

Transformational Leadership

To the Leader:

This week's lesson is on *Transformational Leadership*. There are seven traits for the Church of the Nazarene, and the sixth trait is *Transformational Leadership*. These traits depict what we believe should characterize every Church body.

Transformational Leadership means to develop leaders through a model of Christlikeness. Jesus is our example. The eight characteristics are:

- Humble and submissive
- Servants
- Visionary
- Strategic thinkers
- Team builders
- Compassionately assertive
- Clear communicators
- Empowering the next generation to lead and build the kingdom

As you prepare for and present this lesson, be mindful of the entirety of *Transformational Leadership* as you teach the story of Jesus washing His disciples' feet. Try to find ways to bring in some of the other characteristics.

Our children's world is very self-focused, so servanthood flies against the culture. But didn't Jesus always go against the norm of His day? Prayerfully consider how God wants you to pray for your students, present this important message so they (and you) can go into your areas of life, living out the message Jesus charged His disciples with, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (John 13:15).

Objective:

We become leaders that make a difference by following Jesus' example. Students will learn that being a Christlike leader means to treat others as Jesus did – with compassion, yet humble as a servant.

Scripture and Memory Verse:

"The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve" (Matthew 20:28a).

Early Arrival Activity: "Leading like Jesus Did"

Begin working on the Word Bank activity, "Leading like Jesus Did." This can be done as a group or individually.

Ask the students the questions printed in bold. Answers will vary, but here are some prompts, if needed.

Can anyone name a leader? (*Some students may name a teacher, the president, a parent, etc...*)

What makes them a leader? (*They are the ones in charge, they have been appointed to office, they're the boss, etc.*)

What would make someone a GREAT leader? (*Someone who is kind, listens to others, doesn't think they are better than others, etc.*)

Say: “Today we are learning about being a leader, but not just *any* leader – we are talking about being a Christlike Leader. Anybody can choose to be a leader – whether they are a good or a bad leader. But a Christlike leader is something different altogether. Listen carefully to this true story because I am going to have some questions to ask at the end.

Bible Story with Discussion: Jesus Washes the Disciples’ Feet (John 13:5-16, *NIV*)

In the Jewish custom, once a year there is a special time of celebration called “Passover.” This is a time they remember and celebrate when the Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt. All the Jews celebrated it. The celebration lasted for 8 days and ended with a feast.

It was during this time that Jesus’ disciples asked Him, “Where do you want us to go to prepare the Passover meal?”

Jesus told them to go into the city. There they would see a man carrying a jar of water. When they saw him, they were to ask what guest room he had where they could celebrate the Passover.

Now, to you and me, we might wonder how you would know which man carrying water to ask, right? Well, in those days, only the women went to the well to get water, not the men. So to see a man carrying a jar of water was quite unusual.

The disciples did as they were told, and sure enough they found the exact man Jesus told them about. Jesus told them that the man would offer a large upper room, and that is the exact room the man offered.

Before we continue on with the story, there is something that is important for you to know. If we went for a long walk in our town or city, chances are pretty good that we would be walking on a sidewalk or paved road. Maybe if you are in the country there would be grass that you walk on. This was not the case in Jerusalem during Jesus’ day. What they had were dry, dusty, sandy roads. That’s it! It wasn’t just their clothes that got dirty, but their feet would get *really* dirty!

So, to be respectful of someone’s house and hospitality, when one entered a home they would take off their sandals, sit by a bowl of water, and either they would wash their own feet or a servant would do it for them.

The Bible tells us that Jesus really loved His disciples. He wanted to show them just how much He loved them. That day, when Jesus arrived to the upper room, He did something that shocked everyone. He took off his outer clothing and wrapped a towel around His waist. He then took a basin and poured water into it.

The disciples, not knowing what to think, watched Jesus. “What in the world is He doing?” they wondered.

Jesus then carried the basin of water to the first disciple. He knelt down in front of him, took the disciple's foot, and began to wash it; then He washed the other foot. Wait a minute! This was the job of a servant! This wasn't how it was supposed to be. It was as if the pastor of your church went to your house and began cleaning the mud from your shoes!

For many minutes, the quietness lay heavy in the room as Jesus went from disciple to disciple, washing their feet, then drying them with the towel He had around His waist.

When Jesus arrived to Simon Peter, he asked Jesus with great shock, "Lord, are you planning on washing my feet?"

When Jesus told him He was, Simon Peter said to Him in horror, "You will never wash my feet!" Simon Peter couldn't imagine someone so special, the Messiah, being so humble and washing *his* dirty (and maybe stinky) feet!

Jesus told him that if He (Jesus) wasn't able to wash his feet, then Simon Peter could have no part of Jesus.

So what did Simon Peter say? "Well then, don't just wash my feet. Wash my hands and head as well!" Basically, give me a bath!

Jesus told him he didn't need a bath, because he already had one. Just his feet needed to be clean.

After Jesus had washed all the disciples' feet, he asked them if they understood what He had just done. Yes, He was their Lord and Teacher, but He had just set an example for them and told them to be willing to do that for each other.

"I'm telling you the Truth," Jesus said. "No servant is greater than his Master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends him. Now go and do to others as I have done to you."

Review Game: "Let's Think About This"

These questions refer back to the story, going a little bit deeper in what it really meant for Jesus to wash His disciples' feet.

1. **What miracle happened before the meal?** (*Jesus predicted the man carrying the jar of water.*)
2. **Why was it easy to spot the man with the water?** (*Typically, only women carried water.*)
3. **How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus washed their feet?** (*Surprised, confused, etc.*)

4. **Why do you think Simon Peter didn't want Jesus to wash his feet?** (*Humility, not wanting Jesus to do this lowly service.*)
5. **What was the purpose of Jesus washing His disciples' feet?** (*To teach them that if HE didn't come to be served but to serve others, we need to serve others as well. He was setting an example for them of what servanthood looks like.*)
6. **Name some ways YOU can be a servant like Jesus was?** (*Being helpful to someone elderly, providing a service without getting paid, stepping in to help at church, etc.*)

Activity / Craft / Science

Break out into groups of 2 or 3. Give each team/group a scenario in which they must come up with ways to be a leader in that situation.

1. Somebody brought cupcakes to school. There are twelve cupcakes, but 15 kids. How would a Christlike leader handle it? (Strategic)
2. In Sunday School class, the teacher has a really great item that she wants to give away. Every child would love to have it. What would you, as a Christlike leader, do? (Team Builder)
3. Your church is having a Community Service Workday. The kids are a part of it, and there are jobs from cleaning up trash to cleaning the bathrooms. What would you, as a Christlike leader, do? (Humble, Submissive)
4. A boy in your classroom is in a wheelchair and has a handicap that makes him look different. Everyone is afraid to be around him. . What would you, as a Christlike leader, do? (Compassionately Assertive)
5. A girl visits your church. She is rude and laughs at the music and lesson being taught. She makes everyone very uncomfortable. What would you, as a Christlike leader, do? (Clear Communicator)

Personal Challenge and Take Away Prayer

Being a Christlike leader isn't always easy. There are times we really do want what the teacher has. Sometimes we want a cupcake, even if there aren't enough to go around. There are times when we are around someone else who make us feel uncomfortable because they are different. But what makes a Christlike leader is someone who asks God to help us *be* the Christlike leader He asks us to be.

Leadership doesn't mean being the boss - it means serving, loving, putting others first, doing the right thing.

Prayer:

Jesus, You showed us how to be a good leader. Teach me how to follow You and lead like You did. In Jesus' name, amen.