

Learning Together

A Study of God's Word (John 13:1–17, 34–35)

Dial-up Review

Distribute copies of Reproducible 2. Say, **In the portion of Scripture we are about to read, we will see a demonstration of the kind of actions our Savior has called His followers to do.** Have students read John 13:1–17, 34–35 either individually or as a group with individual readers taking turns reading. Invite students to review the account by completing the exercise. Correct responses follow.

Before the (1) Passover (72776837), when the (2) devil (33845) had already put it into the heart of Judas to betray Jesus, Jesus lay aside his outer (3) garments (42763687) and began to wash the disciples' feet. When (4) Peter (73837) objected, Jesus said, "If I do not wash you, you have no (5) share (74273) with Me." Later, (6) Jesus (53787) explained His actions. Jesus gave His disciples a new (7) commandment, (26662636368) to love one another.

Servanthood

Say, **Jesus calls us out of the world around us to be set apart—to view life and live it differently than those who do not know or belong to Him. Through faith, He equips us for a new and sometimes challenging way of living, one more appropriately described as selfless than selfish.** Continue with a discussion of these questions.

1. Why would Jesus choose to participate in such a lowly task as to wash His disciples' feet? (By this object lesson Jesus demonstrated His love and compassion for others. He desires all to know that we become spiritually clean only through His actions on our behalf; Jesus lived,

died, and rose again to remove sin and its consequences from us.)

- 2. Why does John, seemingly out of nowhere, mention Satan plotting through Judas in verse 2?** (Jesus knew of the evil plan that was about to unfold and how God would use His suffering and death to serve all people, providing us with forgiveness, life, and eternal salvation. His washing of the disciples' feet demonstrated the servant aspect of the sacrifice He was about to make for the benefit of all people.)
- 3. When it's Peter's turn to have his feet washed, for what reason does he strongly object?** (His objection is based on a misunderstanding of Jesus' true mission. Peter didn't think it appropriate for His Lord to wash a disciple's feet. Peter was seeing things through a worldly perspective.)
- 4. Why does Jesus say: "If I do not wash you, you have no share with Me" (v. 8)?** (No one would be cleansed from the dirt of sin unless Jesus washed us clean with the forgiveness He earned for us through His holy life, death in our place, and resurrection.)
- 5. Read John 15:12–17. According to verse 13, what is the greatest demonstration of love?** (The greatest action of love is to give your life for another. Jesus did that for us. Comment that Jesus calls as "friends" those who know what the Father has revealed to the Son. Included among these things is an understanding of Jesus' reason for coming to earth—to seek and save the lost.)

6. John 15:16 talks about bearing fruit. How can Christians bear fruit as they serve God and others with the resources God graciously provides? (We can use our resources to serve God and others. We can give of our time to help others, our talents and abilities to help and enrich the lives of others. Our financial resources can be used in a variety of ways; by investing in LCEF, our money is used to build churches and other buildings dedicated to the service of God and others.)

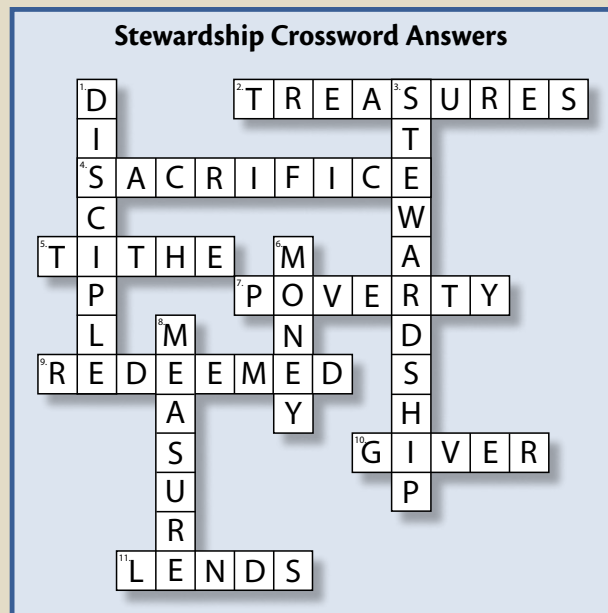
7. What motivates God's people to serve others? See 1 Thessalonians 2:13. (Working through God's Word and the Sacraments [the Means of Grace] God's Spirit motivates believers to serve both God and others.)

Review

Invite students to complete the crossword activity (Reproducible 3), if you choose to do so. In your review of the responses, stress that to redeem something means to buy it back. Jesus actually bought us back from the devil, paying for us with His own blood. What a great God! What a great sacrifice! What an excellent example of sacrificial giving!

