

# Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

## Overview



### Materials You'll Need

- construction paper
- pencils, colored pencils, crayons, or markers
- scissors
- clear self-adhesive vinyl (to act as a laminate)
- poster board
- tape



### Scriptures

Mk 6:30-45; Lk 9:10-17

### Bible Truth Objective(s)

Jesus is powerful and can perform miracles

### Behavioral Objective(s)

To teach the children that they should always say grace before their meals; to say grace before meals at home without being prompted by parents by practicing the words to use

### Memory Verse

"So they all ate and were filled." (Mk 6:42)



## Bible Knowledge

### The Signs and Miracles of Jesus

When Jesus was on earth, He performed many signs and miracles. But He did not do them to just amaze the people. All the signs and miracles reveal His purpose or character. For example, when Jesus accepted Zacchaeus' repentance, it showed the crowd who had gathered that He had come to forgive their sin. When Jesus calmed the storm, He demonstrated to His disciples that He had power over nature. Today's lesson, concerning the feeding of the five thousand, reveals several things about Jesus.

First, it shows Jesus' compassion toward the people. It was late and there were thousands of people. Jesus could just as easily have sent them on their way. But Jesus does not ignore our needs. He is concerned with every aspect of our lives, both the spiritual and physical. In contrast, the disciples asked Jesus to send the people home, thinking they were being considerate since the hour was late. But Jesus challenged them by asking if the disciples had any food to offer.

Second, it reveals Jesus as our Shepherd. The crowd, which followed Jesus and His disciples, was as pitiful as sheep without a shepherd. Sheep are easily scattered; without a shepherd they would be in grave danger. Jesus knew He was the Shepherd who could teach them what they needed to know. He would keep them from straying from God. (See Ps 23; Is 61:1; Ez 34:11-16 for descriptions of the Good Shepherd.)

Third, Jesus set a good example for all His followers to always pray to God first. Before breaking the bread and fish, the Bible records that Jesus "looked up to heaven, blessed" (Mk 6:41) and then passed out the food. Without God's power and guidance, nothing would have been possible. Even though Jesus was the Son of God, He did not take His authority for granted. He did not want to bring any glory onto Himself. By praying to God before performing this miracle, Jesus acknowledged His Father in heaven and gave all glory to Him. He understood His role on earth and did all things so that people would praise God.



## Understanding Your Students

In today's lesson about the feeding of the five thousand, there are many teachings to be learned. Although the focus for the children is to say grace before meals and give thanks to God for that blessing, we can also emphasize other things as we go through the story.

First, the young boy was willing to share his food. Certainly, he knew that the small amount of food he had was not enough to help every hungry person gathered there. But he did not hesitate to offer what little he had. That is the true spirit of sharing. The students can learn from this young boy's example. Talk

about specific situations where the students might be called upon to share their belongings. What would they do and what would they say? Mental preparation can help the students be ready when the need arises.

Second, Jesus was able to use the five loaves of bread and two fish to feed a multitude. This is because He is powerful and He had compassion on the people. The students should be reminded of the great love and power of our Lord Jesus. Even though no one, including the disciples, thought it was possible, Jesus performed a miracle to feed the hungry people. Today, Jesus is the same. There isn't anything He can't do. When we need His help, we can call on His name and He will hear us.



## Vocabulary

### **Miracle**

something amazing that no one could do except for God

### **Disciples**

the followers and believers of Jesus Christ

### **Crowd**

a large group of people gathered together



## Before You Teach

When the disciples had returned from their mission, Jesus took them away to rest. He told them to row the boat across the lake so that they could find a quiet place away from the crowd. From Jesus' instructions, we can learn several things about doing holy work.

First, Jesus recognized that physical rest was needed. He knew how important it was to take every opportunity to spread God's message, but He also realized that the tired disciples would not be very effective. They had already been on their feet all day and were probably hungry. Rest was what they truly needed. This holds true for us today. For example, there are religious education teachers who have taught for many years in the same class. But because they feel a sense of responsibility or because there is a lack of manpower, they keep doing their job, even though they may have lost their zeal. This is when Jesus wants us to take a

break and recharge, as He wanted the disciples to do. We become better at our jobs when we feel refreshed and ready to take on the tasks before us. We want to look forward to our work and not dread it.

