

Use Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

## Unit 24 • Session 2

# Jesus Fed a Crowd

### BIBLE PASSAGE:

Matthew 14; Mark 6; Luke 9; John 6

### STORY POINT:

Jesus miraculously fed a crowd with five loaves and two fish.

### KEY PASSAGE:

Psalm 40:5

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Why did Jesus perform miracles? Jesus performed miracles to glorify God, to show He is the Son of God, and to care for people.

**INTRODUCE THE STORY**  
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**APPLY THE STORY**  
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Additional resources are available at [gospelproject.com](http://gospelproject.com). For free training and session-by-session help, visit [ministrygrid.com/thegospelproject](http://ministrygrid.com/thegospelproject).

## LEADER Bible Study

Jesus' disciples had been working hard, teaching people and healing them. Jesus called them to go away with Him to a desolate place so they could rest. By now, Jesus' popularity was so great that finding a place to be alone was difficult. When Jesus and His disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee, the crowd of people were already waiting for them on the other side.

Jesus saw the crowds, but He wasn't frustrated or angry. He didn't tell them to go away. Instead, He had compassion on them because they were lost—like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who seeks and saves the lost. (See Luke 19:10; John 10:14.)

The miracle Jesus performed that evening—feeding 5,000 men plus women and children—is the only miracle during Jesus' earthly ministry that is recorded in all four Gospels. The same God who provided manna for the Israelites in the wilderness multiplied loaves and fish to satisfy the crowd.

But Jesus' didn't intend to only meet people's physical needs. He came to satisfy their spiritual needs as well. In John 6:35, Jesus said, "I am the bread of life." He said that no one who comes to Him will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in Him will ever be thirsty again.

Jesus is the bread that came down from heaven. (See John 6:41.) God provided His Son as the perfect sacrifice to take away our sins. At the first Lord's Supper, Jesus broke bread—a symbol of His death on the cross. (See Matt. 26:26.)

As you teach kids this Bible story, help them know that God can and will provide for our needs. Kids can trust Him for their "daily bread." (See Matt. 6:11.) God met our greatest need in giving us salvation through Jesus. Will He not graciously give us all things? (Rom. 8:32)

# The BIBLE Story

## Jesus Fed a Crowd

*Matthew 14; Mark 6; Luke 9; John 6*

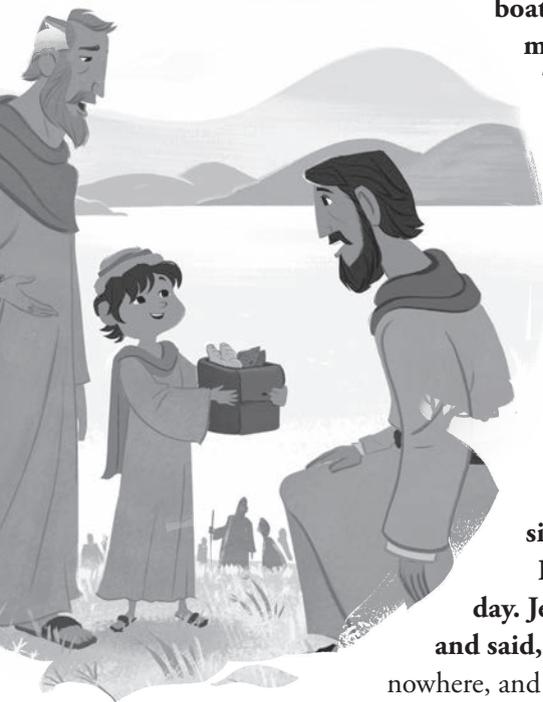
Jesus' disciples had been hard at work. They had been healing people and teaching them. So many people came and went that the disciples did not even have time to eat! **So Jesus said to them, "Come with Me. Let's go to a quiet place where we can be alone and get some rest."**

Jesus and His disciples got into a boat to cross the Sea of Galilee, but many people saw them leaving.

The people traveled by foot, and they ran ahead of Jesus. When Jesus and His disciples got to the shore, the people were already there waiting for them. Jesus saw the crowd and He cared about them because they were like sheep who needed a shepherd. So Jesus taught the people many things about God's kingdom, and He healed people who were sick.

By this time, it was late in the day. Jesus' disciples came to Him and said, "We are out in the middle of nowhere, and it's getting late. **Tell the people to go away** so they can go to the farms and villages to buy themselves something to eat."

But Jesus said, "They don't need to go away. **You give them something to eat.**"



**Jesus' disciples were confused. "We can't feed this many people," they said.**

"It would cost a whole year's pay to buy enough bread for them to eat," Philip said.

