**JOURNEYING TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Session 2 of 4

# The servant king

### MEETING AIM

To better understand the metaphor behind Jesus’ words and actions and engage with it.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

John 13:1-20

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in-person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your situation.

Washing someone’s feet is an odd thing to do these days. It wasn’t in biblical times, although it was looked down on as a dirty job. However, 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! It’s a famous story but explore why this is so symbolic. Particularly look at the part with Peter asking to be completely washed. Yes, it is showing that even someone as important as Jesus was humble enough to act as a servant to others, but also it is a picture of the gospel: when we become a Christian, we are forgiven and baptised; spiritually ‘washed’. From then on, we no longer need to be baptised – we just need to come in prayer regularly to confess our sin and ‘get right’ with God again, simply to remember we are forgiven!

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

As people join you, share any refreshments you have. Ask them to share what they have been doing during the past seven days. Ask the young people what jobs and chores they have to do at home. Then chat about chores that young people around the world might have to do that they don’t.

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

Play a game similar to ‘Grandma’s shopping list’ – instead of shopping items, have an itinerary of places they’ve been, things they’ve done, people they’ve spoken to. So simply start off the sentence: “This week has been amazing. First off, I went to…” Each person in the circle repeats it and adds something from their week, eg: “Then I saw a red kite on our walk”, “Then I got a D for my English homework”, or “Then we ordered a banquet from the local takeaway”. Ask them the think about things that other people did for them as highlights, as well as times they did something sacrificial for someone else.

### BIBLE EXPLORATION – 10 mins

**You will need:** washing-up bowls of warm water; towels

Give out the washing-up bowls, buckets or plastic boxes and oversee the young people putting a few centimetres of warm water in the bottom (enough to cover their feet). Encourage everyone to take off their shoes and socks and put their feet in the water. Invite everyone to close their eyes while you read out John 13:1-20, asking them to imagine they are there in the room with Jesus and the disciples.

With eyes still closed and feet still in the water, ask a few imaginative questions, such as: “What would you think if you were one of the disciples?”, or “What might it feel like to have Jesus wash your feet?”

Encourage everyone to dry their feet, but not to put their socks and shoes back on yet.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

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?
* What might be a similar act to washing someone’s feet in our culture?
* Who are the people in our society who need God’s love and our service?
* Do you feel we serve our community as much as Jesus would like? How can we serve the people who live around us more?

### CREATIVE RESPONSE – 10 mins

**You will need:** poster paint; paper plates; paper; felt-tip pens; cover-up and clean-up equipment including warm water in bowls and towels

Ask the group to put some paint on a paper plate and put their bare foot in the paint. They can then make a footprint on the paper. They should then list around their footprint the ways people need serving and the needs, both obvious and hidden, that Jesus wants us to care about.

Ask the young people to wash their feet, dry them and put their socks and shoes back on. As they do so, invite them to think about the story and what they have discussed and experienced. What conclusions might they have come to about Jesus’ actions, and how we might put this attitude into action in our own lives? You might want to chat together as a group about what they are thinking.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

Continuing on from ‘Creative response’, invite the group to be quiet. Speak about how God can be found in the small, quiet, humble things in life – that he is not often found on billboards or Hollywood but in a kind word spoken to someone at school, through a foodbank that a family is in much 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 perhaps up to ten times. Start off very quietly and reflectively, building up to a shout, and then bring it back down to a whisper again, and end with a normal level “Amen”.

**JOEL TOOMBS**

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