

'See, I Am Doing A New Thing!'
A Children's Service for Good Friday

Welcome

Opening sentence: *This is what the LORD says -*

he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters:

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.

See, I am doing a new thing!

Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?

We prepare for worship with the Cross, flowers and candles. We repeat:

The Cross says: Jesus loves us.

The flowers say: We love Jesus.

Jesus said: I am the light of the world.

Hymn Lord of the Dance

Reading Jesus washes the disciples' feet (below)

Teaching A New Commandment

- It's the evening before Good Friday, which we call Maundy Thursday. Does anyone know why we call it Maundy Thursday? *Maundy* comes from the Latin *mandatum*, meaning commandment (*mandate* has the same derivation).
- Jesus and the disciples have gathered in the Upper Room to share the Passover meal together. They would not have been sitting on chairs, as we do now, but reclining at the table, with their feet sticking out behind them.
- Imagine how dusty and rough the roads might have been at the time. Servants would often be required to wash people's feet when they came in from a journey. What would that have been like? What might have happened to people's feet as they travelled long distances? A volunteer steps in trays of yucky substances as suggestions are made. E.g.
 - They may have cut their feet - jam or ketchup.
 - Someone is bound to say that they may have stepped in dog poo - chocolate spread.
 - They will have been through dirt and dusty - sand/fine soil.
- Would anyone like to wash these feet now? Probably not. But on Maundy Thursday the God of all creation had taken human form and did just that, acting as a servant.
- And he gave his friends a new commandment: *As I have loved you, so you must love one another*. Others before Jesus had told people to love one another, so why was this a *new* commandment? Because he tells them to love one another *as he has loved them*: with a love that's prepared to serve all people, no matter how badly they behave, no matter how dirty or horrible they are, no matter how tired or distracted we are, and long after we feel like it.
- And notice that it was a new *commandment*. It wasn't advice or an invitation: Jesus *commanded* us to love one another with a love like his.
- But how can we possibly manage to obey?

Hymn The Servant King

Reading The Lord's Supper (below)

Teaching A New Covenant

- Do you know what a covenant is? It's an agreement, in which two people or groups both have promises to keep: I/we will do this, and you will do that. Can you think of any examples? (E.g. marriage, parent-school agreements, promises between friends, business contracts.)
- Jesus was born into a Jewish family. Many hundreds of years before his birth, God had chosen the Jewish people to be his special friends, and he had made a covenant with them. He cared about everyone in the world, but his chosen people had a special job. They were to learn all about God and obey his rules, so that they could tell the world about his love and encourage everyone else to love him too. On his side, God promised never to leave them or let them down.
- Every year, the Jewish people celebrate the Passover meal. The bread, wine and other food that they shared helped them to remember how God brought them out of slavery in Egypt, through the Red Sea to the land he had promised them.
- At this point you might want to share out some hot cross buns and grape juice.
- But when Jesus and his friends celebrated the Passover together, he used the bread and the wine to teach them that there was going to be a *new* covenant with God. Another word for a covenant is a *testament*. In the Old Testament, God had chosen just one group of people to remember his laws and teach the world about his love. Now there was a New Testament: Jesus was inviting every single person into a new relationship with God. We are to love God and love one another as he has loved us. On his side, he promises never to leave us or let us down.
- But again: how can we possibly manage to keep our side of the agreement?

Hymn One More Step Along the World I Go

Reading The crucifixion (below)

Teaching A New Prayer

- Now we can see the meaning of the bread and wine that Jesus used to teach his friends about the new covenant with God.
- By ourselves, we can never obey Jesus' new commandment: we let down God and other people every day, and all of that stuff gets between us and God. But when Jesus died on the cross he took all that away. The bread reminds us that his body was broken for us. And the wine reminds us of the blood that he shed: when he died, we were washed clean of all our wrongdoing.
- And so we can come to God in the name of Jesus, who died for us. He promised at the last supper that when we pray in his name, God will *always* answer.

Hymn Lord Jesus Christ

Easter Garden

The children are invited to build an Easter garden, including the empty tomb.

Teaching A New Gift

- Jesus died so that we can come to God, praying in his name and entering into a new relationship with him. But what about that new commandment? How are we to manage to love one another as he has loved us?
- The Easter story doesn't end on Good Friday. Look at the empty tomb. That first Easter morning, when the women went to the tomb where Jesus' body had been laid after it was taken down from the cross, Jesus was not there, because he had risen!
- When he went back to heaven, Jesus sent us a new gift: God's Holy Spirit, who comes to live in us, to change us and heal us and help us to love God and love each other. We just need to invite him.

Prayers

We say together: Come, Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful people,
and kindle in us the fire of your love. Amen.

The Collect for Good Friday: Eternal God,
in the cross of Jesus
we see the cost of our sin and the depth of your love:
in humble hope and fear
may we place at his feet all that we have and all that we are,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Other prayers, e.g. Father, we thank you that you are always with us;
that you have promised never to abandon or forsake us.
We pray that in the darkness of their suffering,
you may be with all who are ill;
all who are persecuted in your name;
all who mourn.
In Jesus' name, we thank you for your healing love,
and for the gift of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

We say together: The Lord's Prayer

Hymn 262 How Great Thou Art

Dismissal

The candles are put out, then we say together:

Jesus said, "You are the light of the world."

Let us take his light into the world.

Jesus washes the disciples' feet

Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel round his waist.

After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped round him.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place.

Do you understand what I have done for you? he asked them. You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord', and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.

I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

The Lord's Supper

When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve.

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper he took the cup. He gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, Drink this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

The Crucifixion

They arrested Jesus and took him to the high priest. Many people told lies about him, but their statements did not agree. Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and mocked him. And the guards took him and beat him.

Very early the next morning, they bound Jesus, led him away and turned him over to Pilate. Pilate asked the crowd what he should do with Jesus. "Crucify him!" they shouted.

Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified. The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace. They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. And they began to call out to him, Hail, king of the Jews! Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spat on him.

And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha. And they crucified him. It was the third hour when they crucified him. The written notice of the charge against him read: The King of the Jews. They crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left.

Those who passed by hurled insults at him. In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. He saved others, they said, but he can't save himself!

Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

And with a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.