Secondly, Jesus knew it was important to find a quiet place to rest. In order to truly have rest, we need to have peaceful surroundings. It is difficult to focus on God and understand His will if our minds are cluttered with worldly matters. When we retreat to a quiet spot, we can think about what God wants us to do. We can concentrate in deep prayer and meditate on the words of God so that they can give us strength. Just as in the example of the teacher, taking a break doesn't simply mean walking away from one's duties. If we are not teaching, that means we have more time for service in the chapel or a group Bible study. These will allow us to recharge spiritually because we are in an environment that enables us to soak in the words of God. When we feel strengthened, then we can serve Him wholeheartedly.



## Bible Story

### Jesus and His Disciples

In the last lesson, we learned that Jesus chose twelve disciples. Do you remember what the disciples did? (Allow time for students to answer.) The disciples were Jesus' helpers. They learned many things about God from Jesus. Then they would teach other people who did not know God yet. They would tell others how much God loves them and how God could help and save them. Jesus wanted many people to know God and be saved. Then those people could go to heaven one day. He knew it would be hard for Him to tell everyone all by Himself. That is why He chose these special people. Do you remember their names? (Have students volunteer. Teacher may wish to write down the names as they say them or just do a quick run-through.) In today's lesson, we are going to learn more about how the disciples helped Jesus and how Jesus performed a great miracle.

### A Great Crowd Follows Jesus

Jesus and His disciples spent every day helping people. They would heal those who were sick or help those who needed help. They would also tell people about God's kingdom. Sometimes, they had to travel from place to place so that more and more people would know about God. Even though Jesus had some helpers now, it was still a lot of work. One time, Jesus and His disciples worked so hard that they did not even have time to eat. They must have been very hungry and tired. Jesus saw that the disciples were hungry and tired so He said to them, "Come, let's go to a quiet place to rest." The disciples were glad to hear that. They had been helping people all day. They were really tired. But where would they find a quiet place to rest? They decided to get into a boat and row to a quiet spot on the other side of the lake.

The disciples and Jesus climbed into the boat and began to row it to the other side of the lake. They were probably happy to be by themselves. They could look at the water and breathe in the cool air. They couldn't wait to find a quiet place once they rowed to shore. But some people saw Jesus and His disciples get into the boat. They wanted to hear more about God. So they followed the boat and ran

along the shore to the other side of the lake. When other people saw this, they followed the crowd and began to run too. Everyone wanted to hear Jesus speak. So when the disciples finally got to the other side of the lake, there was a great surprise waiting for them. Instead of finding a quiet place, there was a huge crowd standing there. The Bible records that there were about five thousand people. That is a lot. They had run quickly along the shore and were waiting for Jesus!

What would Jesus do now? He was really tired and He knew the disciples were too. Would He tell them all to go home because He was tired? No, Jesus didn't want to do that.

Instead, Jesus got out of the boat and began to teach them about God. The people gathered around Jesus. They listened to Jesus for a long, long time. Soon it was getting dark. Now all these people were probably really hungry. Jesus' disciples began to wonder how all those people would get their dinner. It would take them a long time to walk back home from the other side of the lake.

So Jesus' disciples said, "Jesus, maybe we should ask these people to go home now. It's getting late and they need to eat."

But instead of sending them home, Jesus said, "Why don't you give them something to eat?"

Jesus' disciples did not know what to do. There were thousands of people. Imagine you are at a picnic with all the church brothers and sisters. How many hamburgers, hot dogs or sandwiches would you need? Probably a lot, more than we could count. Now, this crowd was bigger, much bigger than the church members put together. How could the disciples feed them all?

Jesus' disciples said, "It would take a lot of money to feed everyone here. And there is no place nearby to buy that much food!" They didn't know what to do!

Jesus answered them, "Does anyone in the crowd have any food? Go and find out."

After searching for a while, the disciples found a young boy who had some food. They said to Jesus, "A boy here has five little loaves of bread and two fish." But how could five small loaves and two fish feed all the people?

### Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

"Tell the people to sit down in groups on the

grass," said Jesus. What do you think Jesus was going to do? The disciples and the crowd didn't know what Jesus was going to do. But they listened to Him and sat down on the grass in groups.

After everyone was sitting on the grass, Jesus took the basket of bread and fish. He held some bread in His hands. He looked up toward heaven and prayed. What do you think Jesus was praying about? (Allow time for students to answer.) Jesus thanked God for the food. Even though there wasn't a lot, He still remembered to give thanks to God because it is God who gives us all the blessings. Then He broke the five loaves of bread and two fish into smaller pieces

### **The People Are Full**

With their baskets of bread and fish, the disciples walked up and down the rows and rows of people. Each person took some bread and fish, but after they took some, there was always more left in the baskets! It was as if the baskets never got empty.

