

FAMILY FOOT WASHING SERVICE

Opening Prayer:

Blessed are you, Lord God.

The basin and the towel are signs to us of your Son's servanthood.

You have made us partakers of Christ and of one another.

As we go forth, give us grace

to count others more important than ourselves,

to love our enemies,

to make peace.

Send the Spirit of truth to keep alive in us
what Jesus taught and did,
that our words may carry his good news, and
that our lives may bear the shape of the cross
of the One who lives and reigns with You
and with the Holy Spirit,
God, forever and ever. Amen.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not everyone was clean.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell



you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Family Foot-Washing Activity: Prepare a basin of warm water and some towels. **Who should do the feet washing?** Husband to wife, wife to husband. Parents to children. Resist the urge to rush through the process. Be intentional, take time, and demonstrate the same reverence that our Priests do during Holy Thursday Mass.

Recite the traditional antiphon during each washing: **“I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so also you should love one another.”**

Pre-Activity Discussion: Tell your children how the act of washing people’s feet was a job reserved for the lowest servants, and yet Jesus sets the ultimate example of humility and servanthood by taking on this role. Remind them that in a culture where people walked long distances on dusty roads in sandals, this was a very dirty task! You can also mention how Jesus washes *all* of His disciples’ feet – including those of Judas, who later betrayed him, demonstrating His love for even His enemies. And, talk about how Jesus performed this amazing, sacrificial act during the last moments of His earthly life. Instead of simply thinking about Himself as He faced His imminent death, Jesus was still focused on how He could love others and glorify God.

Post-Activity Discussion: Discuss how it felt for everyone to wash another person’s feet, both for the person doing the washing and for the person receiving the service. Talk about how Jesus redefines what it means to be truly great in contrast with how this world describes greatness. Finally, ask your kids how they can be like Jesus and humbly serve those around them.

Closing Prayer: Close together as a family with the Our Father.