

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 understand that our Lord Jesus provides for us every day.

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 the Gospels, including 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), paying special attention to Questions 268–72.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- Goldfish crackers or bread
- Recording device

FOR EVERY LESSON

- Device with downloaded music
- Pens or pencils
- Student copies of *Explore Bible Guidebook*
- Bible
- Copies of downloadable activity page
- Supplies for bonus activities



LEADER NOTE

Bring out a bag of goldfish crackers after you have asked the opening questions. Then ask if this bag is enough for everyone to eat supper or even lunch. Pass out the goldfish crackers for students to eat while you are discussing this miraculous event. Or bring in a loaf of bread to share with students.



GUIDEBOOKS

Hand out student copies of the *Explore Bible Guidebook* and turn to Lesson 13.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Check the back page for the “Meal Prayers” activity to extend learning.

LAUNCH

PRAY Dear Lord, bless us as we gather to study Your Word today. Remind us that You provide all that we need in our daily lives. Even more wonderful, You give us eternal life through Your Son, Jesus. Amen.

SING “These Things Are Written”
“Today Your Mercy Calls Us”
Music can be found in the digital resource center.

SAY How long does it take someone to make supper for you? Have you ever been to a big party? Imagine feeding all those people; now imagine five thousand men plus women and children to feed. How long would it take you to make them supper? Having enough food is a big deal, isn’t it?

LEARN

READ “THE FISH-AND-BREAD SIGN”

Read the Bible narrative aloud to your students.

DO SOMETHING

FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS To get students moving and to reinforce the events of the story, start this storytelling by having students pretend to hike up a mountain. Then help students retell the story using pantomime only.

FOR OLDER STUDENTS If you have strong readers, ask volunteers to read aloud this passage from their Bible. Have students do an audio recording, using your phone, as if they were interviewing people who were at this Bible event, a sort of “You Were There” style interview. As a group, listen to your recording.

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- God provides for our daily needs, but more than that He provides us with faith and forgiveness and gives us eternal life in Jesus—not just daily life.
- Jesus performed this miracle not to prove how fast He could make food or even just to feed the hungry crowd that might have become unruly if they were not fed. He did it to strengthen the faith of the disciples. His daily feeding of us will also strengthen our faith and sustain us in times of trouble.
- God feeds the hungry whether they are Jew or Gentile. He didn’t distinguish between the two types of people on the hillside. He does the same in our world. He provides the things that sustain daily life in our world (crops, farmers, industry, government, good roads, stores) to all people, believers or not.
- This true account from the Bible was a miracle. Only God could feed all those people with five loaves and two fish. Just as the disciples could not have fed those people on their own, we cannot earn heaven on our own.

LIVE

EXPLORE THE CONTEXT

Before you start the discussion questions, use the *Explore Bible Guidebook* for further details about food and money in the Bible.

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose from the following questions. For a few helps, encourage students to look in the *Explore Bible Guidebook*.

- ▶ How would you have reacted to Jesus if you had been one of Jesus' disciples?
- ▶ What if you had been the boy with the fish?
- ▶ What if you were one of the crowd there listening to Jesus, and then He fed you with fish and bread?
- ▶ Can you think of a time in the Old Testament when God provided food for His people? (He provided manna for the Israelites in the wilderness; manna is also a kind of bread.)
- ▶ How does Jesus "feed" His people today?

SAY THE BIBLE VERSE TOGETHER

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

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- Look up **John 6:35** ("I am the bread of life"). Read this passage or have a volunteer read it aloud. Discuss what that means for Jesus to be our bread of life.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Ask students to point to things they see that the Lord has provided.

LEAVE

SAY Our God Jesus certainly provides for us, just as He did for the people on that hillside all those years ago. We can praise God for that every day.

SING "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow"

"The Lord's Prayer"

Music can be found in the digital resource center.

PRAY Dear Jesus, thank You for providing all that we need to support our bodies and lives. Help us to share Your love with others this week. In Your name we pray, Jesus. Amen.



DOWNLOADABLE PAGE

Extend learning by printing the downloadable activity page, found in the digital resource center. See the back page of this guide for details.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus is the true bread of life, who has come into the world to give us eternal life.

DOWNLOADABLE PAGE HELPS

Make copies of the downloadable activity page by accessing the digital resource center. Use the helps below as a guide.

To extend this activity a bit, students could use magazines to cut out pictures to fill the designated areas. If students struggle with fine-motor control, have students dictate their answers to you or another helper in the class.

Take this opportunity to talk about meal prayers. Give examples, and allow students to share their favorites.

THE FISH-AND-BREAD SIGN—JESUS FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND
Unit 2, Lesson 13

What's for Lunch?

Directions: Draw a picture on this dinner plate to show how God provides for you in these areas. Write or copy a prayer below to thank God for those gifts.

My prayer: _____



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 previous 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

MEAL PRAYERS

5–10 minutes

Thank God for His gifts of food—talk about meal prayers. Share different meal prayers that students use. Bring in some of your favorites. Encourage students to thank God at meal times wherever they are, at home or in public. Have students write their own poetic meal prayers.

PAPER PLATE CRAFTS

Times may vary

Prior to class, do an online search of paper plate crafts for the feeding of the five thousand story. Choose one of these crafts that suits the age and abilities of your particular group. Use the components of the craft—a basket, fish, and bread—for students to retell the narrative.

FOOD PANTRY

Times may vary

If you started collecting food to give away back in Lesson 10, now is a good time to reenergize your giving efforts. If time allows, perhaps use some of the Bible verses from the student book to make Scripture inserts for your food donation.