**FIRST STEPS TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Session 2 of 4

# The servant king

### MEETING AIM

To explore how Jesus calls us to be servants.

### 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 particular situation.

As with Palm Sunday, there is plenty of symbolism here that younger children won’t understand. However, they will appreciate the idea of someone doing something kind for them, and also that Jesus did something that someone as special as he was would not normally have done. Exploring these stories at a basic level will provide the building blocks for children to understand them more deeply when they return to them later in life. As long as we don’t teach children anything that they will have to unlearn later, we’re laying a good foundation of faith.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Start your time together with some simple refreshments (if you can) and ask the children if anyone did anything special for them this week. Perhaps someone made them a cake or surprised them with a video call. How does it feel? Tell the group about a time when someone did something special for you, or when you did something special for someone else.

### PLAY – 10 mins

**You will need:** tray; flour mixed with cocoa powder; flip-flop; leader wearing shoes and socks who is happy to show off their feet!

Show the children how dusty the disciples’ feet would have been by asking one of the leaders to take off one of their shoes and put a flip-flop on their foot instead. Explain that everyone wore sandals in Jesus’ time. Put the flour / cocoa powder mix into the tray. Ask your volunteer to put both feet in the tray and wiggle them about as if walking. When they remove the flip-flop from one foot and their shoe from the other, the children will see how dirty your feet get walking in the dust in sandals compared to shoes and socks. Describe how servants would wash the feet of guests. Now you are ready to tell the story but don’t let your volunteer wipe their foot just yet.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** pitta bread (and gluten-free alternative, if needed); a bowl of warm water; a towel; the volunteer with a floury foot; another volunteer

Arrange everyone on chairs in a semicircle. Be ready to tell part of the story kneeling down, as it’s effective for the children to see an adult below them. Tell this story:

Jesus was eating dinner with his friends. *Share out the pitta bread with the children.* He knew the time was coming for him to put God’s big plan into action.

He got up from the table, put a towel around his waist and took a bowl of water. *Do this as you speak.* He began to wash the feet of his disciples. *Kneel and wash your volunteer’s floury foot. Stay kneeling if you can.*

Jesus came to his friend Simon Peter. *Kneel in front of your other volunteer.* Simon Peter said: “You can’t wash my feet! You’re Jesus!” *Get the person to say Simon Peter’s words.*

Jesus told him: “You don’t understand yet, but you will. If you want to be my friend, you will let me wash your feet.”

Simon Peter wanted this more than anything, so he let Jesus wash his feet. *Wash the person’s feet.*

Then Jesus got up and said to all his friends: “You call me Teacher and Lord, but I have just done the job of a servant. That is how it should be because in God’s kingdom the master is not more important that the servant. We must serve each other.”

It would be nice at this point to allow the children to wash each other’s feet. This may depend on practicalities, such as the type of flooring you have and your attitude to mess! You may prefer to wash plastic dolls.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the children these questions, making sure everyone has the chance to contribute:

* What was your favourite part of the story?
* What do you think about what Jesus did?
* When has someone done something kind for you?
* Has Jesus done anything kind for you?
* When have you done something kind for someone else?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** paper; scissors; felt-tip pens

Explain that we are going to think of ways we can serve the people we know. Perhaps helping with the tidying at home, fetching something for Mummy or finding Granny’s glasses. Ask the children to share their own ideas. Encourage children to draw around their foot and cut it out. On the cut-out, your children can draw a picture of something they could do to serve someone else. Talk about how we feel when someone does something kind for us.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** foot shapes from ‘Creative time’

Gather all the paper feet together and stand around them in a circle. Ask everyone to put a foot into the circle. Say this prayer:

Thank you, Jesus, that you came to earth to show us that the smallest and weakest are important in your kingdom. Help us to serve others at home, at school and at play. Amen.

Encourage the children to put their cut-outs somewhere where they’ll be seen regularly.

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