

Jesus Feeds the 5,000

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Give Jesus what you have, and trust Him to supply what you need. Jesus Himself is the bread of life.

Bible passage: John 6:1–35. Students read John 6:1–14 and John 6:26–35 out loud themselves.

Memory verse: "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." *Philippians 4:19 (KJV)* and "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." *John 6:35 (KJV)*

You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.

Before class: read John 6:1–35 and Mark 6:30–44. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: Small or Big? (5–10 minutes)

Name one side of the room "too small to matter" and the other side "could make a big difference." Read each item. Students walk to the side they think fits. 1) Saying hi to the new kid who sits alone. 2) Giving one dollar to a missions offering. 3) Praying for a friend for one minute. 4) Inviting one person to church. 5) Being the only one who doesn't laugh at a cruel joke. Ask: *Why do we sometimes think what we have to give is too small?* Say: "One of Jesus' disciples once asked, 'What are they among so many?' Let's see what Jesus did."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: John 6:1–14. Students take turns, a few verses each. Old words in this passage:

- **multitude** (6:2): a huge crowd; **diseased**: sick
- **nigh** (6:4): near; the Passover was a yearly feast of the Jews
- **company** (6:5): a group of people; **whence**: from where
- **prove** (6:6): test
- **pennyworth** (6:7): a penny was a day's pay (Matthew 20:2), so two hundred pennyworth was about two hundred days of work; **sufficient**: enough
- **lad** (6:9): a boy; **barley loaves**: simple, everyday bread
- **distributed** (6:11): handed out; **as much as they would**: as much as they wanted
- **fragments** (6:12–13): broken pieces; **of a truth** (6:14): truly



Tell the middle part in your own words: Mark adds that Jesus was moved with compassion, because the people were like sheep without a shepherd, and He taught them many things (Mark 6:34). The people sat in groups of a hundred and of fifty on the green grass (Mark 6:39–40), and about five thousand men ate, beside women and children (Matthew 14:21). After the miracle the people wanted to take Jesus by force and make Him a king, so He went up into a mountain alone (John 6:15). That night the disciples crossed the sea by boat, and Jesus came to them walking on the water (6:16–21). The next day the crowd took boats to Capernaum, looking for Jesus (6:22–25).

Read out loud: John 6:26–35. Old words in this passage:

- **verily, verily** (6:26): truly, truly; Jesus is about to say something important
- **labour not for the meat which perisheth** (6:27): don't work only for food that spoils; **meat** means food
- **endureth unto everlasting life** (6:27): lasts forever
- **sign** (6:30): a miracle that shows who Jesus is
- **manna** (6:31): the bread from heaven God gave Israel in the desert (Exodus 16)
- **evermore** (6:34): always

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Andrew brought the boy's lunch to Jesus even though he wondered, "What are they among so many?" (John 6:9). What is something you have (time, a talent, a kind word, money) that seems too small? What could happen if you gave it to Jesus anyway?
2. Jesus asked Philip a question to test him, though He already knew what He would do (6:5–6). Why might God let us face a problem we can't solve on our own?
3. Jesus gave thanks before the food was handed out (6:11). What would it look like for you to thank God before you see the answer?
4. Jesus told them to gather the leftovers "that nothing be lost" (6:12). What does that show about how God cares for the things He gives us?
5. The next day Jesus said the crowd was looking for Him because they ate the loaves and were filled (6:26). What is the difference between wanting what Jesus gives and wanting Jesus Himself?
6. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life" (6:35). Bread keeps your body alive. What does it mean that Jesus gives a life that lasts forever?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words in Philippians 4:19: **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. In John 6:35, **he that cometh to me** means whoever comes to Jesus, and **believeth on me** means trusts in Jesus.

Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Philippians 4:19 this week; keep working on John 6:35 next week too.



5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "The crowd ate the loaves and were hungry again the next day. Jesus offered them something better: Himself, the bread of life (John 6:35). God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."

Pray with the students, 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.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. What is my "five loaves and two fish," something small I could give to Jesus?
2. Where do I need to trust God to supply what I need right now?
3. Write a short prayer thanking God ahead of time for taking care of that need.

If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: give one small thing to God or to someone else, on purpose. Before each meal, remember that Jesus gave thanks for the loaves, and thank Him too.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for supplying everything we need. Here is what we have, even when it seems small; use it for You. Help us hunger for You more than for the things You give. Thank You for loving us and making a way to save us through Jesus, the bread of life. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student asks how Jesus did it: answer honestly. The Bible does not explain how; John calls it a miracle (John 6:14). The same Jesus who made all things (John 1:3) could make a little into more than enough.

