

Get Ready!

Jesus Feeds the 5,000

By: Robert Morrison, Jr.



Text

Mark 6:30-44; John 6:1-14; Matthew 14:13-21; Luke 9:10-17

Key Quest Verse

“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:43-45, NIV).

Bible Background

Prior to the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000, much had happened leading up to this miracle. After Jesus had recruited His disciples, He began to teach them many things about Himself and what His mission was. Jesus spent time with the disciples teaching them about the Kingdom of God and about His being the Christ or Messiah that the Jews had been looking for. Leading up to the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus had performed many other miracles. He raised the dead, healed many sick and diseased people, calmed a storm, and drove demons out of people, to name a few. These miracles were evidence that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, but the disciples seemed to be slow at realizing this. They even asked the question, “Who is this guy?” after He calmed the storm. At one point during Jesus’ teaching, He sat the disciples down and gave them some basic instructions before sending them out on their own to teach the people in surrounding towns. He sent them out in pairs and gave them power over evil spirits. This was more evidence that He was who He said He was.

Reflection Questions:

When the disciples came back to Jesus, they reported all that had happened to them on their trip throughout the various towns. One could imagine the excitement in their voices as they told Jesus all about their experiences. Being given the power over demons and knowing all the miracles that Jesus had performed with them, what do you think the mood of this meeting was? Imagine that you had been invited to attend your favorite sport’s team practice sessions or a production of your favorite television show and spent a week working with the stars. What would you hope to learn? Who in particular would you like to meet and why? Then after a week, you are asked by your schoolteacher to report to your classmates all that you learned. What would you say? Would you be excited or would it be just another boring report due to pass the class?

Get Ready!**Lesson Quest****What I want my students to:**

- Know:** What Jesus was trying to teach His disciples about who He was and what His mission was.
- Feel:** The excitement that must have been felt by the disciples as they returned from their journeys, only to be drawn into an experience of having to serve the crowd while Jesus performed a compassionate miracle. To feel the wonder and amazement of a firsthand experience of who Jesus is and how He wants me to develop a deeper relationship with Him.
- Do:** Take a lesson from the story of Jesus feeding the crowd and His words, “. . . whoever wants to be great must be slave of all,” and look for opportunities to serve others, using those opportunities as a way to show God's love and others that Jesus is your friend and Lord.

The goal of the lesson is to guide students to learn more about some of the miracles Jesus performed and why He used miracles. What are the purpose of miracles and what were some of the results of those miracles? Specifically, the students will read about and become actively involved in learning about the feeding of the 5,000. Each student is encouraged to not only learn the facts surrounding the miracle, but also to delve more deeply into the significance of miracles, the purpose of this miracle, and why this miracle might be significant to Jesus' message. The students will also be led to consider a comparison between this miracle and Moses' feeding of the Israelites as they wandered in the desert.

Activity options will include a group activity where the students can plan for a 10,000 person banquet, a play to act out this event in a modern day setting, and a study session to research miracles and the story of Moses and the Israelites' journey in the desert.

Get Ready!**Leader's Devotion**

As you read through the Bible text for this lesson, consider how you might feel if you were one of the crowd in the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000. From a Jewish perspective, the people following Jesus had long been looking for a Messiah to deliver them from the oppression of corrupt governments and years of bondage to pagan rulers. Imagine yourself on the side of the hill straining to hear what Jesus was saying. Was this man, the Christ, spoken of by the prophets, and why was He here at this time? What did He have to say to make me want to follow Him out of my house and into a desolate place with no provisions of food or shelter. As Jesus began to pull food out of the sack, do I realize this as a miracle, or is the crowd so great that confusion masks the significance of this event? And just what is the significance of this event?

In preparation for the class lessons, look up in a good Bible Dictionary “miracles” and see what it has to say about the miracles Jesus performed. Why did Jesus use miracles while He was here? What was the setting and cultural mood during this time? Consider, “How can I move the students toward relating this story to a personal application to their life today?”

Spend time praying for your students that they will become more aware of who Jesus is and what His message was while He was on earth. Ask God to allow His spirit to create a spark in each student to want to develop a deeper relationship with Jesus as a friend, brother, and ultimately, as Savior and Lord of his or her life.

Get Set!**Option A****GO TO THE BIBLE STORY**

After Jesus and the disciples spent some time talking about all that had happened on their journeys, Jesus realized that they all needed some rest. So, they jumped in a boat and set out to get away from the crowds that had gathered. As they rowed across the lake, the people caught sight of them and ran to meet them when they got back to shore. According to the written account, there were 5,000 men, and evidently many more women and children. In those days, men and women were not permitted to sit together as they ate their meal in a public setting. This is probably the reason the author only mentions the number of men and could be one reason why they sat in groups.

