet.

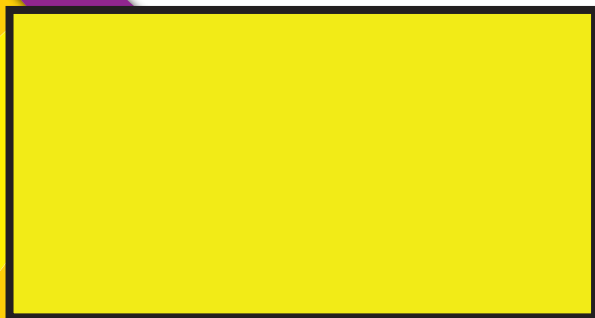
"Stop!" Peter cried. "You shouldn't serve us like this!"

"If you want to be My friend, Peter, I must wash your feet," Jesus explained. "When I wash your feet, your whole body will be clean."

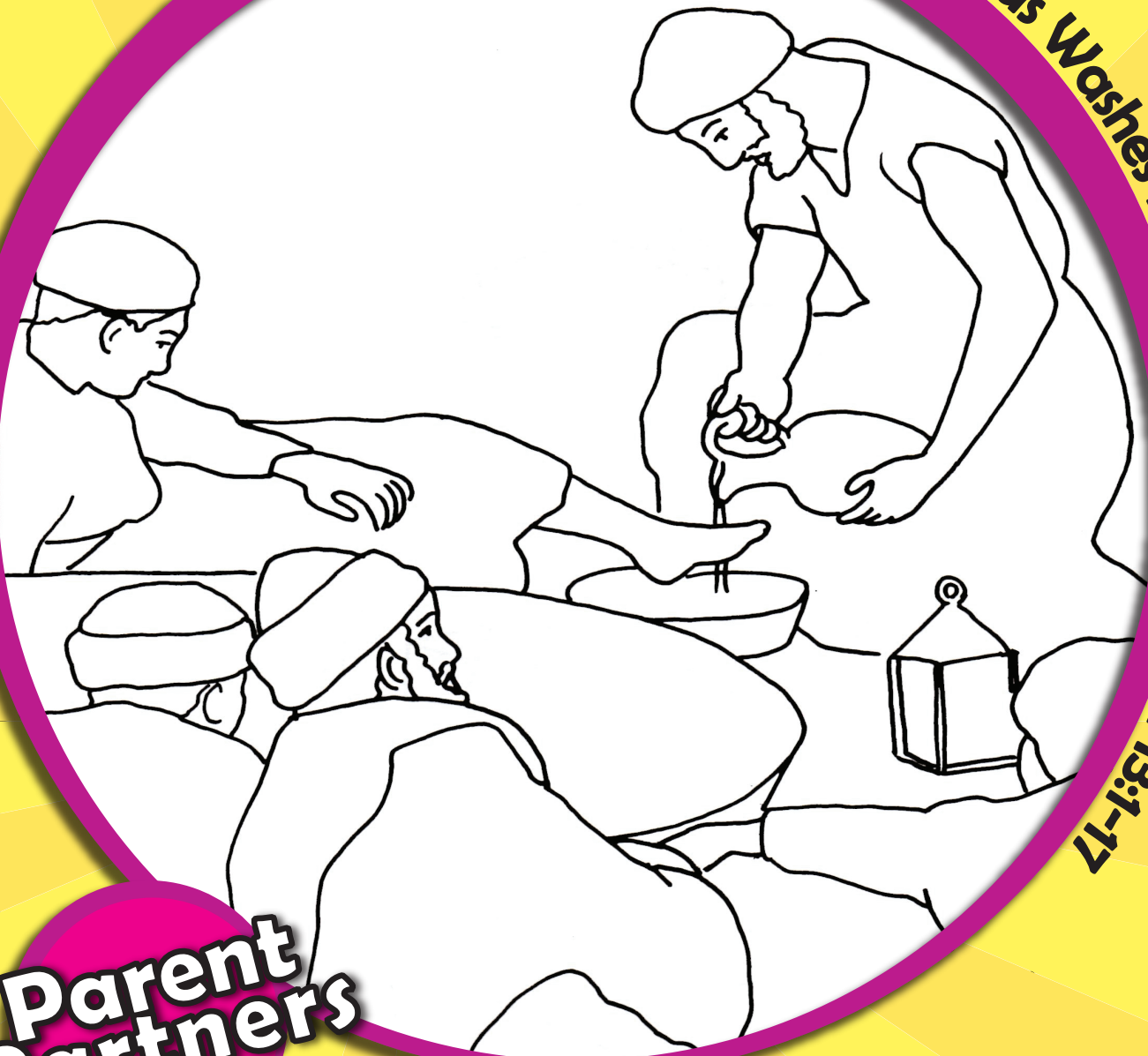
When Jesus finished washing their feet, He told the disciples, "Follow My example. Find ways to serve others, too."