Prayer

Father God, may we always allow You control of our lives and decisions. We ask in deep reverence and humility for the help of the Holy Spirit to strengthen our love for all people. May we be motivated to give without seeking rewards and repayment from those we serve. Help us to use to Your glory the time, talents, and treasures You have given us. We ask these things in the name of Jesus, the ultimate servant. Amen.



Two Scenarios

Distribute copies of Reproducible 4, one to each student. Point out that Christian stewardship may be defined as the act of bringing our life and priorities in line with God's will. Invite students to work in groups to read and analyze the scenarios with a focus on what we as God's stewards can learn from each. Recap key discussion emphases as a whole group.

A New Beginning

- 1. Evaluate the self-talk included in the scenario.** (Affirm student responses that center on the idea that we can easily become derailed from any plan of action. And once we are derailed, getting back on track, though certainly always a possibility, becomes difficult.)
- 2. What does it mean to you to be a follower of Jesus with respect to your use of time and possessions?** (Answers will vary. This item provides students with the opportunity to reflect on their own stewardship. Accept the fact that living for Jesus will not be a priority for some. Encourage all with the thought that living for Jesus is the greatest of all possible adventures.)
- 3. What does Jesus' forgiveness and strength mean for someone desiring to live as a faithful follower of Jesus?** (Stress that Jesus forgiveness covers all sins including those times when we fail to follow through on our stewardship plans.)

Just Trying to Help

- 4. Identify the decisions or events that contributed to a bad outcome.** (Not counting money in public; keeping up so you can leave with your friends, even if it involves putting the food back so you can leave with them; choosing to give the woman money instead of watching her items so she can go to the parking lot to get her purse. Be assured that even in this bad situation, God knows your generous heart.)
- 5. How might talking to your God and your parents about these and other issues demonstrate your preparation to handle yourself?** (God invites us to pray all at times [1 Thessalonians 5:17]. He promises to hear and to answer. Chances are, next to God, our parents love us more than anyone else. Parents value opportunities to offer their counsel and advice because they want what is best for us.)



Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

(John 13:1–17, 34–35)

