



JESUS FEEDS 5,000

MATTHEW 14:13-21

GOAL

▶ **To teach children about the compassion and miraculous power of Jesus, and encourage them to act in compassion toward others and in great faith towards God.**

CHARACTERS

▶ **Jesus:** He taught the people and miraculously fed them when they were hungry.

Disciples: Jesus told them to feed the hungry people despite the fact that they did not have any food.

Boy: He gave his small meal to Jesus, and Jesus turned it into a meal for thousands of people

People in the Crowd: Scripture says that 5,000 men were present, which means that if women and children had been counted, the number of those in attendance would have been much higher. They came for healing and to listen to Jesus' teaching. Jesus fed them with only five barley loaves and two fish.

MEMORY VERSE

▶ **Matthew 14:14:** When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.



OVERVIEW

▶ **Read Matthew 14:13-21:** A crowd of people hoping that Jesus would heal their sick loved one followed Jesus to where He was. As Jesus healed the sick and taught the crowd of people, it grew late. The disciples realized that they were pretty much out in the middle of nowhere, and the people must be getting hungry. They asked Jesus to tell the people to leave so they could find food in nearby villages, but Jesus told the disciples to feed all of the people there. The only food they could find was five loaves of barley bread and two fish given to them by a boy, nowhere nearly enough food for a crowd of well over 5,000 people. Jesus took the loaves and fish, thanked God for it, and gave it to the disciples to distribute to everyone there. After everyone ate enough food to make them full, there were 12 baskets of leftover food.

SUGGESTIONS

▶ Scripture informs us that the crowd was made up of 5,000 men, but women and children were also present. Some people estimate that the number of people fed was as high as 15,000 or more.

This miracle demonstrates a couple of important concepts:

1. Recognition: Out in the middle of nowhere, the disciples' idea of a solution to feeding thousands of people was to send them away into the nearby villages to find food. When Jesus told them to feed all of the people, they again leaned on their own understanding of accomplishing such tasks and quickly became discouraged. They were right in that five loaves and two fish is not enough food to feed more than 5,000 people when using our own human ability—but that amount of food was more than enough for Jesus. If they had recognized and relied on Jesus' power, they could have avoided the frustration they felt at first and instead, sat back as they watched a miracle unfold.

2. Offering: God doesn't need us to accomplish his goals on Earth, but despite our failings, He uses us to show His glory. When the Israelites wandered the desert for 40 years, God gave the people manna to eat. Jesus didn't need these little loaves and dried fish to feed everyone. He wants us to participate—He wants us to experience the blessing of glorifying God.



**PRE-LESSON
ACTIVITY**

▷ **Gone Fishin'**

Cut-out images of food items such as cake, an ice cream cone, corn on the cob, a hamburger, etc; cut-out images of five loaves of bread and two fish; a bucket; a stick, such as a broom handle; a long bit of string; and a clothespin.

Create a fishing pole by tying the string to one end of the stick. Tie the clothespin to the end of the string. Place the food images into the bucket. Have children circle around the bucket. Assign one child to stay at the bucket as the Fisher's Helper. Children take turns with the fishing pole, putting the clothespin at the end of the string into the bucket. The Fisher's Helper closes his or her eyes and pulls out a food cutout and attaches it to the clothespin. The children must retrieve the five loaves and both of the fish in order to complete the game.

**MEMORY
VERSE
MEANING**

▷ **Matthew 14:14:** At this point in Scripture, Jesus had just learned that His friend John the Baptist had died, and He and His disciples were constantly being sought by thousands of people who had heard of the great works Jesus had done. He was saddened by the news and exhausted from the work. He and the disciples sailed to a desolate area to have some time to themselves, but when they reached the shore, they saw that a multitude of people were already there waiting for Jesus. Instead of pushing off and sailing somewhere else where He might have a moment of peace, He saw their need and was moved to help them. Jesus calls us to follow His example and help others, no matter what is going on in our own lives.



**POST-LESSON
ACTIVITY**

- ▶ **Loaves and Fishes Necklace | *Supplies:*** string; dry pasta, such as penne or ziti; small, cut-out images of fish.

Have children string five pieces of pasta on the string, and color and decorate their fish cutouts. Then, tie the strings to form necklaces. The five pieces of pasta and two fish will remind them of the loaves and fishes that Jesus made into a meal for thousands of people.

.....

**TAKE
HOME**

- ▶ Now that we've read about Jesus' power, how can we grow in faith so that we can be confident that God will provide for us?

The more we put our trust in Jesus, the more confident we can become in His ability to help us. The more confident we become in His abilities, we will be much more likely to automatically turn to Jesus when we face obstacles. God will provide us with a solution or with direction in how to solve the problem. The sooner we turn our problems over to God, the less frustration we will experience in our lives.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 1



Q1a: What types of people came to hear Jesus teach?

A1: People from all social classes and cultures, including Jews and Gentiles

Q1b: Who is your favorite teacher in school?

TN: Ask students why they like this teacher so much. People loved to hear Jesus teach because He was able to relate very complicated concepts in a way that everyone could understand.

SLIDE 2



Q2a: What did Jesus command the disciples to do?