Jesus Washes His Friends' Feet



Jesus Washes His Friends Feet - John 13:1-17



Parent Partners

Lesson Focus: Jesus showed His followers how to humbly serve others.

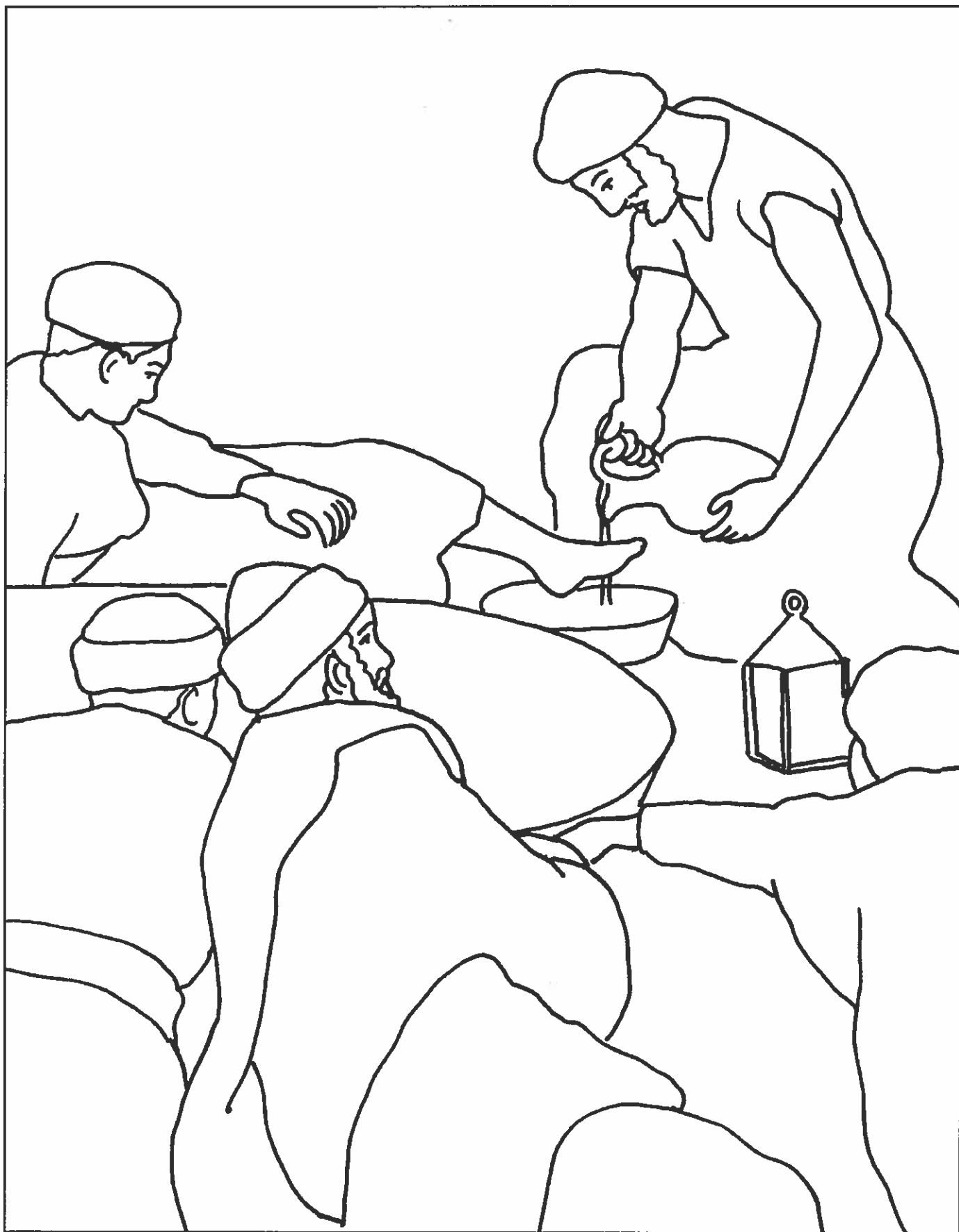
Ways to reinforce this truth with your child:

ASK:

- Why does Jesus want us to serve other people like He did?
- Why were the disciples' feet dirty?
- Who usually washed the dirty feet?
- Who washed the disciples' dirty feet?

ACT:

- Read the Bible story together (or read the summary on the front of this page).
- Lesson Bible Verse: John 13:15
"Jesus said, 'I have shown you what you should do.'"
- Help your child think of ways to surprise another member of the family by doing something nice, such as making the bed, setting the table, feeding the pet...



#5—Jesus Washes His Friends' Feet