The disciples kept giving out the bread and fish until everyone had food to eat. And everyone ate until they were full. After the disciples were sure that everyone had eaten, they put down their baskets.

They were amazed when they looked into them. Each basket was still full of bread and fish. How could that be? The young boy only had five loaves of bread and two small fish to share. But now, after everyone had eaten, there was still twelve baskets of food leftover.

All the people knew that Jesus had performed a miracle. A miracle is something amazing that only Jesus, the Son of God, could do! None of us could make five loaves of bread and two fish turn into so much food that thousands of people could eat and be full. The people really thanked God. They thanked God because they could learn from Jesus. They also thanked God that Jesus took care of them by giving them food to eat when they were hungry.

We learned from today's lesson that Jesus is powerful and can do wonderful things! He can do great miracles like make people well and feed five thousand people with just a little bit of food. We also learned that Jesus never forgot to thank God for everything. Before He passed out the food, He first prayed to God for His blessings. We should also remember to thank God for all our blessings, great or small because everything comes from God.



### Check For Understanding

1. **Why did Jesus and His disciples get into the boat?** (They wanted to row to the other side of the lake and find a quiet spot to rest.)
2. **What did Jesus and His disciples find waiting for them when they got to the other side of the lake?** (They saw a huge crowd because the people wanted to hear Jesus talk about God.)
3. **When it began to get late, what did the disciples ask Jesus?** (They asked Jesus to tell the people to go home so they could eat dinner.)
4. **How much food did the young boy have to share?** (He had five loaves of bread and two

fish.)

5. **What did Jesus do with the bread and fish?** (He thanked God and then broke the bread and fish into pieces. There was enough to feed everyone there.)
6. **Was there any food left over?** (Yes.) **How much food was left over?** (There were twelve baskets of food left over.)
7. **Jesus prayed before giving the food to the people. Jesus' prayer reminds us to pray. God is pleased to hear our prayer of thanksgiving before each meal. We should thank God for all the ways He takes care of us. What can we say to thank God?** (Encourage your students to thank God for the food by practicing together what they can say. Go through the actual prayer from beginning to end so that each student becomes familiar with what to say.)



## Life Application Story

### Thank God For This Food

The bell rang and many children walked out of their classrooms. It was lunch time at school. Juan and his best friend, Nick, stood in line to get their lunch. Juan couldn't wait for lunch today because it was his turn to buy hot lunch. His mom let him buy it sometimes. He always looked forward to these lunches. When it was their turn, the two friends each took a tray and filled it with the food they wanted. Juan picked spaghetti, corn, an apple pie and a carton of white milk. Nick also got what he wanted and they walked outside. It was a nice day so they were allowed to sit at the picnic tables outside instead of the cafeteria.

"Let's sit down here," Nick said.

"Okay," Juan said.

They found a nice, shady spot not too far from the playground. After they sat down, Nick picked up his fork and dug in.

"Boy, am I hungry," Nick said as he slurped up his spaghetti. He looked up at Juan and saw that his friend had his eyes closed. Then Juan opened his eyes and began to eat.

"Juan, why do you always close your eyes before you eat?" Nick asked.

"I am praying to Jesus," explained Juan.

"Why?" asked Nick.

"Well, at church, the teacher teaches us to pray before we eat."

"Why?" asked Nick again.

"I am thanking Jesus for giving me this good food to eat," Juan said.

"Jesus? I've heard of Him. But you got the food from the cafeteria," Nick said.

"I know, but my mom says that Jesus made the apples grow so we can make apple pie. She also said He makes corn grow so we can pick them and cook them. So we have to thank Him," Juan said.

"I never thank Jesus for my food," said Nick as he drank his milk.

"Well, my whole family thanks Jesus for food all the time. We always pray before we eat," explained Juan once again.

"Does He really hear you?" asked Nick.

"I think so. That's what my mom and dad say."

"But you just close your eyes. I don't hear you say anything," said Nick.

"My mom says it is okay to thank Jesus in my heart but at home I say it out loud."

"What do you say?" asked Nick.

"I say, 'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ we pray. Thank you Lord Jesus for the food. Amen.'"

"Hmm, it sounds hard," commented Nick.

"Yeah and sometimes I forget to do it. But now, I remember, well, most of the time," admitted Juan.

"Well, this is good food. I guess we should thank Him," said Nick.

"Yeah, and spaghetti is my favorite!" said Juan as he slurped up the noodles.