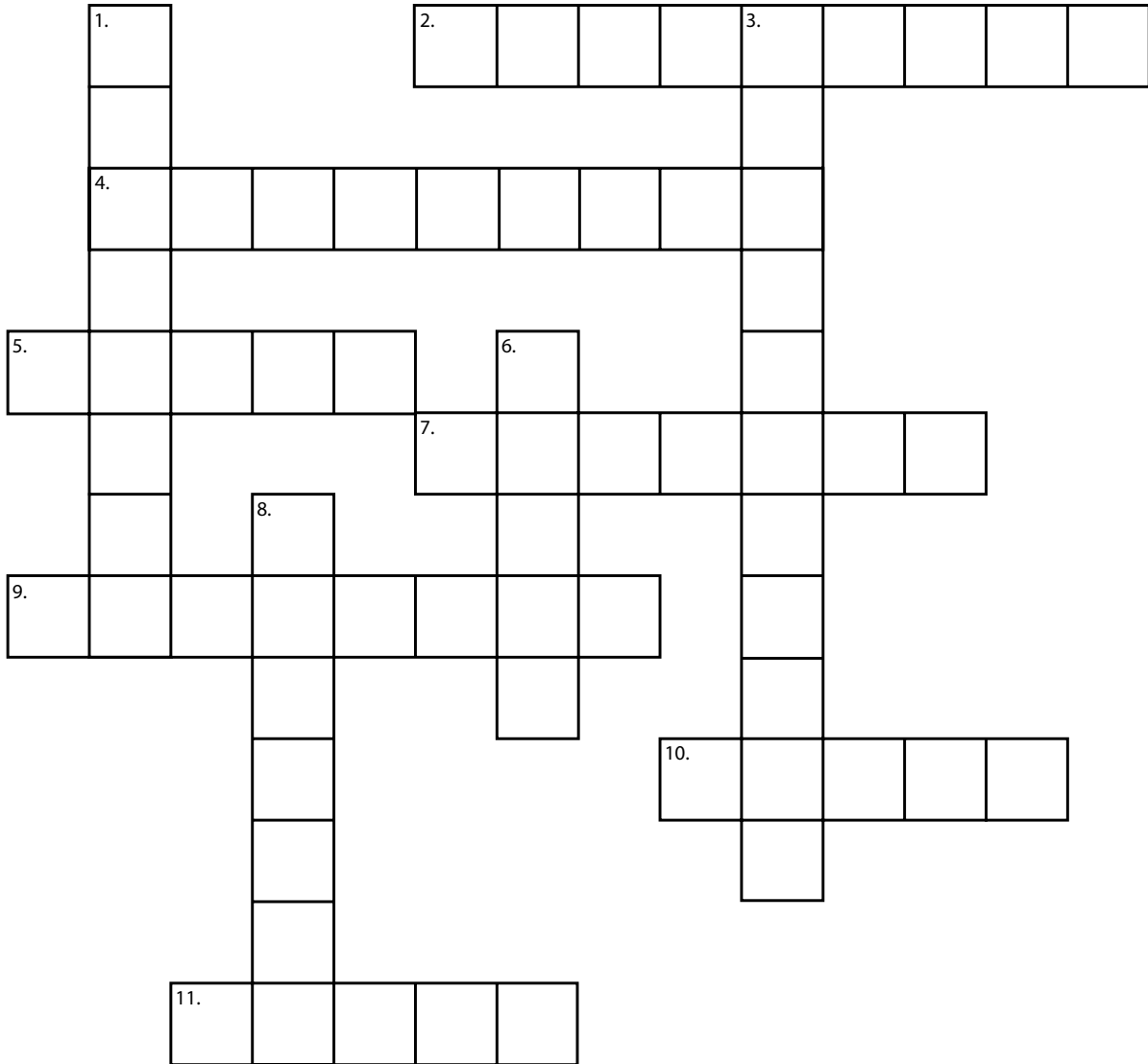
Dial-up Review

Review the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. Use one of the letters associated with each number on the key pad of a cell phone to provide the missing words in the paragraph below.

1	2 ABC	3 DEF
4 GHI	5 JKL	6 MNO
7 PQRS	8 TUV	9 WXYZ
*	0	#

Before the (1) _____ (72776837), when the (2) _____
 (33845) had already put it into the heart of Judas to betray Jesus, Jesus lay aside
 his outer (3) _____ (42763687) and began to wash the disciples'
 feet. When (4) _____ (73837) objected, Jesus said, "If I do not
 wash you, you have no (5) _____ (74273) with Me." Later,
 (6) _____ (53787) explained His actions. Jesus gave His disciples
 a new (7) _____, (26662636368) to love one another.

Stewardship Crossword



ACROSS

2. In Matthew 6:20, Jesus tells us to store up _____ in heaven.
4. To give up something valuable or important.
5. To give 10% of your money or income.
7. 2 Corinthians 8:9 reminds us that we have become rich through Jesus' _____.
9. Jesus _____ us when He bought us back from the devil.
10. According to 2 Corinthians 9:7, God loves a cheerful _____.
11. Whoever is generous to the poor _____ to the LORD (Proverbs 19:17).

DOWN

1. One who follows Jesus.
3. Act of wisely using God's blessings to us.
6. Medium of exchange.
8. Luke 6:38 promises, "with the _____ you use it will be measured back to you."

You Make the Call

One very important part of good stewardship is preparing to think clearly and recognize ways to avoid temptations or to manage situations where temptations or harm are likely to occur. The following situations start out fine but then go wrong. After reading each, talk about what happened and how the outcome might have been avoided.

A New Beginning

You want to live as a totally committed disciple of Jesus. For you, total discipleship involves “walking the walk.” You plan to tithe the money you earn at your part-time job and to spend time with the others in your youth group volunteering at church. But the very first week you need all of your money for a weekend trip with a friend—a trip that comes up at the last minute. And that last-minute trip also cuts into the time you had planned to spend working on your semester project for school. So you work on your project rather than volunteering at church. “I can make up the tithe,” you tell yourself. “And certainly God wants me to do well in school! I won’t be able to earn much to give back to God if I am not able to get a good job someday,” you reason.

1. Evaluate the self-talk included in the scenario (above).
2. What does it mean to you to be a follower of Jesus with respect to your use of time and possessions?
3. What does Jesus’ forgiveness and strength mean for someone desiring to live as a faithful follower of Jesus?

