

Opening of a New School Year

Psalm 119:105 and Psalm 31:8b

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

You have set my feet in a broad place.

Props for Object Lesson Sermon:

- Burning Easter candle in the center
- Hidden under a cloth: large Bible

Baby shoes / pair of toddler shoes / pair of school-age shoes / soccer shoes / high heels / hiking boots...

Dear children, dear young people, dear congregation! Do you want to know what's hidden under the cloth? Are you a little curious? There's a Bible and very different shoes.

The Bible contains many stories and sayings. At the very beginning, we are told that God created the world. That God also created you and me and gives us life.

We learn in the Bible that God loves us very much. God loves us so much that he came to earth to be close to us. We read in the Bible about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He helped people back then and gave His life for them on the cross. And He is our Savior and helper today, too.

The words of the Bible are powerful. They show us the way. They are like a light in the dark night. They awaken and inspire trust in Jesus Christ.

I want to read two passages from the Bible to you:

Psalm 31:9b: "O God, You have set my feet in a broad place." and Psalm 119:105: "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

Shoes – small and large shoes, high heels, soccer cleats... Which of you has the biggest shoes? What do shoes have to do with these two passages from the Bible?

This will explain to you: Both Bible passages speak of feet: "O God, You have set my feet in a broad place." and "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

We have all walked quite a long way with our feet. On average, a healthy person walks 4,000 to 5,000 steps a day. That's about 1.7 million steps in a year. Think about how many steps you've taken in your life so far? Who would have thought?

We can tell from the shoes how far our feet have already traveled.

1) Baby shoes - These are shoes for a very small child.

They represent the beginning of our life's journey. You have these or similar shoes, we all have worn them at some point. Back then, we couldn't stand on our own two feet. We were carried by our parents or pushed in strollers.

Your parents and godparents brought you to Jesus Christ. It was and is very important to them that you are with Jesus Christ. Baptism connected you to Christ.

The burning Easter candle represents Jesus Christ. Some people have a baptismal candle at home. Light it as a sign that you are connected to Jesus. – (Place baby shoes next to the Easter candle)

Jesus Christ made you children of God through baptism. And since then, He has known you and me by name. He has connected with you and me and will never forget us.

II) Pair of shoes - toddler

When you wore these shoes, you were perhaps 2 or 3 years old and were learning to walk. A little unsure at first, holding on to the chair leg or your parents' hand. And then you stood on your own two feet, discovered the world, ran and jumped around.

And Jesus Christ has not left you alone. He has walked with you, even if we don't always feel it. He truly does not leave us alone but speaks through His Word and fills our hearts with his love.

III) Pair of shoes (6 years) and older

These are the size of the feet of those who are coming to school. And these are the shoes of those who have been going to school for quite some time. They have been used to flick a stone or kick a soccer ball.

Every day, your feet will carry you to school. You will learn reading, writing, arithmetic, and much more. You will meet teachers and other children, and perhaps make new friends. Some of you will already be very excited and looking forward to school. I wish you all the best for having fun.

But perhaps some of you also have concerns: What will it be like in the new class, at university, at work? New subjects? An exam at the end of the year? Will I be able to do it?

Despite all concerns, despite all joy: The promise God has given us in His Word remains true. Jesus Christ will not leave us alone; neither day nor night. He accompanies you. He holds His hand over you. You can always turn to Him and speak with Him at any time.

Jesus himself gave us the "Our Father." With it, we can always turn to Jesus. Perhaps you can also find your own words, for example:

· "Lord Jesus, thank you that you are with me, protect me on the way to school."

· "Lord Jesus, help me with the tasks that await me today."

And we adults can greet our children in Jesus' name as they leave the house in the morning.

Bless with the sign of the cross and the words "God bless you."

We don't always behave as Jesus would have us behave. Sometimes evil thoughts enter our hearts and ugly words come out of our mouths. But even then, we should and can ask Jesus for forgiveness and change.

IV) Your feet have walked many steps. Your feet will still walk many steps. At some point, your feet will stop growing and then perhaps they will be as big as this shoe: high heels / hiking boots...

These shoes have already experienced and endured many things: They have danced happily and exuberantly; have covered many kilometers; have climbed high mountains and ridden bicycles; have bumped into rocks; have slipped and provided support. And sometimes such shoes "smell," and we leave them outside.

Jesus Christ doesn't mind. He comes to us. He walks with us. God wants us to discover the world he has given us. "God, You have set my feet in a broad place."

And God wants us to know him, to trust him, to heed his word and rely on it. For he always means well for us. "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Amen.