

## Jesus Provided Bread from Heaven

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; John 6:1-14

**MAIN POINT:** Jesus fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish.

**KEY PASSAGE:** John 20:31

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why did Jesus perform miracles? Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.

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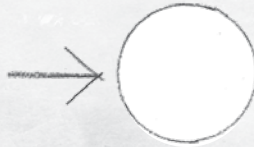
**SMALL GROUP OPENING**  
(10–15 MINUTES)

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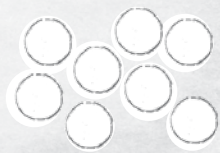
**LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY**  
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**SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES**  
(25–30 MINUTES)

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## 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. 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. God was clearly at work. 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 the 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 sin. 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)



**MINISTRY GRID**  
training made simple

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# The BIBLE STORY

## Bible Storytelling Tips

## Jesus Provided Bread from Heaven

*Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; John 6:1-14*

• **Use props:** As you tell the story, stand in front of the kids as Jesus might have stood before the large crowd. Show a few pieces of bread and two fish to emphasize it was not enough to feed everyone.

• **Use sound effects:** Set the scene by playing a recording of waves along the shore. Perhaps dim the lights to indicate evening.

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 they were 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, friendship with God, and eternal life.*



**WANT TO  
DISCOVER  
GOD'S WORD?  
GET  
ADVENTURE!**

Invite kids to check out this week's devotionals to discover Jesus' disciples believed feeding 5,000 men, plus women and children, was too hard. Jesus showed He has the power to do anything! (Jer. 32:27) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out [www.lifeway.com/devotionals](http://www.lifeway.com/devotionals).

# Small Group OPENING

**SESSION TITLE:** Jesus Provided Bread from Heaven

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**KEY PASSAGE:** John 20:31

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why did Jesus perform miracles? Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.

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## 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. As kids arrive, ask them about what they usually eat for lunch at school. Do they pack their own lunch or buy lunch at the school cafeteria? What are their favorite lunchtime foods?

**SAY** • Today we will be learning about another miracle Jesus did. This miracle had to do with feeding many people with food brought by one boy. What do you think people might have eaten for lunch back in Jesus time?

## Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “Lots of Loaves” activity page. Ask the kids to count the number of loaves of bread they see.

**SAY** • In our story today, we will hear how Jesus caused a small amount of bread to become lots and lots of bread. Things are not always as they seem, especially when God’s power is involved!

- “Lots of Loaves” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

## Session starter (10 minutes)

### OPTION 1: Bread toss

Invite each kid to pick a partner. Give each pair of kids a dinner roll. Kids will start facing each other about one step apart. The kid with the roll will toss it to her partner. If he catches it, both will take one step back and toss again. Each time the partner successfully catches the roll, the kids will take one step apart. If they drop the roll, they must sit down. The team that is farthest apart when they sit wins.

**SAY** • In our game, each time you passed the bread, the space between you and your partner grew. In our Bible story, we will learn that each time the bread was passed, the amount of bread grew! How can that be possible?

### OPTION 2: Fish fling

Form two teams of kids. Invite the kids to line up at one end of the room. Place a basket about five feet in front of each line. Give each kid three fish-shaped crackers or toys. When you say “go,” the first kid in both lines will toss his fish trying to land it in his basket. After he has thrown his fish, he will move to the back of the line. The kid behind him will then toss her fish and move to the back of the line. The game ends when both teams have thrown all their fish. The team with the most fish in their basket wins.

**SAY** • Today we will learn a story about fish filling up a basket. What do you think could happen to make fish fill up a basket?



• toy dinner rolls or paper wads

• fish-shaped crackers or small toys, 3 per kid  
• baskets, 2

## Transition to large group

# Large Group LEADER

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## Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins.

## Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire

*[Large Group Leader enters wearing colorful workout clothes and a helmet. His or her face has “war paint” patterns across both cheeks.]*

**LEADER** • *[Speak loudly and with high energy.]* YEAH!

LET’S GO! Welcome, everyone! I am so glad you found your way back to the Mud Warriors training course. I just finished a great workout. I almost slipped on the pole hop section, but thankfully I was able to hang on a little longer and my teammate lowered the next platform for me to stand on. I would have fallen right into the pit, and that’s never fun. No one likes their britches full of sloppy mud! That was a good enough reason for me to take a break for some refueling.

Unfortunately, I was just about to eat my lunch when I realized I didn’t pack one today! I just completely forgot. I was so pumped to get back here

and practice the course, I didn't realize that I left home without food for the day. My teammates were kind enough to share their lunch with me, so that's good, but I felt pretty silly at first.