Just Trying to Help

You stop at the local quickie mart on the way home with your friends. Checking your cash, you are glad that you have more than enough for a burrito and a cold drink. Your friends, having already paid for their stuff, head for the door. They shout for you to “Catch up later.” You hurry to buy your stuff. Looking at a comic you grabbed, you don’t see a lady cut in front of you. The lady appears not to have enough money to pay for the food she holds in her hands—half of which she has already eaten. In desperation, she catches your eye just long enough for you to know that she could use your help. It seems so unreal as you pay for her food. She smiles warmly when she tells you that she can pay you back; that her purse is in her car. Upon reaching her car, she starts to unlock the door. Suddenly, a very large, very angry man appears, demanding everything in your pockets. He lifts you straight off the ground and takes your money. Landing with a thud, you see the woman and the man laughing as they walk off counting your money.

4. Identify the decisions or events that contributed to a bad outcome.
5. How might talking to God and your parents about these and other issues demonstrate your preparation to handle yourself?

Growing Together

Use any or all of the following activities to expand, enrich, or enliven your *K.I.D.S. Count* discussions over additional days beyond the week. Review and repeat activities throughout the school year.

Worship Ideas

- * Ask students to work in groups to develop a devotion with the theme “Lord, make me a servant” based on John 15:12–14. During the devotion or in a transitional time following the devotion, talk about the traits that make someone a good friend (such as trust, compassion, patience, time). Invite students to consider the following examples. Discuss aspects of each scenario evidencing true friendship.
 - A friend refuses to take advantage of an obvious weakness he or she knows you have, and doesn’t turn it into blackmail.
 - A friend gives up Friday night plans to help you fix an unexpected situation at home (with no strings attached).
 - A friend hears that some others are planning to set you up and warns you first, even though that friend will make enemies with those planning the trick.

Write a skit about one of the above situations. Talk about how we show Jesus’ love to unbelievers through the friendships we establish and maintain. Ask, **What is the hardest part of keeping a friend? Why do the same traits of a good friend also apply to those that make a good servant? How do we demonstrate our friendship with Jesus in the way we use the resources He has given us?**

- * Read Matthew 25:31–46. Sing, “Blest Be the Tie that Binds” (*LSB* 649). Talk about and discuss how God’s Spirit enables us to share our time, talents, and treasures with others as ways of sharing them with Jesus Himself. Discuss the following: **What is unique about the friendships enjoyed among brothers and sisters in Christ? How does God’s Spirit enable us to demonstrate good stewardship of our resources in the context of friendship?**

Investigating Further

- * Create a flow chart to show how the K.I.D.S. Stamp Program works. It could involve each of the *K.I.D.S. Count* gang at a different point in the explanation of where the money goes once it is invested in LCEF. Include some more technical points about how the money becomes a viable support for building projects.
- * Conduct online research to determine the locations of current projects funded by the Lutheran Church Extension Fund. If possible, provide pictures of the various projects.
- * Create a tree-style diagram, similar to a family tree, which can be used by students to keep track of local service projects that they become part of and the outcomes or progress of those projects. Title the diagram “The Serving Tree.”

Additional Bible Study Suggestions

- * Read Romans 16:17–19. Talk about things that can happen to strain or lead to the end of a friendship. Ask, **How do selfishness, envy, and poor self-esteem combine to make keeping good friendships harder? What other things can get in the way of strong friendships? How can money enter the picture? Identify ways that you can incorporate God’s love, and the examples that Jesus gave to strengthen relationships that begin to falter? Do you hold grudges, remembering what others did to you last year? five years ago? longer? What does it mean to you that God removes our sins “as far as east is from the west” (Psalm 103:12)? What role does time play in maintaining strong friends? What are some little things that you could do each day that may also help keep a friendship strong? How do these little things matter over time? Give examples of loyalty among friends. How does Jesus demonstrate His loyalty and friendship through His death on the cross to redeem us? What does it mean to be “wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil” (Romans 16:19)? How does this relate to the stewardship of our time, talents, and treasures?**
- * Read and discuss Luke 21:1–4. Comment that a mite equals a very small amount of money. **Why was Jesus so drawn to the widow’s actions? How does her example of sacrifice relate to Jesus’ washing the disciples’ feet? What does it mean to you to have God as your friend with respect to your approach to life? your relationships with others? your use of your money and other resources?**

Role-Play Activities

- * After securing approval, allow the students to experience washing each other’s feet. Discuss with students their feelings before and after the event. Ask if and how this activity changed how the students viewed each other.
- * **A creative teacher once told her students, “Today will be a very busy day for me. I will be helping provide care for those living in a retirement home in New York, building a church and school in California, assisting in the construction of a day care facility in North Carolina, working in a food pantry in inner city Cincinnati, helping a pastor in Idaho with his mortgage, supporting a student going into church work at Concordia Selma, Alabama, and assisting counselors at a camp in Minnesota who are conducting a Vacation Bible School.”** Talk about how this very busy day is made possible with your money invested in LCEF. Role-play and discuss a Christian’s money at work helping “God’s kingdom come” through the work of LCEF.

