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Jesus Feeds the 5,000

Scripture: John 6:1-15

Theme: Jesus is the Bread of Life

1st-3rd Grade (Ages 6-8)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

Lesson Overview: Jesus as the Bread of Life Introduction (Greeting & Warm-Up) Start with a simple song or prayer to welcome kids with joy. Ask: "What's your favorite food? Why?" Let them share briefly, then say, "Today we'll learn about Jesus who is like the best food ever, he gives us life!" Story: Jesus Feeds the 5,000 (John 6:1-15) - Begin by showing a picture or drawing of Jesus with a small loaf of bread and fish (even if it's just a toy or handmade). Explain that a crowd of people (5,000!) came to hear Jesus teach, but they were hungry. - Jesus knew they needed food. He took a few loaves and fish, gave thanks (like we pray), and then gave them to His disciples to share. The food multiplied, there was enough for everyone! The disciples packed up what was left, and Jesus walked away. - Key Point: Jesus didn't just feed their bodies, He showed them He's the one who gives life, just like bread keeps us alive! Even when things feel empty, Jesus is our source. Application & Discussion - Ask: "What was one thing you learned about Jesus today?" (Wait for answers, then say: "Jesus is like the best bread, He's always there for us, even when we don't have enough!") - Share a simple challenge: "This week, tell someone you trust how much Jesus loves you. It's like sharing the best bread!" (Keep it light: "Like Jesus sharing His loaves!") - End with a closing prayer or verse (John 6:35: "I am the bread of life... whoever comes to Me shall never hunger"). Volunteer Tips: - Use a "miracle" craft (e.g., cut-out bread shapes to "multiply" with stickers) or act out the feeding. - Keep transitions short, kids this age need movement breaks! - Praise their participation: "I love how you saw how Jesus cares for everyone!" Optional reflection: children can draw a picture of Jesus helping their friends, then share one way they can help someone else this week. This extra activity supports the lesson's theme and gives teachers a simple, lowprep option for extending the discussion.

Bible Story

Jesus Feeds the 5,000

A long time ago, Jesus was walking through a crowded place with his disciples. The people saw him and wanted to meet him, so they followed him. When they came to the other side of the sea, they had walked far enough that Jesus didn't see them coming. The disciples asked Jesus, "Teacher, send these people away so they can find food in the wilderness." Jesus answered, "You give them something to eat." His disciples laughed because they didn't have any money or food, only five loaves of bread and two fish.

Jesus took the small food that his disciples had and gave thanks to God for it. Then he gave the bread to his disciples, who passed it around to everyone. The people ate, and they all had enough to fill their bellies. There were about 5,000 men (plus women and children), and still, there was food left over! Jesus did something amazing, that day, he turned a little food into a big meal.

When the people saw how much food there was, they realized Jesus could really work miracles. They wanted to make him king and take him with them to the next village. But Jesus knew what he wanted to do. He told his disciples to take the leftovers in baskets and then send the people home. Jesus wanted them to keep trusting him, not just for food, but for everything they needed.

This story shows us that Jesus cares for us even when we don't have enough. Just like he gave his followers food, he provides for us in other ways, like strength, love, and even miracles, when we trust him. We can learn to depend on God, even when things seem small or hard. What's one way we can trust God today?

Key Verse

John 6:35 , 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to Me will never go hungry.'

God is like a big, never-ending snack! Imagine you have a plate full of the yummy, delicious food you love, maybe cookies, pizza, or fruit. Even when you eat all of it, God is like having a whole new plate waiting for you every time. Jesus says, "I am the bread of life," meaning He gives us everything we need to grow strong, happy, and full of love. When we trust in Him, we won't ever be hungry for God's goodness, He's always there to give us more! Jesus feeds our hearts too! Not just our stomachs, Jesus is like a superhero who feeds our hearts! When we read the Bible, pray, and talk to God, we feel full of joy and kindness inside. Just like you wouldn't eat a sandwich and still feel hungry for a second one, God doesn't want you to feel empty, He wants you to ask for more of His love! When you feel sad or lonely, remember: God is always there to give you comfort, just like He gave His last loaf of bread to His friends on a very long journey. How can we "eat" God's love? The best way to "eat" Jesus' bread is to come to Him every day, just like you might go to the table for a snack! You can: - Pray (talk to God like you talk to a best friend). - Sing or dance to His songs (like praise songs). - Share kindness with others (God loves when we help people!). Even when you don't feel very hungry, Jesus says you can still come to Him, He won't turn you away! The more you spend time with Him, the more full you'll feel in your heart. A fun experiment! Try this: Grab an apple or your favorite snack, and imagine God is the one who made it. Now, pretend to "eat" it slowly, what does it taste like? How does it make you feel? Jesus is like that, He gives us His love in many ways, and every time we choose Him, we get to taste His goodness! Remember: God's love is like an endless sandwich, you can keep taking bites all day long!