### Questions to Think About:

1. **Why did Juan close his eyes at lunch?** (Juan was thanking Jesus for the food.)
2. **Why did Juan thank Jesus for the food?** (Because Jesus is God and He makes all the food grow.)
3. **What does Juan say when he thanks Jesus?** ("In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ we pray. Thank you Lord Jesus for the food. Amen.")
4. **When can we give thanks to Jesus for our food?** (Allow students to answer.)
5. **What can we say when we want to thank Jesus (or say grace) for the food we are about to eat?** (Allow students to answer; encourage the students to each say it one time so they can practice.)
6. **Juan says he sometimes forgets to pray to thank Jesus. Do you forget sometimes? How can you remember to say grace by yourself?** (Allow students to answer; brainstorm ideas to help students.)



## Activity 1

### How Much Food is There?

Look at the picture of the boy holding the food. How many loaves of bread are there? (5) How many fish did the boy share? (2) Write the numbers in the boxes.

How many baskets of food were left over after everyone ate? Find all the baskets hiding in the picture and circle them. (12 baskets)



## Activity 2

### Thank You For the Food Place Mats

#### Materials:

1. construction paper
2. pencils, crayons and markers
3. clear self-adhesive vinyl (to act as a laminate)

#### Directions:

1. Provide each student with a piece of colored construction paper (light colors might be better for drawing on).
2. Have the students draw a picture that will remind them to thank God for all the wonderful food they eat each day. For example, they could draw a table with different foods on it, or they could draw a variety of food on the paper.
3. On the paper, also leave some room so that each student can write, "Thank you Lord Jesus for giving us all the food."
4. When the students have decorated and colored the place mat, stick a layer of the clear self-adhesive vinyl over the construction paper to make it more durable. Encourage the students to use their place mats at home to remind them to say grace before each meal. The vinyl coating will also help with easy clean up should the students have a spill.



## Activity 3

### Thank You Poem

#### Materials:

1. large poster board
2. markers
3. tape

#### Directions:

1. In this activity, the students will all help to create a "Thank You" poem.
2. Tape the poster board to the white board.
3. Brainstorm with the students the things they are thankful for (e.g. family, food, friends, Jesus, church).
4. Now help the students put their ideas into sentence form. The sentences don't need to be fancy, nor do they need to rhyme. The teacher and students can be as creative as they want to be. Below are some sample poems:

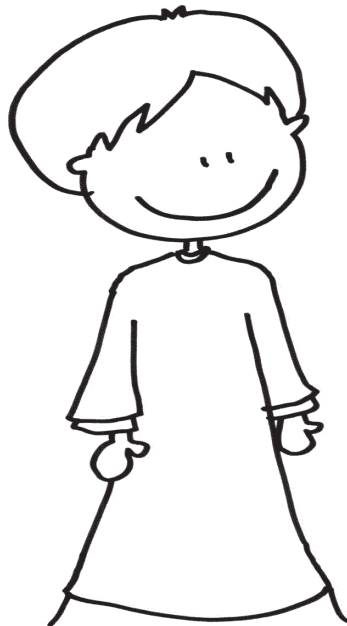
Thank you Lord, for everything.  
 For summer, fall, winter and spring.  
 For Mom, and Dad and brother and sister.  
 For friends and all the things in nature."

Thank you Lord, for giving us Jesus.  
 Thank you Lord, for my great family.  
 Thank you Lord, for loving me.  
 I will always remember your blessings.

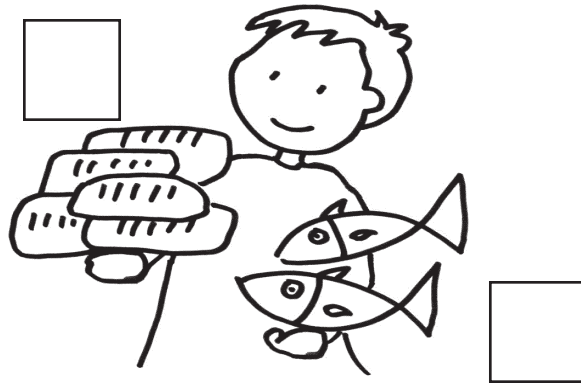
5. Once the poem is complete, the teacher can write the words on the poster board. The students can each have a turn to decorate the white spaces left on the poster board to reflect their words on the poem.
6. Hang their poem in the room so that the students are encouraged to always thank God for all the wonderful things they have in their lives.

Activity 2:1

### How Much Food is There?



How many loaves of bread are there?  
How many fish did the boy share?  
Write the numbers in the boxes.



How many baskets of food were left over after everyone ate? Find all the baskets hiding in the picture and circle them.