

THE FISH-AND- BREAD SIGN

Jesus Feeds
Five Thousand
John 6:1–15
AD 32

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

Our God Jesus provides for us.

BIBLE VERSE

God . . . richly provides us with everything. 1 Timothy 6:17

LEARNER GOAL

I know Jesus gives me what I need.

LAW & GOSPEL

Our faith is weak, and we fail to trust in God to give us what we need.

For the sake of Jesus, God promises to provide for all our earthly and spiritual needs.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

A crowd of at least five thousand men, plus women and children, had gathered to hear Jesus preach. When challenged to find a way to feed the hungry crowd, the disciples question how this is possible. But Andrew brings one boy's lunch—five barley loaves and two fish. Miraculously multiplying this meager meal, Jesus feeds them all, with abundant leftovers.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read John 6:1–15 and notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read parallel accounts from Matthew 14:13–21; Mark 6:30–44; and Luke 9:10–17.

IN DEPTH Review the section “The Fourth Petition” in *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017).

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- Play dough & toy dishes
- Egg cartons or plates & beads or Goldfish crackers
- Crackers & bottle of water in a bag
- Blanket, basket, bread rolls & plastic fish
- Pictures of food
- Goldfish crackers or bread & honey
- Paper-towel or gift-wrap tubes; wrapping, tissue, or construction paper or pieces of self-adhesive vinyl; decorating supplies (e.g., rickrack, glitter pens)

FOR EVERY LESSON

- Bible, songbook & classroom supplies
- Copies of *Discover Leaflet*, stickers & music downloads
- Supplies for bonus activities



LEADER NOTE

Set up one or more activities to help children transition into the classroom and to provide a connection between what they know and what they will learn in the lesson. Invite them to get started at an activity.



BONUS ACTIVITY

For another prelearning activity, set out materials for “God Provides.”

LAUNCH

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

PLAY DOUGH Set out play dough and toy dishes. Encourage the children to pretend someone is coming for dinner. Ask, **Who is coming to dinner? What will you make for them to eat? Today you’ll hear how Jesus took a small lunch and made it feed lots of people.**

EXPLORE Set out empty egg cartons with the sections numbered 1 to 12, or twelve small paper plates numbered 1 to 12. Put Goldfish crackers or beads in a bowl on the table. Have the children count the corresponding number of fish or beads to add to the egg carton or plates. Say, **Today you will hear how Jesus takes a little food and makes so much that there are twelve baskets left over!**

JESUS TIME

SING “I’m in God’s Family!” (digital resource center) or
“It’s Good to Give Thanks” (*Little Ones Sing Praise*, p. 61)

SAY **Hi, boys and girls. What did you share with your family about what you learned last week? Today we’ll talk about how Jesus gives us what we need.**

PRAY **Dear God,* help us listen* and learn* how You provide for us* and give us what we need.* Thank You* especially for giving us* our Savior,* Jesus.* Amen.***

*At the asterisks, have children echo the phrase to God.

LEARN

INTRODUCE THE BIBLE STORY

Put a few crackers and a bottle of water in a paper lunch bag. Hold up the bag and say that you brought a snack for the children. Take out the crackers and water. Break the crackers in half, and give each child a piece. Then hold up the water bottle. Look dismayed that there aren’t enough drinks for everyone! Say, **I didn’t give you much of a snack, did I? I started with a few crackers and gave you just half of one! And I didn’t have enough drinks so you could each have one. I’m sorry! Jesus is much better at giving us what we need. Today we’ll hear how He took just a little food and made enough to feed a big crowd of people! Let’s listen and find out more.**

TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Show your Bible, and tell the children that all the stories in God’s Word are true. Invite children to sit on a blanket with you as you tell the Bible story today. Put two plastic fish and five real rolls of bread in a basket. Tell the Bible story, using the *Discover Leaflet* as a guide. When you talk about the fish and loaves, take them out of your basket to show. After you tell of Jesus blessing them, tear the bread in enough pieces to pass around to the children. After telling the story, use the questions on the leaflet to review.

SAY THE BIBLE VERSE

Say, **Jesus cared for the people who came to hear Him teach. God cares for us too! The Bible says (read from Bible): “God . . . richly provides us with everything” (1 Timothy 6:17). That means God gives us the things we need.** Say the verse together.

LIVE

DISCOVER LESSON TRUTHS

Separate each *Discover Leaflet* into two pages. Send the first page home with the children, or store them in binders to send home at the end of the unit. Hand out the second page of the leaflets, stickers, and crayons.

SIDE 1 Ask, **How many fish and loaves did the boy have? How many are here? How many more do you need to match what was in the boy’s lunch?** Give children stickers of a fish and two loaves of bread. Have them connect the dots on the remaining loaf and color the basket. Talk about how many people Jesus fed and the leftover baskets of bread. Say, **I wonder . . . how could that happen? Yes, Jesus is God. He has all power!** Explain that this was a miracle, something that can only happen by God’s power.

