

# SHINE

families  
serve

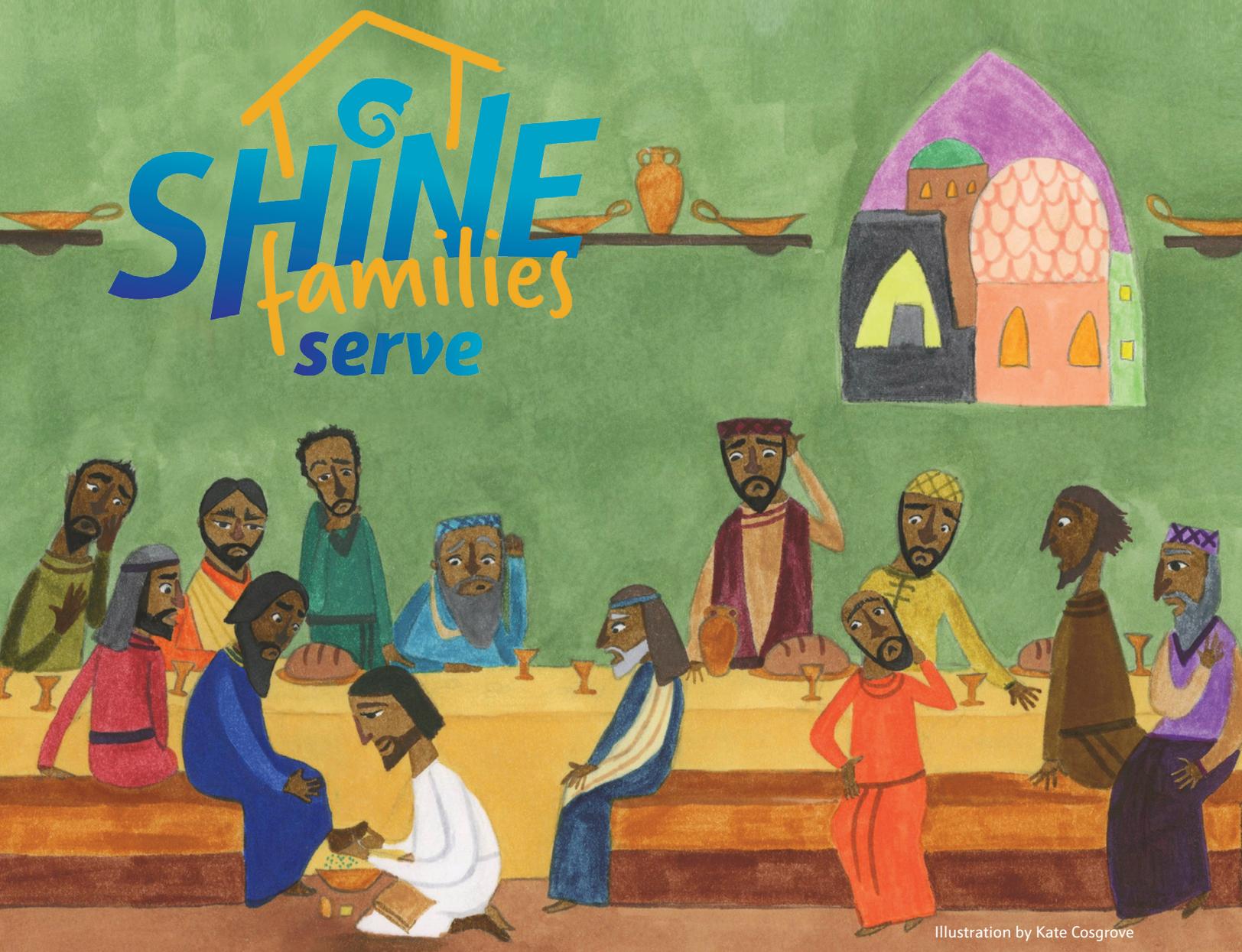


Illustration by Kate Cosgrove

## Jesus' Surprising Service

Read the story of Jesus washing his disciples' feet from John 13:1–13 or from *The Peace Table* on pages 270–271.