**Jesus asked them, "How many loaves of bread do you have? Go look."**

**Jesus' disciple Andrew said, "A boy here has five loaves and two fish, but what good will that do for so many people?"**

Jesus told the disciples to instruct everyone to sit down. So all the people sat down in big groups on the grass.

**Jesus took the five loaves of bread and the two fish. He looked up to heaven, and then He blessed the bread. He broke it into pieces and gave it to the disciples. He also divided up the fish. The disciples passed out the food to the people, and everyone ate until full.**

Then Jesus told the disciples to collect any leftover food. The disciples collected 12 baskets full of pieces of bread and fish. **Jesus fed about five thousand men that day, plus women and children.**

*Christ Connection: By feeding the five thousand, Jesus provided for the physical needs of the crowd. The next day, Jesus called Himself the bread of life. (John 6:35) Only Jesus is able to satisfy our souls forever by providing forgiveness, peace with God, and eternal life.*

## **Bible Storytelling Tips**

- **Use gestures:** Look up as you tell about Jesus looking to heaven, use hand motions to mirror Jesus' breaking bread, and extend arms as Jesus distributed bread and fish.
- **Use props:** Position 12 baskets at the front of the room. Emphasize that everyone in the crowd ate until full, and the disciples collected 12 baskets of leftovers.

# INTRODUCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Jesus Fed a Crowd

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Matthew 14; Mark 6; Luke 9; John 6

**STORY POINT:** Jesus miraculously fed a crowd with five loaves and two fish.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Psalm 40:5

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why did Jesus perform miracles? Jesus performed miracles to glorify God, to show He is the Son of God, and to care for people.

## Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to talk about how they behave when they are really hungry. Do they get cranky when they are hungry?

**SAY** • We all need food to live. When we don't have food, we often begin to feel crabby and upset. Today we will learn about a time many people were growing very hungry. That sounds like a recipe for disaster! But we'll learn how Jesus provided for them.

## Activity page (5 minutes)

- "A Simple Feast" activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete the "A Simple Feast" activity page. Direct the kids to circle two foods they would choose if they were going to plan a feast with just two kinds of food. Invite them to compare their answers with one another and explain their choices.

**SAY** • When I think of a feast, I usually imagine lots of food of many different varieties. Today we will learn about a feast that had only two foods: bread and fish. Would you be impressed by that kind of feast?

## Session starter (10 minutes)

### OPTION 1: Hot loaf

Instruct the kids to sit in a circle. Provide one kid with a beanbag, paper wad, or small ball. Tell him to imagine it is a hot loaf of bread fresh from an oven. Play music or sing a song. While the music plays, the kids will pass the “loaf” around the circle. At random intervals, stop the music. The kid holding the “loaf” must say how much bread she could eat and then sit out the rest of the round. Play as time allows or until one kid remains.

**SAY** • One loaf of bread might be enough for all of us to eat, but do you think five loaves would be enough for more than 5,000 people? No way! Today we will learn about a time Jesus used five loaves to miraculously feed thousands and thousands of people.

### OPTION 2: Fish in the sea

Provide each kid with two chenille stems. Show the kids how to loop the chenille stems around and twist each together to form two simple “Christian fish” or ichthys (ICK-thoos) symbols. Discuss how many of the kids like to eat fish. Ask if they would rather eat bread, fish, or both.

**SAY** • Some people love to eat fish, and other people don’t like it at all. Today we will hear about a time Jesus fed thousands of people with just two fish and five loaves of bread! How do you think He did that?

## LOW PREP

- beanbag, paper wad, or small ball
- music

- chenille stems, 2 per kid

## Transition to teach the story

# TEACH the Story



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## Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

## Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire

*[Leader enters wearing business casual attire and a hands-free telephone headset.]*

**LEADER** • Hi there. Welcome back to Graceful Getaways.

I suppose you aren't here to book a trip this week either? That's OK. Now might not be a great time to travel. I just heard about a crazy news report.

Apparently, yesterday evening a non-stop, cross-country flight had a bit of an emergency. Somehow, the meals that were served on board had been mishandled. Everyone who ate the fish became violently ill—even the crew! Thankfully, a former pilot on board didn't eat, and he was able to safely land the plane. Some people were calling it a miracle. Either way, it was good that no one got hurt.

But you know, this story reminds me of another time many people ate fish. The story I'm thinking of doesn't involve any mishandled fish or foodborne

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

illness. But it does include a real miracle done by Jesus. Let me tell you about it.