Activities

Activity 1:

Students use a simple sensory activity to explore how Jesus multiplied food, teaching them to share what they have and trust God.

1. Draw the Background: Give each child a paper plate and tell them to draw a big body of water at the bottom half. Use blue paper or blue crayons to help them visualize the sea.
2. Add the Food: Give each child a few toy bread slices and a toy fish to glue onto their plate near the water. Encourage them to draw waves and fish swimming.
3. Label with Trust: Fold a small piece of paper and write "Jesus fed the crowd with just five loaves and two fish!" (John 6:9). Let them glue this near their food.

4. Draw Jesus: Have them draw Jesus standing above the water, smiling, holding a loaf of bread in His hands. Encourage them to write "Trust God with what little you have!"
2. "Miracle in a Bag" (Sensory Story & Act)
6. Tell the Story: Read John 6:1, 15 in a fun, dramatic way. Ask, "What happened when Jesus gave the disciples just five loaves and two fish?"
7. Small Group Sharing: Put 3, 5 goldfish crackers and 5 pretzel sticks in a paper bag. Have each group share one cracker and one pretzel stick between them.
8. Discuss Miracle: Ask, "Did we have enough for everyone? How can we trust God like Jesus did?" Write "Jesus multiplied food to share with everyone!" on a paper heart for them to keep.
9. Act It Out: Have them act like the crowd by taking turns sharing one cracker and one pretzel stick, then placing the extras in a group bowl to "miraculously multiply." Say, "God gives us enough when we trust Him!"
10. Both activities are simple, visual, and encourage discussion about trusting God with small amounts, just like Jesus did! Let me know if you'd like adjustments.

Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions for young learners (ages 6, 8) about Jesus Feeding the 5,000 (John 6), designed to spark imagination, reflection, and real-life connections:
- What Would You Do If You Had Only a Few Food Items to Share with a Big Group?
- Jesus had only a little boy's lunch, just a few loaves of bread and fish, but He used them to feed thousands! Imagine if you had something small, like a single cookie or a handful of crackers, and you wanted to share with your friends. What would you do? Why do you think Jesus didn't give up when the food seemed too little? How can you trust that God can use even the smallest things to help others, just like He did in the story?
- (Application: Think of a time when you shared something with someone who needed it. How did it feel? What does it teach you about trusting God with what we have?)
- If You Were One of the Followers Walking to Jesus, What Would You Have Wanted to Ask Him Before You Arrived?
- The disciples and Jesus had already been walking for a long time before the crowd gathered. If you were there, what might you have wanted to talk to Jesus about? Maybe you wanted to know if He could really help the hungry people, or if He would still be kind to you after all that time. Jesus is always ready to listen, how can you ask Him today about something you're worried about or excited about?
- (Application: Write down one question you have about God or faith. You don't have to know the answer right away!)
- What Would You Do If You Had Extra Food at Home and You Saw Someone Else Needing It?
- In the story, there were leftovers after the meal, some bread and fish! What would you do if you had extra snacks or treats and saw a friend who didn't have anything to eat? Maybe you'd offer to share, or ask your family if you could help them too. Jesus taught us that sharing is an act of love. How can you be kind like that in your own life?
- (Application: Brainstorm one small way you can help someone else this week, like sharing a toy or donating something to a food drive.)
- Why Do You Think Jesus Walked on Water? How Does That Help Us Understand His Power?
- After feeding the crowd, Jesus walked across the lake to get away from them! If you could walk on water, what would you do? Maybe you'd play games or explore places you couldn't reach by boat. Jesus' power isn't just about miracles, it's about trusting Him to take care of you, even when things seem impossible. When have you felt scared or alone, but then God helped you? How did that feel?
- (Application: Draw or describe a time when you felt God was with you, even in a big or small way. What does that remind you about His love for you?)

Prayer Focus

Here's a simple and heartfelt prayer for your early elementary class, inspired by Jesus feeding the 5,000: --- "Dear God, Thank You for being the best Provider. When Jesus saw so many hungry people, He had only a few loaves and fish, but He took care of them with His love. Just like Jesus turned a little food into enough for everyone, You take care of our families, friends, and even the smallest things we need each day. Help us remember to trust You, even when we don't have enough. Teach us to share and be kind, just like Jesus showed kindness to everyone. Amen!" --- This prayer keeps it warm, relatable, and easy for kids to follow. You could even act it out with hand motions (e.g., stretching arms wide for "enough food") to make it engaging! Would you like any adjustments?

>> Missions Spotlight

In parts of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, hunger is a daily reality. Missionaries who run food programs share that Jesus is the Bread of Life, He feeds both our bodies and our souls. Organizations like Compassion International combine physical and spiritual care.

-> To the Cross

Jesus took five loaves and two fish and fed 5,000 people. Then He said, 'I am the Bread of Life. Whoever comes to Me will never go hungry.' At the cross, Jesus' body was broken like bread so that we could be fed with eternal life.