A2: He told them to feed the people.

Q2b: Have you ever helped cook a meal for your family?

TN: Cooking a meal for a few people can be tricky, but imagine making sure that 5,000 people were fed! This difficult task was complicated by the fact that the people were already hungry and the disciples didn't exactly have an abundance of ingredients from which to choose. They felt Jesus had given them an impossible job, but really, Jesus was giving them an opportunity. This was a chance for the disciples to recognize who Jesus was and rely on His power. While Jesus isn't a genie in a bottle who grants us all of our wishes, it should have occurred to the disciples to ask Jesus if He could help.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 3



Q3a: What food did the boy offer?

A3: Five barley loaves and two fish

Q3b: Have you ever shared your lunch with someone?

TN: The food this boy had with him was enough to feed him, but it certainly wasn't enough to feed all the people who had come to see Jesus that day. Knowing it wasn't enough to feed everyone, he could have kept it to ensure that he was well fed, but he gave it anyway, hoping it would help. Sometimes we may not feel like we have anything to offer, but God can do so much with us. Remember, God doesn't need us to carry out His will. Jesus could have commanded food to miraculously appear, but instead he let a boy show his faith and that He trusted Jesus to provide. It offered Jesus an opportunity to glorify God and demonstrate His power.

SLIDE 4



Q4a: What did Jesus do first with the loaves and fish?

A4: He thanked God for the food.

Q4b: Has anyone ever told you to eat something you don't like because there are starving children in the world?

TN: The loaves that the boy gave to Jesus were probably small biscuits that could have been eaten in a couple of bites, and the fish were probably small dried fish. While this was likely a common meal at the time, some people may not have been particularly happy to eat it; but they recognized that it was better than nothing. We should be thankful for the food we have to eat and all of the things we have because God provides us with everything.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 5



Q5a: How did Jesus' lessons help the disciples?

A5: The lessons helped the disciples to strengthen their faith.

Q5b: What miracle would you like to have witnessed Jesus perform?

TN: While on Earth, Jesus performed many miracles, such as turning water into wine, healing sick people, and walking on water.

SLIDE 6



Q6a: After everyone had been fed, how many baskets of food were left over?

A6: 12 baskets

Q6b: Have you ever been sick and had to visit a doctor?

TN: When you go to the doctor, they use a number of clues to determine what exactly has made us unwell, and they prescribe medicines or treatments to slowly make the pain or discomfort stop. Jesus didn't require the sick people who sought His help to give Him a detailed medical history before deciding how to heal them—He just prayed, laid His hands on them, or told them that they were healed, and it was so. This story describes not only the miracle of Jesus feeding more than 5,000 people, but also discusses His miraculous power to heal people.



MEMORY
VERSE

- ▶ **Matthew 14:14:** When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

BIG IDEA

- ▶ With Jesus, who is all-powerful, everything is possible.

CLOSING
PRAYER

- ▶ Dear God, You're amazing! You fed thousands of people, making food out of nothing! You showed us that You know our needs and take care of us. Please help us to turn to you when we need help because you are able to provide. We ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 1



Jesus was one of the most famous people in all of Israel. One day, as He was teaching, thousands of people came to listen, hanging on His every word. He spoke and taught in a way that people could understand. There were people from all social classes and cultures, including Jews and Gentiles. Yet, each of them found significance in the wisdom with which He taught. Jesus had a lot to say, and later during the day, the crowds became hungry.

SLIDE 2



"Jesus, the people are hungry!" his disciples came and told Him. "You must send the people away to find a place to stay and find something to eat!" Jesus looked at the thousands of people. It was a huge crowd. Not counting the women and children, there were 5,000 men. Then Jesus gave a strange order to His disciples: "You give them something to eat," He commanded them. The disciples were confused. How were they supposed to find enough food to feed so many people? "We don't have any food! Even if we spent all the money we have on food, there still would not be enough."

SLIDE 3



Then Jesus asked them, "What food do you have?" Andrew, one of His disciples, came up to Jesus with a young boy. Jesus looked at the boy kindly as he held up his lunch. "This boy has five barley loaves and two fish. But that is not enough for all these people." Jesus smiled in thanks as the boy handed Him his lunch. "Have the people sit down," Jesus instructed. The disciples went to work arranging the people into an orderly seating pattern.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 4



The young boy watched as Jesus held up his food and thanked God for it. Suddenly, a miraculous thing occurred. After giving thanks, Jesus started handing out the food. The more He handed out, the more food there was. God was multiplying the five barley loaves and two fish to be enough to feed all of the people.

SLIDE 5



The crowds were amazed. Once again, Jesus' disciples witnessed the power of the Son of God. Jesus was constantly illustrating and teaching them valuable lessons that would help strengthen their faith. With God, nothing was impossible, not even turning two fish and five loaves of bread into enough food for more than 5,000 people. Then, to prove God's power even more, Jesus gave the disciples instructions to gather all the leftovers.

SLIDE 6



As the disciples scooped up the leftovers, they filled 12 baskets. This was an undeniable miracle. Who could have such power? Indeed, Jesus was the Son of God. That day, thousands more people believed, repented, and put their trust in God.