Field Trips

- * Research projects currently being funded by the LCEF. If possible, arrange for a site visit or an online tour. Sometimes, the site boss will let people toss coins into the drying cement. Perhaps blessings upon the structure might be allowed to be written on the walls before the drywall is put up. Obtain information about those being served by the project. If you choose, arrange for an “over the top” offering to provide an unexpected blessing for the project, such as an upgrade in furniture or other amenities.

- * Have a local architect (or someone from an active site) make a presentation to the students about some of the behind-the-scenes challenges and unexpected surprise that can arise in the completion of a building project.

Arts and Crafts Activities

- * Identify one of the completed job sites built with money provided by LCEF funds. If possible, have the class create a model using cans, cardboard, and other common objects. You may even invite students to take pictures on location. If you choose to do so, designate groups of students to be in charge of constructing portions of the model to represent different parts of the building.
- * Track through Google Earth the locations of other project sites (that are not accessible by field trip). Keep an active map visible to track progress.

Service Projects

- * Organize students to give of their time and efforts in the cleaning, improving, or repairing of playground equipment at a local day-care center or city park. Make a list of supplies and tools that will be needed to do the work. Get permission from the proper authorities to work on the equipment. Your students' efforts will serve the children using the equipment. But it will also provide them with experience in giving of themselves to others as a way of sharing the love of Jesus.
- * To emphasize with your students that, as God's people, we demonstrate love and care for others because God in Christ first showed His love and care for us, involve them in making placemats that thank God for His good-

ness to us. Provide a number of placemat-size sheets of paper. Allow students to take a sheet for every member of their family. Encourage them to write on each placemat the following: Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever! (Psalm 118:1). Have them decorate their placemats with artwork of their choice. Then laminate and allow students to take them home or give the placemats to a nursing home or church kitchen for use there.

Games and Movement Activities

- * Play the penny game. The object of the game is to show how time and repetition (the keys to a savings plan) can make small investment amounts pay off.

Needed: a large supply of pennies (at least 200); several small buckets; and roller scooters (2 to 3).

Spread the pennies on the floor. Set a line at one side of the room. On the scooters (you can only push with your feet), students are to be given one minute to pick up as many pennies as they can (one at a time) and place them in the bucket.

- * Secure a thirty- to forty-foot-long piece of string or rope. Tell class members that they will use one piece of rope to build a church, positioning the rope to provide a three-dimensional outline of the building. Tell students that everyone in the class must hold onto the rope at some time during the activity, that once a person touches the rope, he or she must not let go of it; and the rope lines can cross but they must not overlap. Talk about the ways we use resources to build

structures that help “God’s kingdom come to us,” as we say in the Second Petition of the Lord’s Prayer. Comment that a perfect home in heaven awaits all who trust in Jesus as their Savior.

Snacks and Cooking Activities

Stewardship Cookies

(Cookies that include Bible verses relating to stewardship instead of fortunes)

Ingredients:

- 3 egg whites
- $\frac{3}{4}$ c. granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. butter or margarine, melted
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. flour
- 2 tsp. almond extract

You will also need: Paper strips ($\frac{1}{2}$ " x $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches), as many as you have cookies.

“God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:7–8).

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Beat egg whites until frothy. Beat in sugar and salt. Stir in butter, flour, and almond extract. Drop batter by rounded teaspoonfuls on ungreased baking sheet (no more than six at a time) about 3 inches apart. Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until edges are light

golden brown. Remove from oven. Carefully remove one cookie at a time and gently place a strip of paper containing the words of 2 Corinthians 9:7–8 on one half of the cookie. Fold cookie in half over the paper strip. Drape the center of the folded cookie over the handle of a wooden spoon until sides touch; slide off spoon. Place on wire rack to cool. Repeat with remaining cookies. Work quickly while cookies are still warm.

Gold Coins

Ingredients:

- 24 round buttery crackers
- 1 c. creamy peanut butter
- 2 c. butterscotch chips

Spread half of the crackers with the peanut butter. Place remaining crackers on top to make cracker sandwiches. Melt the butterscotch chips in a double boiler or melt them very carefully in a microwave. Dip the cracker sandwich in the melted butterscotch. Place on waxed paper to cool.