SIDE 2 Say, **In the Lord’s Prayer, we pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.” When we pray this, we are asking God for food. But it is more than just food. It is all the good gifts, or blessings, God gives us. I wonder . . . what are some of these gifts? Look at the pictures on this page. If you think it is a gift God gives us, put a happy-face sticker on it.** Have children finish coloring each picture. Help them see that God gives us all good gifts to support life: food, homes, clothing, family, friends, toys, helpers, good weather, and so forth. Ask, **What is the most important gift God gives us? Jesus! What did Jesus do for us?** Give children a Jesus sticker to add to the center of the gift box. God’s gifts make us thankful. Talk about ways we can show God we are thankful for His love and blessings.

ENGAGE IN ACTIVE LEARNING

Take this time to reinforce the Learner Goal with active learning. Choose the options that work best for you and your students. Turn to “Active Learning” on the back page for instructions for the activities below.

□ MOVE

Play Food Basket Upset and talk about the Fourth Petition of the Lord’s Prayer.

□ SNACK

Serve Goldfish crackers or bread with honey.

□ CREATE

Children will make their own spyglasses to look for God’s blessings.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Talk about how Jesus is God’s Son, who loves and cares for us. In today’s lesson, He did a miracle—something only God can do. He made enough food for everyone. Check for understanding by asking children to name a way Jesus cares for them. Then say, **Jesus gives us what we need.**

LEAVE

SING “God Is So Good” (*Little Ones Sing Praise*, p. 57) or this song to the tune of “Are You Sleeping”:
**Jesus gives us, Jesus gives us all we need, all we need.
Let us thank and praise Him, let us thank and praise Him.
He is good. He is good.**

SAY Today we learned that Jesus gives us what we need!

PRAY Dear Jesus, You are so powerful, and You take care of us all the time in so many ways. Thank You for Your love and care. Thank You for being our Savior. Amen.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus is the true bread of life, who gives us what we really need: forgiveness of sins and eternal life.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Play “I Spy.”



BONUS ACTIVITY

See “Food Pantry” for a class service project.



LEADER NOTE

Before you close in prayer today, throw a beanbag to a child to catch. Have child thank God for a food or item of clothing God gives him or her. Then have child toss the beanbag to another child. Be sure each child has a turn. Give suggestions to children who need help to think of something.

ACTIVE LEARNING

□ MOVE

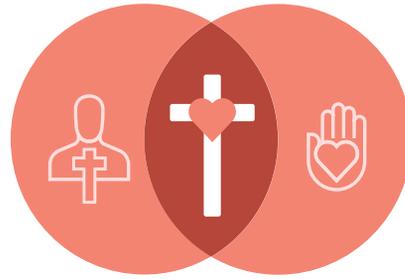
Play Food Basket Upset. Have children sit in a circle, preferably on carpet squares. Tell each child the name of a common food item (e.g., pizza, apple, milk, popcorn, hamburger), making sure there are at least two children with each item. Call out the name of one of the foods (or hold up a picture of it). Have the children with that food item get up and change places. When you call out, “Food basket upset!” all the children get up and exchange places. Talk about how we pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.” God gives us our food. He is the giver of all good gifts.

□ SNACK

Serve twelve Goldfish crackers in snack bags. Count the fish before eating them. Or serve bread rolls and honey.

□ CREATE

Help children make spyglasses to look for God’s blessings. Provide a 6-inch piece of gift-wrap tube or half of a paper-towel tube to each child. Give them colorful wrapping paper, tissue paper, construction paper, or pieces of self-adhesive vinyl, cut to size, to wrap round the tube. Tape in place. Decorate with rickrack, glitter pens, and craft stickers of some of God’s gifts. Give children the Bible Verse sticker to add last. Talk about how they can use their spyglass at home to look for God’s blessings.



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God provides for all I need, and He shows me how to serve others with the gifts He gives.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I am a steward of God’s gifts, using the time, talents, and treasures that He has given me to serve in the places He has called me to be.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how this lesson builds on learning for each age.

ADULT

I can identify and thank God for the different ways He provides for me in my various vocations.

YOUTH

I can share the confidence that God has provided all that we need for this life and the next.

ELEMENTARY

I understand that our Lord Jesus provides for us every day.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know Jesus gives me what I need.

★ BONUS ACTIVITIES

GOD PROVIDES

10 minutes

Set out magazines with pictures of food, glue sticks, scissors, crayons, and paper plates. Have children cut out pictures of food and glue them to their plates. Or they can draw food on their plates. Ask, **Which food do you like the most? Which don’t you like? Where does your food come from? Today we’ll hear how Jesus takes a boy’s lunch and does something special with it.**

I SPY

15 minutes

Use your spyglasses to look for God’s blessings around you. Holding the spyglass, say, **I spy something that is [red]**. Have children use their spyglasses and guess. Give another child a turn. *Variation:* Have children spy shapes (circles, squares, triangles). Say, **God’s blessings are reminders of His love and care for us. Of all God’s blessings, which is the most important one? Yes, Jesus! Because of Jesus, God forgives us and gives a home in heaven. He is with us and takes care of us now and helps us live as His children.**

FOOD PANTRY

15 minutes

Talk about how the little boy gave his food to Jesus to help others. Similarly, God often uses us to share His love by providing for others. Encourage children to bring a few nonperishable food items to class next week, such as bags of Goldfish crackers, cans of tuna, or muffin mixes. In class, mark packages with a cross, and have children put them in a large basket to donate to your church pantry or local food bank.