In Jesus' day, people walked long distances to get from place to place. Their feet often got sore and dusty.

When they visited other people's homes, the hosts would often have their servants wash the feet of the travelers. This was a practical way to help the visitors, and it also showed respect and kindness.

The disciples were surprised that Jesus was washing their feet because he was their teacher and leader and this was something that a servant would normally do. Jesus told his disciples that he wanted them to remember his example. He didn't want them to think of themselves as more important than the others.

### Talk About It!

What are some ways that we show hospitality to people who are visiting us?

Have you ever been surprised to see a leader serve others in a way you didn't expect?

What are some ways that we can show respect and kindness to others—not treating them as less important than ourselves?

SHINE  
everywhere



Illustration by Elisa Chavarri

Beloved Shine Families,

Our “growing faith at home practice” this month is Serve Together. Families who serve together grow in faith. And yet, service is really a response to God’s love for us. If we begin to think of serving others as something we “should” do, we might find ourselves a little off track.

The apostle John wrote to the church, “We love because God first loved us.” Paul wrote, “As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.”

That is a list of great qualities for a person to have, but again, they are a response to being God’s chosen ones, already holy and beloved by God.

What reminds you that you are beloved, chosen, and already holy?

I have a prayer book that opens the prayer with this: “Be still and aware of God’s presence within and all around.” And a prayer app that begins with, “Become aware of God’s loving gaze upon you.”

We’ve heard from Meredith Miller that the goal of faith formation in children isn’t creating obedient children; rather it is to be present with our children as they learn to love a God who can be trusted.

Before we do one thing, God calls us beloved children. Before we do one act of service, before we clothe ourselves with compassion and kindness, before we even love God back—God loves us and wants to be with us.

What is one way you and your family experience God’s love for you?

May the presence of this loving God be made real to your family this month.

With our love and blessing,

Shana Peachey Boshart

Shine Everywhere Project Facilitator

**We love  
because God  
first loved us.**  
—1 John 4:19 (CEB)

# Picture Book Corner

*Maria's Kit of Comfort*, written by Kathy Fry-Miller and David Doudt, was inspired by the work of Children's Disaster Service through Brethren Disaster Ministries. Volunteers bring a suitcase of specially selected toys, such as bubbles, clay, puppets, and books, to disaster sites where they set up play centers. These kits of comfort give children a variety of ways to process the trauma of living through natural disasters and other distressing events. Illustrations by Kate Cosgrove create a soothing and bright feel to the book and show Maria engaging in activities that help her express her emotions and regain hope.



You can follow the QR code to watch the authors read the book together. You will also find an article about the story behind the book's publication and an activity guide.



## Math and Many Hands

There are many helpers who work together to serve people they might never meet! One organization that helps people is Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). You likely know of many other charities that do great work and can look up facts about the way they help people.

Here are some numbers that tell the story of how people served others through MCC last year.



**39,616** comforters were sent to keep people warm.

*Do you know how many people live in your town or city? How does that number compare to the number of comforters sent?*

**41,145** hygiene kits were sent. Each kit contains 5 items: 1 toothbrush, 1 bar of soap, 1 nail clipper, 1 hand towel, and 1 comb. These kits help people stay clean and healthy.

*About how many toothbrushes do you think you would need to give everyone in your church or on your street one?*

**52,481** school kits were sent to students. Each kit contained 4 notebooks, 8 pencils, 1 ruler, 12 colored pencils, 1 eraser, 4 pens, and 1 pencil sharpener.

*How many kits would you need if you wanted to give one to everyone in your classroom?*

**5,117 LBS / 2,321 KG** of bath soap was shipped to people who need it.

*How heavy is a bag of sugar or flour in your house?  
Now can you imagine how heavy all that soap would be?*



Follow the QR code to learn more and to watch a video of Mary from South Sudan opening her own school kit.





This style of praying allows all members of the family to participate in their own way. The leader begins and ends the prayer time, leaving silences during which others can share a few words or a phrase that names something for which they are praying.

Praying is a form of service. Even when we don't know quite what to do or when a situation is beyond our control, we can still bring it before God in prayer. This can be an important way to act.