### Big picture question (1 minute)

**LEADER** • Our big picture question is all about Jesus' miracles. *Why did Jesus perform miracles? Jesus performed miracles to glorify God, to show He is the Son of God, and to care for people.* A miracle is something amazing done with God's power that would normally be impossible. Jesus' miracles showed love by healing and saving people. His miracles glorified God by proving His power and goodness. They also showed that Jesus is the Son of God because no one else could have done what He did. Let's learn about another miracle now.

### Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

• Giant Timeline

**LEADER** • Jesus traveled all over Israel. He healed people, taught about God, and performed many other miracles. Last week, we learned that **Jesus calmed a storm to show the disciples He is God.** This week, we will learn about a time Jesus cared for people by providing a big meal for a lot of hungry bellies. Our story is called "Jesus Fed a Crowd."

### Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 14; Mark 6; Luke 9; John 6. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Jesus Fed a Crowd."

• Bibles  
• "Jesus Fed a Crowd" video  
• Big Picture Question Poster  
• Bible Story Picture Poster  
• Story Point Poster

**LEADER** • Sometimes I think about how frustrated the disciples probably felt at the start of this story. They were tired, hungry, and trying to get a break from the crowd of people who all followed Jesus. When they saw the huge crowd waiting for Jesus on the other side of the Sea of Galilee, they probably had a lot of anger bubbling up inside them. I know I would have.

But how did Jesus respond? The Bible tells us that He saw them and felt compassion. He knew that the crowd was filled with people who were like lost sheep. Jesus is the Good Shepherd, and He wanted to take care of the people.

Now think back to the disciples again. As it got later and later, they finally had a chance to get away from the crowd by sending them to go get food. If I had been one of the disciples when Jesus told me to give them food, I might have lost my temper. If being tired, hungry, and surrounded by strangers weren't irritating enough, now Jesus was asking the disciples to do something that was essentially impossible. But it was only impossible for them. Nothing is impossible for God.

Jesus didn't say, "Don't worry, I'm going to do a miracle to feed everyone." Instead, He helped His disciples take on the challenge a little bit at a time. First, they found what little food was available. Then, they helped get the whole crowd seated. Next, they passed out the food bit by bit. It's possible they kept expecting the food to run out after each person. But by the end, they had gathered more in leftovers than they had to begin with! **Jesus miraculously fed a crowd with five loaves and two fish.**

## Christ connection

**LEADER** • In a way, this can help us see what following Jesus can be like. We won't usually know ahead of time what God's plan for us is. Sometimes we might feel frustrated or overwhelmed. But we can trust Jesus each step of the way. His plans are perfect. He will help us push through and obey.

By feeding the five thousand, Jesus provided for the physical needs of the crowd. The next day, Jesus called Himself the bread of life. (John 6:35) Only Jesus is able to satisfy our souls forever by providing forgiveness, peace with God, and eternal life.

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

## Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the "Unit 24, Session 2" questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about why some people don't have enough food to eat. Guide them to discuss ways we can help meet people's needs and trust God to meet ours.

• "Unit 24, Session 2" Questions from Kids video



## Missions moment (3 minutes)

Display the photos from the "Missions Work in Myanmar" printable. Point out the country of Myanmar (next to Thailand) on the world map, and invite volunteers to come read the descriptions on the cards from the printable.

• "Missions Work in Myanmar" printable  
• world map

**LEADER** • Missionaries are helping people in Myanmar to understand who Jesus is. They want the people to understand the miracles that Jesus did and how much He loves them. **Jesus miraculously fed a crowd with five loaves and two fish.** Only Jesus, the one true God, can do that!

Close in prayer for missionaries in Myanmar and any whom

your church supports.

### **Key passage (5 minutes)**

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Psalm 40:5. Then sing the key passage song.

**LEADER** • God's works and plans are good. Everything He does is right. We can trust Him to meet our needs and keep all His promises.

### **Sing (4 minutes)**

**LEADER** • Jesus didn't require that His disciples figure out the solution to the problem of not having enough food. Instead, He took things just as they were and used the situation to do something wonderful.

Sing together "Just As I Am."

### **Pray (2 minutes)**

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

**LEADER** • Father, thank You that Jesus is in control of all things. Help us trust Him even when we don't know what His plans will be. Give us courage to obey at all times. Give us wisdom to see how we can be a part of His plans for the world. We know that You are good and will meet our needs. Amen.