We are told that when Jesus saw the crowd gathered to meet them, He had compassion on them because they “were sheep without a shepherd.” What do you think Jesus meant by this?

The disciples then come to Jesus and ask Him to send the people away, because it was getting late and everyone was hungry. Jesus responds telling the disciples, “You feed them.” This probably surprises them, because immediately they begin complaining that it would take too much money to feed all the people. At this, Jesus takes control and has the disciples organize everyone into groups of 50 to 100. Taking what little food that they got from a small boy, Jesus feeds everyone until they are full. After the meal is over, Jesus has all 12 disciples go around and pick up any leftover food. Each disciple gathers one basket full of food.

Option B**GO TO THE BIBLE STORY**

After Jesus feeds the crowd, the Bible tells us that He performs many more miracles. He walks on water, heals more people, gives sight to the blind, and feeds another crowd with seven loaves of bread. After all this, Jesus finally asks His disciples, “Who do you think I am?” Peter answers, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Later, Jesus gives the disciples another hard lesson to understand when He tells them that if they want to be great, they must learn to serve others. He even lets them in on the secret of why God sent Him, “to give his life as a ransom for many.”



Get Set!

Bible Story

Teacher Tip: Provide markers for students to highlight portions of the story in their Bibles

Have students turn in their Bibles to Luke 9:10-17. It reads, **“When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida, but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing. Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, ‘Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here.’ He replied, ‘You give them something to eat.’ They answered, ‘We have only five loaves of bread and two fish – unless we go and buy food for all this crowd.’ (About five thousand men were there.) But he said to his disciples, ‘Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each.’ The disciples did so, and everybody sat down. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to set before the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.”**

Go!**Acting it Out****DRAMA**

Materials: Script in Resource Pages “Feeding The 5,000,” a bag with bread (and fish or cheese optional), costume hats to signify each role, chairs or blankets, nametags

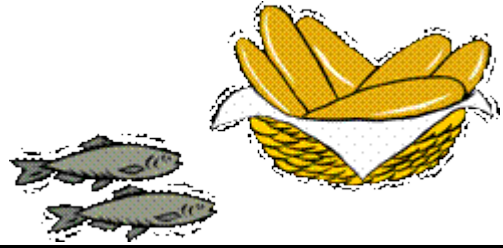
Quest Connection

This skit is to allow students a comic review of the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000 and to help the students retain the story’s truths by relating it to a modern-day setting.

Procedure: Assign roles to your students. Set up the stage area with the props you brought in. Practice the script first, then act it out on stage. If time allows, reassign parts and do the skit again.

Close

Was there one of the characters in our skit that you could identify as being much like yourself? What kind of media coverage do you think would take place if this miracle happened in our world today?

Go!**Banquet Planning****CHRISTIAN LIVING**

Materials: Five small loaves of bread, a small amount of fish (sardines, pieces of cutup fish), map of the outdoor area where the banquet is to be held, spreadsheet for the accountant to figure the cost estimates, menu sheet

Quest Connection

This activity will help the students visualize the event of Jesus feeding the 5,000 by having them plan, as a caterer, a banquet of around 10,000 people.

Procedure: The class needs to divide up into small groups of 3-6 each. Within each, the groups choose a head caterer, accountant, purchasing agent, and servers, drivers, etc. The groups have 15 minutes to plan a menu, estimate the cost, and develop a plan on how to best serve the guests. The group must also address how many servers it will need to make this event a success. One group is secretly given the instructions that they may only serve bread and fish. They have the same rules, except the other groups may be as elaborate as they wish. It will be interesting to compare the costs for each group especially to that of the group only serving bread and fish. Have the leader of each group give a report at the end of the time.

Close

Take the loaves and fish out of the bag and reenact Jesus prayer of thanks for the food. Ask one of the students to assist in breaking the bread and dividing the fish for the class to share.

As the students eat, this can begin a discussion on the significance of the miracle Jesus performed. **The sheer magnitude and logistics of feeding that many people with such a small amount of food and with the help of only 12 men is mind boggling. Ask, "Why did Jesus perform miracles?" Follow up with asking what made this particular miracle significant? Correlate the feeding of the 5,000 with Moses, through a miracle from God, feeding the Israelites in the wilderness (Ex. 16:4). Not only did Jesus perform this miracle out of compassion for the multitudes, but He used this as a teaching tool for the disciples. Later scripture teaches that Jesus was disappointed that His disciples still did not understand the significance of his performing that miracle (John 6:26-40). The final significance for performing this miracle is summed up in John 6:40, "For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I myself will raise him up on that day."**

Go!**Reflections****CHRISTIAN LIVING**

Materials: Resource page “Reflection Questions” (one copy per student), pencils

Quest Connection

I want you to look at the activity page that I have given you. Let’s go over all the questions before we start to fill in the blanks.

Procedure: Read over the questions, then have students fill in the blanks. When they are finished have them share their answers with the class.