You know, it sounds strange, but that actually reminds me of a Bible story. It's about a large crowd who did not have food to eat, and a boy who shared his lunch with them all. Of course, one boy's lunch normally wouldn't be enough, but that's where Jesus' miracle came in.

### **Big picture question (1 minute)**

**LEADER** • Remember, a miracle is something done by God's power that is normally impossible. Jesus did lots of miracles while He was on earth. Our big picture question helps us think through the purpose of Jesus' miracles. Lets say it together: *Why did Jesus perform miracles? Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.* Right on!

### **Giant timeline (1 minute)**

**LEADER** • We learned last week that **Jesus' first miracle was to turn water into wine.** Jesus was at a wedding feast, and the people did not have any wine left. He told men to fill large jars with water and serve from those jars. The water turned into wine through God's amazing power. This week we will see another part of God's power in Jesus' life. Our story is called "Jesus Provided Bread from Heaven." Sounds pretty interesting! I can't wait to learn more about it!

• Giant Timeline



- Bibles
- “Jesus Provided Bread from Heaven” video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster

## Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; John 6:1-14. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jesus Provided Bread from Heaven.”

**LEADER** • Wow! Can you imagine seeing that small lunch feed over 5,000 people? The disciples had been working very hard; they were tired and hungry, and they wanted Jesus to send people away to find food. Instead of doing that, Jesus asked the disciples to take on one more task: find food for the people to eat. And I think it’s hard to climb the rope wall when my hands are covered in slippery mud!

Feeding 5,000 people is a job that seemed impossible. When the disciples searched the crowd, all they found were five loaves of bread and two fish. It was the small amount of food one boy had brought for lunch. I bet the disciples thought Jesus would have no choice but to send the people away now that they could show Him there wasn’t enough food. Or was there?

Jesus held up the food and said a prayer blessing it. He began passing it around and somehow, someway, they just ... kept ... passing ... more! When everyone had eaten as much as they wanted, they had more leftover than what they started with. Whoa! **Jesus fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish.**

## Christ connection

**LEADER** • Jesus’ miracles were like a sign to the world, pointing out His identity. *Jesus performed miracles*

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

*to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.* This particular miracle also showed something else about Jesus. In addition to Jesus' power, He has compassion for people. It would have been fair for Jesus to say, "I'm done teaching for awhile. I want to take a break, so everyone go find food, eat, and come back later." But instead He fed them. He met their need. In a similar way, God would have been perfectly just to allow all of us to die in our sin and be separated from Him forever. Instead, He sent Jesus to meet our greatest need: our need for salvation. Jesus died on the cross for our sin and rose again on the third day so that we could live with God forever. That's the best miracle I know!

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

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together John 20:31.

**LEADER** • Jesus is the only One who can feed 5,000 people with just five loaves and two fish. Jesus is also the only One who can forgive our sins and bring us back to God. *Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.* The writers of the Gospels wrote down His miracles so we could believe in Jesus and be saved!

Lead boys and girls in singing "Life in His Name."

- Key Passage Poster
- "Life in His Name" song

### **Discussion starter video (4 minutes)**

**LEADER** • Do you know the difference between what you need and what you want? As you think about that question, we are going to watch a quick video.

Show the "Unit 23, Session 2" discussion starter video. Ask

- "Unit 23, Session 2" discussion starter video

your kids which of the things the kid actually needed. Why did the kid keep saying “I *need* this” if they were not really needs? Do you ever think you need something when you actually just want it?

**LEADER** • Jesus taught about trusting God to provide for our needs. (*See Matt. 6*) In our story today, Jesus demonstrated His power and desire to give people what they need. We still face difficult times in life. We may have moments where we aren’t sure how God will provide for us, but Jesus has already provided what we need most of all: forgiveness of sins. Even in difficult times we can trust that our salvation in Jesus is secure. There’s no reason to worry when you trust that your future is safe with God.

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

• “I Will Stand” song

**LEADER** • Let’s praise Jesus for providing for us. Sing together “I Will Stand.”

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

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

**LEADER** • Father, thank You for sending Jesus. Thank You for the salvation He provided through His death and resurrection. Help us trust You for all that we need. Help us love You most and obey You more each day. Amen.

