

Week 21

Jesus Feeds the Multitude

Story 99 – *The Gospel Story Bible*

You will need five small loaves of bread or dinner rolls, a large basket, and a can of sardines for this exercise. Prior to Bible study, show the objects to your children and see if they can guess which Bible story you are going to be reviewing this week. (They may not know what the sardines are, so if you want, open the can so they can see the fish.) Once they guess the story, ask them if they would like to try the same meal Jesus provided for the crowds. Then offer them a taste of the fish and some bread.

DAY ONE

Picture It

Once a person becomes famous, people want to be around him or her. That is why movie stars, professional sports players, and the president all draw big crowds wherever they go. To avoid the large crowds, famous people keep their travel plans a secret. Even so, as soon as someone recognizes them, word spreads quickly, and more and more people come, often wanting their autograph. That is what happened to Jesus. Whenever someone saw him, they spread the word, and soon crowds would form. But instead of autographs, they wanted him to heal their sick. Although Jesus didn't announce his schedule, the crowds always seemed to find him.



Read John 6:1–4.

Think about It Some More

Back in Jesus' day, people didn't have as many kinds of good medicine or as much medical knowledge as we have, so there were a lot more sick people with no cures. Today, we can cure leprosy, treat epilepsy, and even give people artificial legs to help them walk if they are lame. But back then, the doctors could not do any of that. So you can imagine just how exciting it was to bring sick people to Jesus and watch him heal them instantly.

If Jesus walked the earth today, we could bring him people with diseases we have no cure for, like some kinds of cancer. So even though we can cure many diseases, the same kind of crowds would form. We would track Jesus via the TV news, and word would spread quickly on the Internet and by text messages. If Jesus thought it was difficult to get away from the crowds back in his day, it would be even harder today.

Talk about It

- ∴ Do you remember what the Passover feast is all about? (*The Passover feast was celebrated by Israel to remember the last plague and their ancestors' deliverance from slavery in Egypt. If you remember, they put the blood of a lamb on their doorframes so that the angel of death would "pass over" their house and not kill their firstborn sons.*)
- ∴ Why did Jesus go up a mountain or out on a boat when a large crowd was coming? (*Jesus liked to go up mountains or out on a boat when a large crowd was coming because that made it easier for the people to see and hear him.*)
- ∴ Why do you think the people were so attracted to Jesus? (*They had never seen anything like what Jesus was doing. Blind people received sight, the lame walked, and the deaf were made to hear. The people hoped that Jesus' miracles were a sign that God was going to deliver them from the Romans, who ruled over them.*)



Pray about It

Make a list of some of the miracles Jesus did and then praise him for each one and how it showed to everyone that he was the Son of God.

DAY TWO

Remember It

What do you remember about yesterday's story? What do you think is going to happen today?



Read John 6:5–13.

Think about It Some More

John, the disciple who wrote this story, said there were five thousand men present the day Jesus multiplied the fishes and the loaves. But there were also women and children there. That means there could have been as many as ten or fifteen thousand people on the hillside. How did Jesus multiply such a small amount of food to satisfy the hunger of more than fifteen thousand people—and still have twelve baskets full of leftovers? Did the two fish and five barley loaves suddenly grow into two giant fish and five enormous loaves of bread? Or did the two fish suddenly turn into twenty thousand fish as Jesus lifted up his hands to pray?

The Bible doesn't describe exactly how Jesus did it, but it would have been fun to sit there and watch. Whatever way it happened, this miracle shows us that Jesus had the power to create—the same power he used when he created the world.

Talk about It

- ∴ How do you think the fish and bread grew to feed all the people? (*Parents, this is just a fun question. We really don't know how it happened. Give each of your children a chance to talk about how they think it happened.*)

- ∴ How could Jesus multiply the fish and the loaves to feed so many people? *(Parents, draw out your children to see if they remember that Jesus was actually the one who created the world [see Colossians 1:16]. If Jesus could create the world from nothing, then multiplying the fish and loaves would've been no big deal.)*
- ∴ How can this story help build our faith? *(At times, we might find ourselves in what seem like impossible situations. Knowing that God is all-powerful and that he loves to help us in our time of need builds faith. In the past he has worked in power to help people. This can encourage us to pray and ask God for help.)*
- ∴ How should God's provision for the five thousand men and their families encourage us as we trust God for the food we need? *(This story helps us to see that God can and will provide all of our needs.)*



Pray about It

Praise Jesus for his mighty power, which could create the world and multiply the fishes and the loaves of bread.

DAY THREE

Connect It to the Gospel

Today is the day we connect this week's Bible story to the gospel. The gospel is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus for our salvation. Can anyone guess how our story this week looks forward to or back at the gospel?