### **Dismiss to apply the story**

• Key Passage Poster  
• "None Can Compare with You (Psalm 40:5)" song

• "Just As I Am" song

## The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



**God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



**We sinned.** Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



**God provided.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



**Jesus gives.** Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



**We respond.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

# APPLY the Story



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## Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- index cards
- pen

Write each word or phrase of the key passage on a separate index card. For larger groups, you may wish to make more than one set. Mix up the cards and distribute them among the kids. Challenge the kids to see how quickly they can arrange the cards in the correct order.

**SAY** • Psalms is a collection of songs written by many different people over many years. God's work is amazing, and He does many miracles. Jesus is God the Son, and He did many miracles too, including dying for our sins and rising again. ***Why did Jesus perform miracles? Jesus performed miracles to glorify God, to show He is the Son of God, and to care for people.***

## Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970, optional)

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help kids find one of the accounts of Jesus' feeding five thousand. (*Matthew 14; Mark 6; Luke 9; or John 6*) Discuss the four gospels. Remind the kids that each gospel tells the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, each from a slightly different perspective. Remind kids that all four are perfectly true.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Why had Jesus and His disciples crossed over the Sea of Galilee? (*to be alone, Matt. 14:13*)
2. What did the disciples want to do with the hungry crowd of people? (*send them away to buy their own food, Matt. 14:15*)
3. How many baskets full of leftovers did the disciples gather? (*12, Matt. 14:20*)
4. What does this story show about Jesus? *Guide kids to think about the compassion Jesus shows. Jesus wants to meet the needs of people. He met their physical needs by healing them and feeding them, but also meets spiritual needs. Jesus taught about God before dying on the cross and rising again. Jesus' work made the way for us to be forgiven and have eternal life with God.*
5. Why did Jesus call himself the bread of life? *Guide kids to think about the role of bread in Old Testament stories. Remind them about the manna God provided and the significance of the unleavened bread at Passover. Help them see that, just as bread represents a basic necessity—food—Jesus is necessary to have spiritual life with God.*
6. How can we learn to trust Jesus more? *Guide kids to discuss ways we can grow in faith, such as studying the Bible, gathering together as a church, praying, and even fasting. Help kids understand what those disciplines are and how we do them.*

**SAY • Jesus miraculously fed a crowd with five loaves and two fish.** Jesus met the physical needs of the crowd by satisfying their hunger. He will meet all our spiritual needs. He satisfies our soul, provides forgiveness, and promises eternal life.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

- index cards
- pen
- cooking pot
- bowl
- pictures from the Internet (optional)

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment found in Teach the Story.

## Activity choice (10 minutes)



### OPTION 1: A shared meal

Before the session, write each of the following ingredients on a separate index card: *catfish*, *noodles*, *fish sauce*, *fish paste*, *ginger*, *banana stem*, *lemon grass*, *onions*, *garlic*, and *chickpeas*. Consider writing a brief description of what the item is or even finding pictures online to show the kids. Fold the cards and put them into a bowl.

During the session, invite the kids to sit in a circle. Place the cooking pot in the middle. Pass around the bowl and invite kids to choose an index card, read the ingredient, and add the card to the cooking pot.

**SAY** • These ingredients we added to the cooking pot make a dish called *mohinga*. Missionaries in Myanmar often make and share food with others to build relationships and share the gospel.

**Jesus miraculously fed a crowd with five loaves and two fish.** Jesus shared many meals with all kinds of people. He ate and talked about who He is and how He loved them. We can do that right where we are too! You can invite friends to dinner or a church potluck. That's a great way to show Jesus' love and live on mission.

### OPTION 2: More than enough

Ask the kids to sit in a circle. Provide one kid with a sheet of brown construction paper. Instruct her to tear off a small amount and pass the rest of the sheet to her right. Each kid will follow suit, tearing off a small bit and passing the rest. Count how many times the single sheet can go around the circle before it is all torn.

**SAY** • It doesn't matter how small of a piece you tear off,

## LOW PREP

- brown construction paper, 1 sheet

eventually, the sheet of paper would be gone. **Jesus miraculously fed a crowd with five loaves and two fish.** No matter how much of the bread or fish people ate, there was always more left for the next person. The Bible tells us that at the end of the meal, the disciples collected the leftover scraps. It was more than they had when they started!

In a way, this is like Jesus. No matter how many people we share Jesus with, He is always more than enough. His power never runs out, so there is no one whom Jesus cannot save. Everyone who trusts in Jesus for salvation will have eternal life with God. Jesus is the greatest treasure and the best provision we can have. And because He is more than enough, sharing His love will never decrease the amount of love He still has for us.

### **Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)**

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

- pencils and crayons
- paper
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.