On Maundy Thursday, the day before he would die on the cross, Jesus made plans to eat the Passover meal with his disciples. He sent Peter and John into Jerusalem to get everything ready. They prepared for the special meal in a large upstairs room.

Jesus and the rest of the disciples came to the upper room that evening and took their places at the table. Usually at a meal like this a servant would wash the guests' dusty feet before they ate. But no servant was there, and none of the disciples had chosen to humble himself by washing the feet of the others. So Jesus himself got up from the table and took off his outer robe. He wrapped a towel around his waist and poured some water into a large bowl. Then he began to wash the feet of his disciples and dry them with the towel.

Peter didn’t think it was right for Jesus to do a servant’s job and wash his dirty feet. So when Jesus came to him, Peter said, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?”

Jesus replied, “Right now you do not understand what I am doing. But someday you will.”

“No!” Peter insisted. “You will never wash my feet. Never!”

“If I don’t wash you, Peter,” Jesus replied, “you cannot belong to me.” Jesus was talking about washing Peter’s sins away.

“Then don’t just wash my feet, Lord,” said Peter. “Wash my head and my hands too.”

Jesus replied, “That won’t be necessary. A person who has already taken a bath only needs to wash his feet to be clean all over.” Jesus was telling Peter that he was already clean since Jesus had washed all his sins away.

When Jesus had finished washing his disciples’ feet, he asked, “Do you understand what I have done for you? You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and you should because that’s who I am. Now since I, your Lord and Teacher, have performed this humble service of washing your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have given you an example to follow. You should do for one another what I have done for you.”

As the Passover meal continued, Jesus became very sad and troubled. He said to the disciples, “One of you is going to betray me.”

The disciples were shocked. They stared at one another, wondering which one of them could possibly do such a thing. One by one they asked, “Lord, is it I?” Finally John, who was sitting next to Jesus, leaned over close to him and asked, “Lord, who is it?”
Jesus said, “It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread after I have dipped it into the bowl of sauce.” After Jesus dipped the piece of bread, he handed it to Judas. Judas had already made plans to betray Jesus to his enemies for 30 pieces of silver. After Judas had taken the bread, Satan entered his heart so that he would not give up his wicked plan. So Jesus told him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.” Judas immediately went out into the dark night to meet with Jesus’ enemies.

When the Passover meal was almost finished, Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to his heavenly Father. Then he broke the bread into pieces, gave a piece to each of his disciples, and said, “Take this and eat it. This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me.”

Then Jesus took a cup of wine. When he had given thanks, he gave it to his disciples and told them, “Drink this, all of you. This is my blood, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this and remember me.” This was the first Lord’s Supper.

Then after Jesus and the disciples sang a hymn, they went to the Garden of Gethsemane, just outside Jerusalem.

Parents and Kids

Jesus served his disciples by washing their feet and by giving them the Lord’s Supper. We can show our love for Jesus and one another by following the example of service he set for us.

1. Ask your child to find one way to serve someone else for each of the next three days, and promise that you will do the same. Each night, tell each other what act of service you did that day. Talk about why we serve others—to show love to Jesus for saving us.

2. Brainstorm with your family ways you can show love for Jesus by serving others. You may have a neighbor who could use help raking leaves or shoveling snow. Perhaps your children could help their grandparents with grocery shopping, housekeeping, or gardening. So many possibilities exist! Encourage your children to show love for God by selecting an act of service to carry out today.

Pray Together

Dear Jesus, you are our almighty God, and yet you humbled yourself to become one of us. Thank you for serving us, especially by giving your body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins. Lead us to gladly serve others out of love for you. Amen.

*Matthew 26:41

Mark 10:45

Galatians 5:13b

*The Eighth Commandment

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, or give him a bad name, but defend him, speak well of him, and take his words and actions in the kindest possible way.