

Maundy Thursday

Read John 13.1-17

In Bible times the roads were very dirty and dusty. The people didn't wear shoes or trainers that covered their feet, they wore sandals. This meant that as they walked along their feet would get really, really dirty. When you got to the house that you were going to, the servants would wash your feet, which meant you didn't get the houses all dirty too.

On Maundy Thursday we remember Jesus' command to love one another. Jesus showed his disciples how to love one another, by helping them, by being a servant. Jesus wrapped a towel around his waist and got a bowl of water and he washed all the disciples' dirty feet. Even though Jesus knew that something bad was going to happen to him, he wanted to do something for his friends. Instead of being worried by his own problems, he just wanted to show his love for everyone else.

Think

Think about Jesus and how important he was. He had done miracles, and healed lots of people. Crowds of people had come to listen to his teaching, and everyone thought he was really important. Some had worshipped him.

Was it a strange thing for someone so important to wash the feet of his friends?

What might he have done for his friends if he had lived in our time and our culture?

Do

- Think of things that you could do today to help someone. Have you ever washed somebody else's feet? Has anyone ever washed your feet? Make a list of your family members, and then think of something you could do for each one of them today.
- Draw around your feet on a piece of paper. Try to make about ten feet. If there are other people in your family, draw around their feet too. On a big piece of paper, stick the feet in a circle shape. In the middle of the circle write, 'Jesus washed his disciples' feet'.

Pray

Dear God, thank you that Jesus did kind, good things for people.

Help me to help other people too.

Thank you that Jesus cleaned people's dirty feet to show that he loved them.

Thank you for loving me. Help me to love others.

Amen.

Good Friday

Read John 18–19

Can you remember the story of Good Friday? This is the day when we remember that Jesus died on the cross. It was a horrible way to die. We know now that Jesus amazingly came alive again, but his friends did not know that would happen. They were very sad about it all.

Think

Today, the cross is one of the world's most famous symbols – perhaps the most well known. You can find the cross on flags and badges, in schools, museums, on clothes and jewellery. When you see a cross, what does it make you think of?

The day on which Jesus died has been called 'Good Friday' by Christians for nearly 2,000 years. It seems a bit strange to call the day when God's son was horribly killed 'good'. Perhaps Bad Friday or Sad Friday seems more suitable. What would you call it?

The reason it is called 'Good' Friday is because of the meaning of Jesus' death. He died to set us free from all that is bad in the world, our own badness, and that of other people. Think for a moment of things that you have done that are bad, and things in the world that are bad. These are the things that Jesus can make better because he died and rose again.

Do

Draw a cross on a sheet of paper. Write a prayer or prayers on to the cross, and draw pictures around it of some of the things that are mentioned in the Bible to do with Good Friday. The suggestions below come from John 18–19.

A cock – that crowed after Peter denied knowing Jesus three times (John 18.27).

A hammer and nails – used to hold Jesus to the cross (John 19.18).

A crown – the sign on Jesus' cross said 'King of the Jews' (John 19.19).

A die – used by the soldiers to see who would 'win' Jesus' clothes (John 19.24).

A sponge on a stick – used to give Jesus a drink of wine vinegar (John 19.29).

A spear – used to pierce the side of Jesus to check whether he was dead (John 19.34).

Pray

Lord, help me to look at your world, and the people in it, in the right way.

Whenever possible help me to see goodness and make good what is bad.

Amen.

Holy Saturday The burial of Jesus

Read John 19.38-42

A man called Joseph, who had become a disciple of Jesus, asked Pilate (the Roman leader) for Jesus' body so that he could bury it. Pilate told some of his soldiers to take Jesus' body off the cross and give it to Joseph. A man called Nicodemus was helping Joseph. They wrapped strips of material and special spices around Jesus' body. Then they placed it in a tomb in the garden near to where Jesus had been crucified.

Think

Try staying really still and quiet for as long as possible. How long did you manage? Was it difficult or easy? See if you can get some of your friends or family to play the party game 'Sleeping lions'. In this game you all have to be as still as possible. The winner is the person who is still the longest.

Do

If you have a garden, or know someone who does, ask if you can dig up a little bit of earth. The earth on its own looks very ordinary. Perhaps you could say it looks dark and dead. Have a closer look. Can you find anything in the earth that is alive, a spider or an ant or a bulb that is starting to grow?

Pray

Dear God, thank you that when things look dull,
dark and ordinary – even dead like earth –
that you are still there and things are alive.
Thank you for looking after Jesus' body in the tomb.
Thank you for looking after me wherever I am.

Amen.