

Children's Time with the Gospel Story

John 13:3-16 - Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

In today's story we find ourselves at a meal, sometimes called "The Last Supper" or "The Lord's Supper." This was the meal Jesus shared with his friends on the night before he died. We are going to focus on a very special part of that gathering, and it involves us playing a game called Bible Body Tag. Listen carefully to the story, and every time you hear me mention a part of the body, touch that part. Got it? Let's enter the story together.

Jesus knew the time was getting close when he would leave this world. He wanted to have one last meal with the disciples. Jesus loved his friends very much and wanted to make sure that not just their tummies were full, but their hearts as well. So, he found a special way to show his love for them.

Jesus got up from the table and tied a towel around his waist. He filled a basin with water and got on his knees. Then Jesus began washing the feet of his disciples. But when Jesus came to Peter, Peter shook his head and said, "You will never wash my feet."

Jesus said, "You don't understand what I'm doing now, but you will later."

Peter said, "Well then also wash my hands and my head."

Jesus said, "It is enough to wash your feet. You are clean."

Then Jesus said to all of them, "Do you know what I have done for you?" The disciples were all ears. Jesus continued, "You call me teacher and Lord, and that is correct. If I, your Lord, have washed your feet, you too must wash each other's." The disciples' eyes were filled with awe.

Jesus continued, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must love one another. This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other." Jesus words had truly touched the disciples' hearts.

Thousands of churches around the world commemorate this part of the story on a special night called Maundy Thursday. "Maundy" comes from the Latin *mandatum* meaning "commandment." It is based on Jesus' words we just heard, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must love one another." This passage is closely linked to Jesus' humble act of washing the disciples' feet—a surprising thing for a master to do for his disciples.

I would like each of you to silently think about this — What is a surprising way you can show love for Jesus? What is a special way you can show love for others?

[Allow a few moments for children contemplate.]

Now let's all take in a deep, cleansing breath through the nose, and sigh it out gently.

[Lead the children to do this.]

Let's close in prayer. Repeat after me:

[Invite the children to repeat after you each line of the prayer.]

Loving God,
Help me be a part of the story,
Knowing there's no job too low
When it is done out of love.
Amen.