

JESUS FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND



Passages to Study: Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44, Luke 9:10-17, John 6:5-13.

Read with the class: Mark 6:30-44.

Texts for memorization:

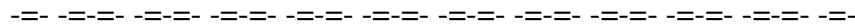
Younger: John 6:51 “I am the living bread which came down from heaven.”

Older: John 6:51 “I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of this world.”



OBJECTIVES: To teach that :

1. Although a person possesses “little”, it can be multiplied to provide great blessing to others when placed in the Lord’s hands.
2. The One that could provide food for five thousand men can provide for mankind’s every need.
3. Jesus used His disciples to serve the multitudes. Today He wants to bless the world through His own.
4. There was a double lesson: first for the disciples and then for the multitude.
5. Those who know the Lord Jesus as Saviour have the responsibility of giving out the bread of life, which the world needs.



SCENE No. 1. At the seaside, figures of Jesus and His disciples, and the multitude.

DEVELOPMENT:

Note: This miracle is the only one that is recounted in all four of the gospels.

- The disciples of John the Baptist went to Jesus to inform Him of the death of John at the hand of Herod.
- The twelve disciples that had been sent to preach in other cities returned around the same time.
- Jesus invited them to accompany Him to get into a boat to go to the other side of the lake for a rest.
- When they saw that Jesus was going across the lake, the people sought Him out by going on foot to an unpopulated area outside the city of Bethsaida and arrived before Jesus and his disciples (Luke 9:10).
- Motivated always by love and compassion, the Lord Jesus taught the people many things and healed their sick.

Sug. Ask the students what they would have liked to have heard Jesus teach, had they been there. The teacher should have some ideas of what is appropriate in order to guide the conversation.

Lsn. Jesus was concerned not only for the large multitudes but also for each individual.

- Jesus showed His compassion, providing first for their spiritual needs and then providing bread for their physical well-being.

Cmt. God’s provision of our daily bread is evidence that He is concerned for human beings.

- It seems that the disciples saw the multitude as a problem and at the end of the day suggested to the Lord that He send them away.
- Jesus took advantage of the opportunity to demonstrate His power and at the same time teach the disciples an important lesson.
- Jesus told His disciples there was no need for them to go away and said, “**give ye them to eat**” (v.37).
- Philip especially, had his faith tested (John 6:5-6).
- Apparently, they had two hundred denarius, which Philip said was insufficient to meet the need even if the people were to eat only a little.
- Philip focused on the amount of money and did not think about the power of Jesus, which they had already seen in operation in healing people.
- The disciples recognized their inability to provide for the needs of the people.

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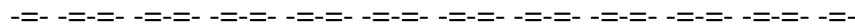
Lsn. 1. The disciples first had to learn that provision for the needy comes from the Lord and the resources that would meet the needs of the multitude were not to be sought from within themselves.

Lsn. 2. The multitude had to learn that miraculous provision comes from the compassionate Saviour.

SCENE No. 2. VISUAL AIDS: To the same scene as above, add figures of the boy with his bag of food being presented to the Lord by Andrew, one of the disciples.

DEVELOPMENT:

- Somehow Andrew had gained the trust of the lad for he handed his lunch over to the Lord Jesus.
- Sug.** Have the students think about what Andrew might have said to convince the lad to offer his food. It can be interesting to ask how he achieved this “donation.”
- In his bag the youth had brought bread and fish, enough for himself and perhaps one other person.
- Cmt.** This disciple, Andrew, is always seen bringing others to the Lord. The first one he brought was Peter, and now presents the lad to Jesus with his bread and two fish.
- Andrew the disciple did not know how such a small amount of food could solve the problem, but he had faith in the Lord, thinking He could do something with what was given Him.
- Cns.** Andrew is a good example of one who shows “mustard-seed” faith in his Lord. (Matt.17:20.)
- The bread and fish, placed in the hands of the Lord Jesus, were about to be a blessing to thousands.
- Apl.** God loves the cheerful giver. Even when it is just a little, in the Lord’s hands it can be useful far beyond what we could imagine.



SCENE No. 3. VISUAL AIDS: By the seaside, figures of the multitude seated and the disciples serving bread and fish to the people.

DEVELOPMENT:

- Lsn.** In putting what he had into the Lord’s hands the youth showed willingness to hand over **EVERYTHING.**
- Sug.** Mention to the students that when one believes in Christ, it calls for a complete commitment to Him not only as Saviour, but also as Lord.
- No doubt, the lad was near the Lord and watched with amazement what Jesus did with his lunch.
- Jesus managed the whole situation, requiring that the multitude sit down in an orderly way to be attended to by the disciples. He commanded that they sit in groups of fifty and one hundred.
- Jesus first gave thanks for the food.
- Apl.** Stress the need to be thankful always.
- In His prayer of thanks for the bread and fish, Jesus showed His fellowship with the Father.
- When He broke the bread and handed it to His disciples it was sufficient to meet the needs of the people. In this way, Jesus showed that He is the source of blessing for the hungry.
- Cmt.** Later on, the Lord explained that He is the Bread that came down from heaven to supply the need of the people (John 6:30-50).
- More was left over than there was at the beginning. In this we see the fulfillment of Ephesians 3:20.
- What was left over was not thrown away but was gathered up to be used by others.
- Cns.** Would each of the disciples have taken home a basket of bread and told the story of how they acquired this bread?
- Sug.** Use the detail of the bread that was left over and probably distributed elsewhere to teach that blessings experienced in the life of one person can also have an effect on others even though not present.
- Exm.** A father is given a promotion at work with increased salary. The family enjoys the benefit of more money available. A mother receives a gift of clothing and takes it home for the children to wear.

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Cmt. Especially when someone is converted, the family and friends are affected by the changes this brings about.

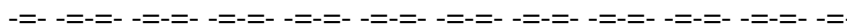
Lsns. The Lord’s disciples learned:

- a) That the One who could provide food for more than five thousand can also provide for the needs of the individual disciple.
- b) The Lord’s disciples have the responsibility of “giving” the bread of life placed in their hands for the blessing of a needy world. This is accomplished through preaching the Gospel.
- c) When a believer gives what he possesses to the Lord, even though it is not much, He can multiply it for the blessing of others.
- d) The Lord does things in an orderly way. He commanded that the people sit down in groups (Mark 6:39-40).
- e) By giving thanks first, before eating, Jesus showed the multitude where the true source of all blessing is found.
- f) Jesus did not give the bread directly to the people, but used His disciples as helpers for He delights to use His own.
- g) What was left over showed clearly that there was enough for **ALL** and in **ABUNDANCE**. No one went away hungry.
- h) One of the greatest miracles would not have occurred had the disciples carried out their earlier intention of sending the people away.

Apl. The Lord has blessed us so that we can be a blessing to others. He wants the whole world to hear the gospel.

Apl. As the teachers “give out” the bread of life to their students, they provide something for the immediate need and there is always something the children can take away and share with those at home.

Note to the teacher: When we allow the Lord to “break us”, we become useful in His hands and a blessing to others.



SCENE No. 4. (OPTIONAL) VISUAL AIDS.

To show that there was another miracle with a different provision, prepare two sheets, one with 5 fish and 7 loaves and, for contrast, one with 2 fish and 5 loaves.

Show as well the seven baskets that were filled after one of the meals and the twelve baskets after the other meal of 5 loaves and 2 fish.

The figures of 4,000 and 5,000 should be added, to show the difference in the multitude.

Where there was no difference was in the Author. Jesus was the author of both miracles.

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