

Jesus Feeds the 5,000

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Give Jesus what you have, even if it seems small. He can do great things with it, and He takes care of our needs.

Bible passage: John 6:1–14. Read it before class, and also Matthew 14:13–21, Mark 6:30–44 and Luke 9:10–17.

Memory verse: "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." *Philippians 4:19 (KJV)*

You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), paper and a pencil for each child, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.

Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: Groups of Fifty (5–10 minutes)

Ask: "How many people do you think are in our church on a Sunday? In a big football stadium?" Write a few guesses on the board. Then say: "Mark's Gospel says the people sat down in groups of a hundred and groups of fifty (Mark 6:40). How many groups of fifty make five thousand?" Let the kids work it out on paper (*100 groups*). Ask: *If someone asked you to feed that many people with one lunch, what would you say?* Say: "Today we will see what Jesus did with one boy's lunch."

2. Bible story: A Little Lunch in Jesus' Hands (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to John 6. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

A crowd follows Jesus. Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee, which is also called the sea of Tiberias (John 6:1). **Look up John 6:2.** ("And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased." A **multitude** is a huge crowd; **diseased** means sick.) Jesus went up on a mountain and sat there with His disciples. The Passover, a yearly feast of the Jews, was near (6:3–4). When Jesus saw the people, He was moved with compassion, which means He felt deep love and pity for them. He healed their sick (Matthew 14:14), and He taught them many things, because they were like sheep that had no shepherd (Mark 6:34).

Jesus tests Philip. Look up John 6:5–6. Jesus asked Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" (**Whence** means from where.) He said it to **prove** Philip, which means to test him, because Jesus already knew what He would do. Philip said that two hundred pennyworth of bread would not be enough for each person to get even a little (6:7). A **penny** was a day's pay for a worker (Matthew 20:2), so that was about two hundred days of work! As the day went on, the twelve disciples wanted Jesus to send the crowd away to the towns to find a place to stay and food to eat, because they were in a lonely place (Luke 9:12).



One small lunch. Look up John 6:8–9. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said a **lad** (a boy) had five barley loaves and two small fishes, "but what are they among so many?" Barley bread was plain, everyday bread.

Everyone eats. Look up John 6:10. Jesus said, "Make the men sit down." There was much grass in the place, and about five thousand men sat down. Mark says they sat in groups of a hundred and of fifty on the green grass (Mark 6:39–40), and Matthew says the count was "beside women and children" (Matthew 14:21). **Look up John 6:11.** Jesus took the loaves and gave thanks. Mark adds that He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves (Mark 6:41). He **distributed** (handed out) the bread to the disciples, and the disciples gave it to the people. He did the same with the fish, "as much as they would." Everyone ate as much as they wanted.

Twelve baskets. Look up John 6:12–13. When the people were filled, Jesus said, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." (**Fragments** are broken pieces.) The disciples filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves that were left over. **Look up John 6:14.** The people said, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." (**Of a truth** means truly.) They knew God had promised to send a prophet. Then they wanted to take Jesus by force and make Him a king, so He went up into a mountain alone (6:15).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Jesus already knew the answer when He asked Philip (John 6:6). Why do you think He asked?
2. Andrew said, "What are they among so many?" (6:9). When have you felt like what you have is too small to matter?
3. Jesus gave thanks before the food was handed out (6:11). What can you thank God for before you see the answer to a prayer?
4. Why do you think Jesus told them to gather the leftovers so nothing would be lost (6:12)?
5. Philippians 4:19 says God will supply all your *need*. How is a need different from a want?

Recall questions

1. Which disciple found the boy with the lunch? (*Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, John 6:8*)
2. What kind of loaves did the boy have? (*Barley loaves, 6:9*)
3. How many baskets of leftovers were there? (*Twelve, 6:13*)

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **supply** means give, **need** means what you truly need (not everything you want), and **his riches in glory** means God has more than enough of everything. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Repeat until the board is empty and the class can say it alone, then kids say it to a partner.



5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jesus fed thousands of people with one small lunch. Later He said, 'I am the bread of life' (John 6:35). God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: give Jesus something that seems small: share your snack, help without being asked, or give your time to pray for someone.

6. Activity: Four Gospels Look-Up Race (10-15 minutes)

This miracle is in all four Gospels. Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. John 6:1: What is the other name for the Sea of Galilee? (*The sea of Tiberias*)
2. John 6:4: What feast was near? (*The Passover*)
3. Matthew 14:14: What did Jesus do for the sick people in the crowd? (*He healed them*)
4. Mark 6:34: What did the people look like to Jesus? (*Sheep not having a shepherd*)
5. Mark 6:38: What did Jesus tell the disciples to go and find out? (*How many loaves they had*)
6. Luke 9:12: What did the twelve want Jesus to do with the crowd? (*Send them away to the towns to find a place to stay and food*)
7. Matthew 14:21: Who ate besides the five thousand men? (*Women and children*)
8. John 6:15: What did the people want to make Jesus? (*A king*)

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for taking care of everything we need. Help us give You what we have, even when it seems small, and help us thank You before we see the answer. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks how Jesus did it: say honestly that the Bible does not explain how. It was a miracle, something only God can do (John 6:14). The same Jesus who made the world (John 1:3, 1:10) can make a little into a lot.