Try out this popcorn-style prayer. It is like popcorn because short, quick prayers “pop up” from the silence, like popcorn starting to pop.

## Nearby, Neighbors, News

“God, we want to ask for your help for the needs we know of **nearby**. We think of . . .”

*Popcorn prayers could focus on family, friends, coworkers, or church members.*

“We also ask for your care for and blessing on the people we know—the **neighbors** in our lives. We pray for . . .”

*Popcorn prayers could name people in your neighborhood or people you are acquainted with.*

“We remember the stories we have heard in the **news** lately. We pray for your will to be done in these situations . . .”

*Popcorn prayers for news stories that caught your attention.*

Close with “Be with all in our world who need justice and compassion, God. May they experience your love. Amen.”



## As We Gather to Eat

“God, we are grateful for this food. Thank you for the way it strengthens our bodies. Thank you that we can be together to share it. We give thanks for the many people who helped to grow the food . . .”

*Popcorn prayers might include farmers, harvesters, and those who save and sell seeds.*

“We give thanks for all who helped to bring this meal to our table . . .”

*Popcorn prayers might include truck drivers, grocery store workers, and advertisers.*

“Finally, we say thanks for those in our family who get the food ready and those who help to clean up afterwards . . .”

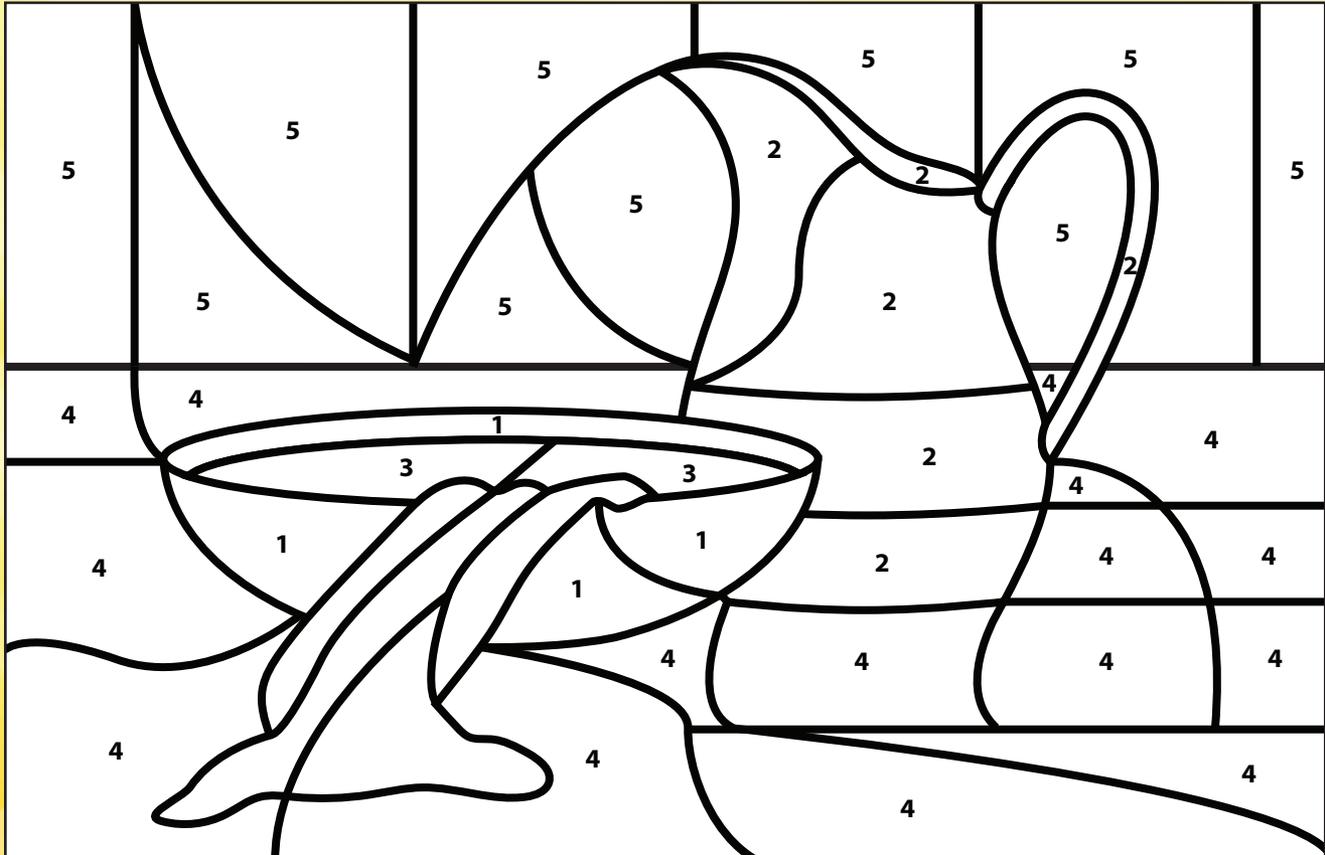
*Name those who helped cook and those who will clean up.*

