



## FOOT WASHING RITUAL

### TIMING:

**PURPOSE:** To connect to God's love and to one another's love. Gives an opportunity to risk believing that they are indeed loved and a vessel of the love of Christ.

**ENERGY:** Reflective, inspiring, lover.

### MATERIALS:

- Four white towels per pair, one set of one dry and one wet for each person doing the footwashing. (Second set to be brought out when leader has them switch places.)
- One bottle of oil per pair.
- One set of two white towels (same as above) and one bottle of oil for the leader. Give them to the leader BEFORE the ceremony begins.

**Footwashing Leaders:** Check in with the materials team for this process on Sunday morning at breakfast to ensure that the materials will be ready on time.

### Room Set Up:

- Cross, 3 candles, River of Grace.
- Add extra chairs for small group leaders who have an odd number of attendees in their group.
- Inform the attendees to sit with their group members.

### MUSIC:

- "MATC 13 Footwashing" "Jesus Be the Center"
- "WATC 14 Footwashing" "Jesus Be the Center"

Check in with the media coordinator prior to the start of this ritual. They should have the song ready to go. Do a volume check with the media coordinator prior to the start of the ritual.

Instruct the media coordinator, that after "Jesus be the Center" you will be stepping up to read from John 13. When you step up, the media coordinator should turn down the volume to a level that allows you to be heard over the music. The playlist should then continue ON REPEAT for the rest of the Footwashing Service.

Be aware of the volume throughout. You may be asked to raise or lower the volume during this process.

**Footwashing Leaders: (If you are dividing this process into two with two leaders.)**

### Leader #1:

"We are going to enter into this next time together by listening to a song. Put everything under your chair, place your feet on the ground. Relax in your chair. Perhaps you will want to put your hands in a receptive position. Let this song, "Jesus Be the Center," be your prayer this morning."

## **Meditation:**

After Jesus, be the Center ends: Read John 13:1-17 (Read slowly, with meaning)

## **Reflections on Christ washing our feet:**

“Why is what Jesus did with his disciples important to us today?”

- **Our Need for Cleansing**

Symbolically, it is about our need for cleansing. Jesus says, “If I don’t wash your feet you are not clean.”

To allow our feet to be washed is symbolic of our reality that we cannot clean ourselves. We are not able to fix ourselves. We are not able to perfect ourselves. We are called to receive cleansing.

- **Resistance to being cleansed**

Our false selves, our resistance to God’s love and his provision, are all ways that we resist being served by God. They are the ways that we say, “I will cleanse myself.” “I will make myself right.” “I am not human.” “I will be God.”

- **We cannot save ourselves**

When Jesus washed the disciples’ feet and called us to do the same he states emphatically that we cannot save ourselves. We cannot independently become clean. We need him.

- **Christ, the Servant Leader**

This act of footwashing was also a revelation of God’s nature toward us, and how we are to be toward one another.

The nature of God is revealed: Christ is the Servant Leader. He is humble. He considers us more important than himself.

## **Leader # 2:**

- **MATC: We need each other** - We often tend to do life alone, independent of God and others. We are not connected in a mature way to others around us. We need men. We need men in our lives in order to become the men God has made us to be.
- **WATC: Community is about living in relationship** - The reality is that we were never intended to be isolated and alone. We were designed for relationship.
- **MATC & WATC: We need to see each other as we are** - How we see each other is important. C.S. Lewis says in his sermon, The Weight of Glory:”

**“There are no ordinary people. You have never talked with a mere mortal..... Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses. If he (she) is your Christian neighbor he (she) is holy in almost the same way, for in him (her) also Christ, ... the glorifier and the glorified, Glory Himself, is truly hidden.”**

## **Leader # 2:**

At this time, we are going to do what Jesus told his disciples to do. We are going to wash each other's feet. We are going to have you pair up with another person in your small group.

### **Here's my encouragement to you:**

Know that as you wash the feet of the person in front of you, Christ is in you serving them. You are taking on the position of a servant just like Christ. Do so with a prayerful heart.

As your brother (sister) washes your feet will you risk believing that Christ in them is washing your feet? The Holy One, The Lord Almighty, Glory Himself is kneeling at your feet.

### **Risk Receiving:**

- Will you risk receiving such amazing love?
- Love that will transform you.
- Love that releases power in you to be the person he has created you to be.
- Christ at your feet:

What would happen if you really believed that God loves you enough to sit at your feet and wash you and pray for you?

Does it feel too long? Uncomfortable? Know that God pursues you. He reaches out to touch you. He will not stop pursuing you. Open up to His love which never gives up but seeks to fill you in this moment.

### **Risk being a Vessel of Christ:**

Is washing another's feet going to be uncomfortable for some of you? Are you anxious about touch, intimacy, about focusing on someone, or being the focus? If so, then use this experience to become aware of what is going on within you.

See beyond the body, the personality, the age of the person in front of you. Choose to see beyond the exterior into the soul and spirit. As C.S. Lewis said: "There are no ordinary people. You have never talked with a mere mortal."

What would happen if you really believed that God was in you as you washed each other's feet – serving, loving, blessing the person in front of you?

"I am going to model for you with \_\_\_\_\_ (Leader #1) how we would like you to do this."

### **Instructions to the attendees:**

You (Leader # 2) are sitting on the floor. Have Leader # 1 come up front so you can model how to wash each other's feet. Face the person whose foot you are washing.

Have them sit in a chair. “Place the towel on your leg. Take off their shoe and sock. Place their foot comfortably on your leg. Don’t hold their foot up in the air. Face the other person while you wash their feet.” [As you model this, ensure that you are facing the person whose foot you are washing.]

Ask, “Are you comfortable?”

“Take wet cloth and wash the foot.”

“Take the oil and massage it into their foot.”

“You will have five minutes to wash this foot. I will tell you when to begin to dry.”

“At that time I will tell you when to switch to the other foot and you will have five minutes for the second foot.”

**Now, model using provided handwipes to clean your hands.**

“At this time, please partner with another person from your small group. Decide who will receive first. The staff will bring the materials to you now. They will bring a fresh set of towels when you switch positions.”

“Be in an attitude of silent prayer as you wash their feet and an attitude of receptivity as your feet are washed.”

**Instructions:**

1. After four minutes tell the group that they have one minute to dry the first foot.
2. If you observe that a pair is switching feet too early, gently remind them to keep going and that you will let them know when to switch feet.
3. Then, after the minute is up (end of five minutes), tell them to now switch to the other foot.
4. After four minutes tell them that they have one minute to dry the second foot.
5. When the time is up, have them switch places. “Now go ahead and switch places. The staff will bring you a new set of towels.”
6. Wait until everyone is resettled. Repeat the above instructions.
7. “Remember to ask if they are comfortable.”

**Leader: Once they have switched partners and have begun (and movement in the room has stopped):**

- “Will you risk believing that as you wash your brother/sister’s feet that Christ is in you washing their feet.
- “As your brother/sister washes your feet will you risk believing that Christ himself, in your them, is washing your feet?

- Risk believing that you are connected to God’s love and power in this moment.”

After the footwashing is complete:

**Journal:** Have them take out their journals and journal in silence. (This should last about 10 minutes.)

Before releasing them to the break: **INSTRUCT THE ATTENDEES TO WASH THEIR HANDS DURING THE BREAK**