



CREATING SPACES
TO SHARE OUR STORIES
AND BUILD FRIENDSHIPS ACROSS DIVIDES

What makes a Good Leader? – CHRISTIANITY

Background:

Jesus taught that a good leader is one who is there to serve others. In this story, which is found in the New Testament part of the Bible, Jesus shows his disciples a very practical way of serving.

When Jesus was alive people often had to walk many miles to get to places and, because the roads were dry and dusty, their feet got very dirty. Traditionally the host would wash their guest's feet - it was not a great job! This story describes how Jesus showed love and care for his disciples by washing their feet before they ate, a very humble act on his part as he was their leader. He wanted to show his disciples that a good leader is one who serves and looks out for the needs of others rather than his own.



The Servant Leader - (Story can be found on back)

Follow up questions:

1. If you had been on an exceptionally long journey, what would make you feel welcome and valued when you arrived at a house?
2. Why do you think Peter didn't want to have his feet washed? Do you think Jesus would have done what Peter asked?
3. What was Jesus trying to teach his disciples?
4. Can you think of a time when someone important showed you kindness? How did it make you feel?

The Servant Leader

It was now the day before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to be with his Father. He had always loved those in the world who were his friends, and he loved them to the very end. Jesus knew that his Father had given him complete power; he knew that he had come from God and that he was going back to God.

While Jesus and his disciples were at supper, he rose from the table, took off his outer garment, and tied a towel around his waist. Then he poured some water into a washbasin and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel around his waist. He came to Simon Peter, and he said to him, "Are you going to wash my feet, Lord?" Jesus answered him, "You do not understand now what I am doing, but you will understand later."

Peter declared, "Never at any time will you wash my feet!" "If I do not wash your feet," Jesus answered, "you will no longer be my disciple." Simon Peter thought and then answered, "Lord, do not wash only my feet, then! Wash my hands and head, too!"

After Jesus had washed the disciple's feet, he put his outer garment back on and returned to his place at the table. "Do you understand what I have just done to you?" he asked. "You call me Teacher and Lord, and it is right that you do so, because that is what I am. I, your Lord and Teacher, have just washed your feet. You, then, should wash one another's feet. I have set an example for you, so that you will do just what I have done for you. I am telling you the truth: no slaves are greater than their master, and no messengers are greater than the one who sent them. Now that you know this truth, how happy you will be if you put it into practice!

(Adapted from John chapter 13 in the Good News Bible)