Read John 6:14–27.

Think about It Some More

When the people saw Jesus multiply the fishes and the loaves, they thought he was the Messiah, the promised deliverer whom they thought would lead them to victory over their Roman overlords. That was why they wanted to make Jesus king. When they called Jesus the prophet who was to come into the world, they were remembering a prophecy Moses had given.

In Deuteronomy, Moses said, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen. . . . I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him” (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18). The people were correct: Jesus *was* the prophet Moses had talked about. But he didn't come to deliver the Jews from the rule of the Romans. Jesus came to save his people from greater enemies—sin and death. He came to give them peace in heaven forever, not just peace on earth from Rome.

Talk about It

- ∴ When the people saw Jesus multiply the fishes and the loaves, what did they want to do with Jesus? *(When they saw Jesus multiply the fishes and the loaves they believed Jesus was a great prophet and wanted to make him king so he could deliver Israel from the Romans.)*

- ∴ Why didn't Jesus want the people to make him king? (*Jesus didn't come to earth to rule as an earthly king to save them from an earthly enemy. Jesus came to be their heavenly king and to destroy sin and death so that everyone who believes in him can live forever.*)
- ∴ If you were there to see Jesus multiply the fishes and the loaves, what do you think you would have done? (*We all would have joined the crowd and wanted to make Jesus our king. Making Jesus king was not a bad response; it was a good one. It was just that the people didn't understand that Jesus had come to give them so much more than earthly freedom and treasure. Jesus had come to give them heavenly treasure and freedom from sin.*)



Pray about It

Ask God to help you love Jesus and heaven more than riches here on earth.

DAY FOUR

Remember It

What has God been teaching you this week through our Bible story?



Read John 6:28–40.

Think about It Some More

It seems amazing that Jesus could feed upwards of fifteen thousand people with only two fish and five small barley loaves. But that is not as amazing as Jesus saving an uncountable multitude (Revelation 7:9) of lost people by dying on the cross for their sins. The feeding of the crowd is meant to be a picture for us of something more special. It is meant to show us that Jesus can provide all we need. Not just what we need to live here on earth, but all that we need to live forever in heaven. That is why Jesus called himself the bread of life. Jesus will rescue all of God's children, not losing even one person whom God had planned to save. We have a great hope. If we believe in Jesus, he will save us. That is God's promise.

Talk about It

- ● KIDS, ask your parents to tell you how God has met their needs
- ● through the years.

(Parents, share a story in which God has provided for you when you really needed something.)

- ∴ What answer did Jesus give to the people who asked, "What must we do?" (*Jesus told them that they should believe in the one whom God had sent.*)
- ∴ Who is the one God sent? (*Jesus*)
- ∴ Who did Jesus say will rise on the last day (v. 40)? (*Parents, if you have younger children who are not strong readers, reread verse 40 and have them raise their hands when they hear the answer: "everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him."*)



Pray about It

Ask God to help you believe in Jesus so that you will be adopted into God’s family and become a child of God, with all of your sins forgiven.

DAY FIVE

Discover It

Today is the day we look at a different Bible passage—from the book of Psalms or one of the prophets—to see what we can learn from it about Jesus or our salvation.



Read Isaiah 29:18–20.

Think about It Some More

Some of the Old Testament prophecies that talk about Jesus are hard to figure out. But it is easy to see Jesus in this one. The “Holy One of Israel” is one of the names the prophets gave for the Messiah who would one day come. When Jesus was on earth, the demons called him the “Holy One of God” (Mark 1:24; John 6:69). And we know that Jesus healed the blind and the deaf. Jesus didn’t go to the rich or the rulers; he went to the poor and needy. And when he taught them and healed their diseases, they were filled with joy and gave praise to God. One day, just as Isaiah 29:20 tells us, the Holy One of Israel will put an end to all evil. That will happen when Jesus comes again.

Talk about It

- ∴ What name for Jesus does Isaiah use in his prophecy? (*Parents, if your children don’t get the answer [the “Holy One of Israel”] correct, reread the passage and highlight the correct answer by changing the tone of your voice.*)
- ∴ What other clues, besides the name Holy One of Israel, tell us that Isaiah was talking about Jesus? (*Isaiah said the deaf would hear and the blind would see.*)
- ∴ When will Jesus put an end to all evil? (*When Jesus comes again he will throw into the fire all sinners who have not turned away from their sin to trust in him [see Revelation 21:8].*)



Pray about It

Praise the Holy One of Israel for opening the ears of the deaf, giving sight to the blind, and one day, putting an end to all evil.