

Ready-to-use all-age service

The servant king



MEETING AIM

To think about how we can follow Jesus' example.



BIBLE PASSAGE

John 13:1-20



KEY VERSE

"I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" John 13:15.

+ PRAYER AND WORSHIP ACTIVITY

Option 1



You will need: examples of instructional writing (eg knitting patterns, electronic manuals or food recipes); dot-to-dot images; pencils; felt-tip pens

Welcome the congregation and hand the dot-to-dot pictures and pencils out to the children. Ask them to join up the dots. As they are doing this, hold up the manuals and patterns. Ask the congregation what each of them does.

Explain that they all act as a guide to help us: from detailed instruction manuals to the dots and numbers on the children's pages. Ask the children to show and tell the images they have drawn from the dots.

Option 2



You will need: children's action song; children to demonstrate the actions.

Explain that you're all going to learn a new song. It's a song with actions, and you're going to follow the children's actions to learn it. Practise the song and actions. Then sing it as part of your community's worship.

+ STORY



You will need: two volunteers to act out the story; a bowl of water; a towel; a chair

Give one volunteer the part of Jesus and the other the part of a disciple. Explain to the congregation that today's Bible passage will be retold through mime. Use the following script, with the two volunteers acting out what you read.

It was the Passover. Jesus and his disciples arrived for a meal together. As this is a time of economic uncertainty, we only have one disciple to keep costs down!

Jesus and the disciples sat down. *Emphasise the plural 's'.*

While everyone was settling down, Jesus thought about what was about to happen. He knew he was going back to be with God. Being with God was a wonderful thing. *Jesus mimes thinking.*

In fact, being with God is the most amazing thing you can think of; even better than chocolate and Ed Sheeran. *Feel free to use another well-known personality your congregation will relate to.*

Jesus was going to be with God, because Jesus was the king.

He was going to get a crown. *Look pointedly at the mime artist until he / she mimes!*

And a robe... *Again, wait for the actor to mime.*

There would be cheering crowds... *And again.*

Jesus knew he would get a crown, but it wasn't going to be a golden one. Not just yet. He knew Judas was going to tell those who didn't like Jesus where to find him alone so they could capture him and put him on trial for pretending to be a king.

But Jesus was no ordinary king. He was like no king who has lived before or after.

Jesus stood up. *Jesus stands.* He wanted to show his disciples how they should live. He got a bowl of water and placed it in front of one disciple. He took off one of his friend's shoes, then the other. *Jesus carries out these actions.*

In Israel, at the time of Jesus, the disciples would not have had shoes and socks, just sandals. And their feet, well...

"Pooley, what a pong!" said Jesus. *Wait for the over-acting that is bound to happen, and the laughs that will inevitably follow.*

Actually, Jesus didn't act like that at all. That's the problem working with amateur mime artists.

Jesus was setting an example of how to treat others.

He first washed one foot and then the other.

He dried both feet with the towel.

The task of washing people's feet was often carried out by servants. Yet here was a king washing the feet of his disciples. Jesus' disciples were his pupils, his followers. They were pretty much his servants to command, yet he washed their feet. In fact, Jesus even washed the feet of Judas, the one who was about to do a bad thing for their friendship.

Jesus did this to show his disciples how to behave. It was a pattern for them to follow; an instruction and an example.

Thank your actors and ask the congregation to give them a round of applause.

Explain that Jesus set an example for us to follow. He taught us to be servants; to serve others. Yet he was also the Messiah – God's chosen one – and a king.

+ REFLECTIVE RESPONSE

Option 1



Explain that when the disciples asked Jesus how to pray, he showed them by example. He taught them the prayer we all know called the Lord's Prayer. Ask if someone can remember the words of the Lord's Prayer and let them share aloud.

Remind them of the lines about God's kingdom. Point out that "your kingdom come, your will be done" can relate to today's Bible passage.

Explain that Jesus is the king. He is the king of God's kingdom. Jesus also gave us a pattern or instruction to follow in serving others. He did this by washing his disciples' feet. Jesus was the servant king.

Invite the congregation to pray the Lord's prayer, reminding them that we play a part in ensuring that God's will is done on earth.

Option 2



You will need: A4 paper; pens

Point out that, thanks to warm socks and shoes, washing people's feet is no longer something that needs to be done when visiting someone's house in most modern nations. In fact, we get a lot done for us. We are very fortunate to live where we do.

Hand out pens and the A4 paper, and encourage the congregation to draw a pair of feet. On the soles and the toes, ask them to write ideas they use to serve others. These should be the sorts of things you wouldn't expect those in charge to do. Would a top chef scrub pots and pans? Would a chief executive drive his chauffeur?

Invite the ideas to be brought to the front of the church and displayed. As a church, choose some activities you can use to serve your community.

+ GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Divide into mixed-age groups and discuss these questions:

- How can we worship God through serving others?
- How does our church serve our community?
- How does our community see us? As servants or something else?

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tells stories at thecreativeminimalist.com.