### **Dismiss to small groups**

## 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.

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## Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- fish-shaped cutouts
- paper clips
- wooden dowels
- string
- magnet

Before the session, make a few fishing rods using wooden dowels, string, and magnets. Tie one end of the string to one end of the dowel rod. Tie the other end of the string to the magnet. Depending on the size of your group, you may want to make more than one. Then write each word or phrase of the key passage on a separate fish-shaped cutout. Place a paper clip on each cutout near where the mouth of the fish would be. Scatter the fish in a small area of the room and allow kids to take turns catching fish with the magnet fishing rods. Once all fish have been caught, challenge kids to arrange them in the correct order to form the key passage.

**SAY** • Jesus' miracles were recorded in the Bible to help us know that He is the Messiah. We can trust in Jesus to receive forgiveness and eternal life with God.

## Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Form three groups of kids and assign each group one of the following passages:

- Matthew 14:13-21
- Mark 6:30-44

- John 6:1-14

Encourage the groups to work together to make a list or Venn diagram to think about the details that are recorded in all three accounts and the details that are not recorded in all three accounts.

Details in all three accounts:

- Huge crowds followed Jesus and the disciples.
- Jesus and the disciples went away by boat.
- The people were hungry.
- Jesus told the disciples to give them something to eat.
- They found five loaves and two fish.
- Jesus fed 5,000 men.

Details just in Matthew:

- There were women and children not counted in the 5,000.
- Jesus healed people before feeding them.

Details just in Mark:

- The disciples had been working hard, without even having time to eat, before going to the remote place.
- Jesus thought of the people like sheep without a shepherd.

Details just in John:

- Jewish Passover was near.
- The loaves and fish came from a boy.

**SAY** • God chose to use four different people to record different parts of Jesus life. In some cases, the same event is recorded in more than one Gospel. Different writers that God used recorded different details and different amounts of detail. What is truly amazing though is that the details always fit together! From the gospels we know that ***Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.*** Jesus

Tip: If kids in your group are unfamiliar with Venn diagrams, adapt this activity to make the diagram with them, or help them list details.

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

died on the cross for our sins and rose again on the third day. Through believing in Him, we can be forgiven and live forever with God.

## Activity choice (10 minutes)

**OPTION 1:** Take some and pass

Invite the group to sit in a circle. Give the construction paper bread to a kid and explain that he must tear off a bit of the “loaf” and pass the rest. The next kid will do the same. Count together how many times you can pass the “bread” before it has all been torn up and there is nothing left to pass.

**SAY** • As you can see, the more we took of our pretend bread, the less there was to pass along. In our Bible story, Jesus blessed the bread and fish and began tearing off bits and passing it to others to do the same. By God’s power, they never ran out of bread! **Jesus fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish. *Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.*** When we believe in Jesus, God forgives our sins and gives us brand new lives.

**OPTION 2:** Lunch plate fish

Distribute a paper plate to each kid. Help kids make a cut from the edge of the plate in toward the center. Then make a second cut to remove a wedge shaped section of the plate. Glue this to the other side of the plate to form a tail; the missing portion forms a mouth. Then kids will make a second set of cuts to remove a smaller wedge shape from the top of the plate. Glue this piece to the center of the plate to form a fin. See the margin art for guidance. Then let the kids decorate their fish with other craft supplies.

LOW PREP

• sheets of brown construction paper cut to look like bread

• paper plates, 1 per kid  
• safety scissors  
• glue or tape  
• other craft supplies

**SAY • Jesus fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish.** But that was not Jesus' greatest miracle! Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose again on the third day. He made the way for us to live with God forever. When we trust Jesus, God forgives our sins and makes us new. Use your lunch plate fish to tell your family and friends about Jesus' power to do miracles and provide salvation to the world.

### Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

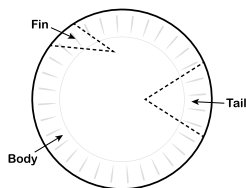
Distribute each child's journal. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture of something they are thankful for.

**SAY •** God has provided for us in many ways, especially though Jesus. We know that Jesus provides for our greatest need, our need for forgiveness. One way we can show our thankfulness to Him is by obeying His commands and telling the world about His love.

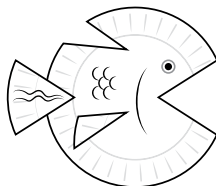
Make sure each child secures this week's sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray, asking God to help your group trust Him to provide for their needs. Thank Him for His love and for sending Jesus.

1 Cut paper plate into three pieces as shown.



2 Attach tail and fin to fish body, then decorate.



- pencils or crayons
- Journal Page
- 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.