Close with “Thank you, God, for the blessing of food to eat and family to share it with. Amen.”

# A Surprise!

Color the pieces of the puzzle by following the number code. When you are finished, you will see a picture that shows something from the Bible story.

NUMBER CODE	1 - Brown
	2 - Purple
	3 - Blue
	4 - Green
	5 - Yellow



## Our Feet Follow Jesus

Take a washcloth and sit in a circle. The washcloth is a symbol of service connected with the Bible story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. The person with the washcloth names one place their feet have traveled that week, saying "Our feet have gone to . . ." Ideas include school, church, and the park. Then the person tosses the cloth to another person who restates that location and adds a place their feet have taken them.

Eventually, the list will become lengthy! Make this a fun exercise and not a competition. People can chime in to help others remember the locations.

Now go around the circle and name one way that people have noticed someone serving others at one of the places they have been that week. End with "Thank you, God, for those who serve."



# Ways We Serve

Enjoy serving others as a family using the ideas on this bingo card. Add your own ideas in the blank spaces. See how many you can complete in one month. Can you do five in a row?

Before you start, decide together how you will celebrate all you accomplish. When you celebrate together, recall what happened and how it impacted your relationships with each other and the people you encountered.

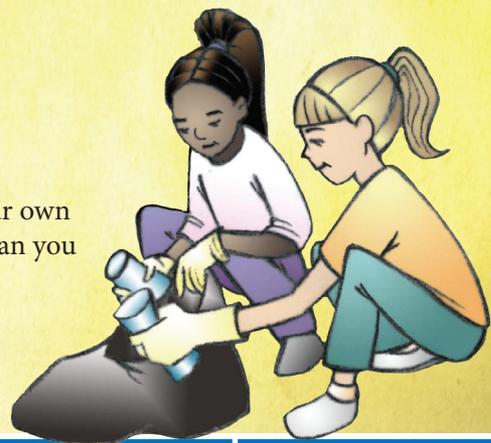


Illustration by Kimberly Bowles

S	E	R	V	E
	Write a thank-you note to the mail carrier.	Help with extra chores without being asked.	Make Valentine cards for nursing home residents.	
Leave encouraging notes around home.	Call or video chat with a grandparent.	Make a meal for a family in need.	Help shovel snow for an elderly neighbor.	Smile and hold the door for five people.
Donate warm winter clothes.	Set up a bird feeder.	We are God's beloved children.	Read a story to a younger child.	Bake cookies for a neighbor.
Return shopping carts at the store.	Say something kind to everyone today.	Fill a blessing bag for someone without a home.	Help clean up after a family meal.	Collect pet supplies for animal shelter.
	Make a craft for a friend.	Listen prayerfully for a service idea from God.	Pray for someone who needs encouragement.	Participate in a church service project.

## A Blessing for Service

Pour some water into a bowl. Take turns dipping your fingers into the bowl to make them wet. Draw a cross on the hand of the person to your left. As you do, say this blessing from Jesus to his disciples: "As the Father loved me, I too have loved you. Remain in my love" (John 15:9 CEB).

Serve one another in love.

—Galatians 5:13 (NLT)