Close

Let's go back to the classroom where your teacher has asked you to report on your week-long experience with your favorite stars. Just as you finish your report on all that had happened during your exciting week on the field or on the set, your teacher asks you to go to the closet, get a bucket and towel, and wipe down each student's desk before your next class.

- 1. What is your immediate reaction?**
- 2. Would you be happy to do this, or would you feel a bit embarrassed to have to clean the desks in front of your classmates? After all, you had just spent ten minutes telling everyone what a big shot you were just last week!**
- 3. Do you think the disciples felt the same way when Jesus asked them to feed the crowd?**
- 4. What do you think Jesus was trying to teach them?**

Go!**Servant or Leader?****FOOD**

Materials: Enough loaves of bread and sample of fish (sardines, tuna, etc.) to prepare sample meal for each student. **Optional:** Also supply a more elaborate sample meal for part of the students if divided up into groups (examples: pizza, donuts, cookies, chips, cola, etc.)

Quest Connection

We are going to discuss the Servant Leadership model that Jesus taught in comparison to His mission of giving His life as a ransom for many.

Procedure: After each student is finished with their meal, have the group who ate the “traditional” food clean up after the ones who had the bread and fish. Make sure they clean everything and that the group being waited on does not help. You might want to have a mop, broom, towels, trash bag, or other supplies available.

Once the cleaning is done, lead the group in a discussion about our Key Quest Verses: Mark 10:43-45. Discuss the role of the disciples in the feeding of the 5,000 and how they were instructed by Jesus to not only feed the crowd, but to pick up the leftover food as well. **What does Jesus mean, that to be great you must be servant of all? Or, that the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve? What kind of leadership model is Jesus teaching? Ask the class which kind of leader do they prefer, one who tells them what to do and then walks away, or one who gets in there and works with them showing them how a task is to be done? Which kind of leader is it easier to be and which might take more effort? Which kind of leader would motivate you to do your best? To answer this, ask the group who did not clean up if they felt like pitching in while their classmates cleaned up around them.**

Close

Would they have been as likely to want to help clean if they had simply been told to clean?

Go!



Moses' Comparison

Materials: Note: This activity can be used without the following materials. Enough loaves of bread and sample of fish (sardines, tuna, etc.) to prepare sample meal for each student. A copy of the worksheet “My favorite Foods Are” and the journal page for each student. **Optional:** Also supply a more elaborate sample meal for part of the students if divided up into groups (examples: pizza, donuts, cookies, chips, cola, etc.) Prepare “manna” for additional sample food if desired.

Quest Connection

We are going to look at our Bible Story in a different way. Let's compare/contrast the miracle Jesus performed in feeding the 5,000 with Moses' miracle where God provided manna for the Israelites.

Procedure: Have students divide into two groups, one will eat the loaves and fish, one will enjoy the traditional food. As the food is being prepared, discuss the fact that “barley loaves and fish” was a meal for the poor in Jesus' day and how it provided for the basic needs of the people on a meager income. Use the worksheet and ask the students to each list his/her favorite meal(s) and think about why those meals are their favorites. What makes them taste so good?

Close

After each student is finished with his or her meal, ask them to discuss how they might feel if asked to give up their favorite foods for a constant diet of barley loaves and fish? (Option: Read John 6:25-40 and compare it to Exodus 16.) Have the class break up into two groups. One group will study the text in John 6, and the other the Exodus 16 text. Each group should answer the following questions and be prepared to give a brief review to the other group:

1. What group of people were involved in the story?
2. What was the “food” mentioned in each story?
3. Who gave this food?
4. What was the purpose of giving of food?

Discuss with the class Jesus remarks, “I am the bread of life, he who comes to me will never be hungry.” What did Jesus mean by this remark? Does this apply to our day to day activities or only to the future? This should lead into a discussion about what makes the Christian life exciting and “flavorful” instead of a system of “do's and don'ts.” Lead the class in a discussion of what each of them can do to “spice up” their daily life in order to show others how exciting it is to have Jesus as Lord of their lives. On the journal page, make a list of what makes the Christian life better than a life without Jesus.

Resource Page

Planning Sheet for 10,000 person banquet

| <u>Action List</u> | <u>Responsibility</u> | <u>Time</u> | <u>Cost</u> | <u>Related Activities</u> |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Invitations | | | | |
| Plan menu | | | | |
| Plan supplies | | | | |
| Purchase food | | | | |
| Purchase/ deliver sup- | | | | |
| Secure facility | | | | |
| Obtain permits/ li- | | | | |
| Hire/ train servers | | | | |
| Calculate costs | | | | |
| Cleanup | | | | |
| Misc./ other | | | | |



Journal Page



Make a list of what makes the Christian life better than a life without Jesus.



Reflection Questions

When the disciples came back to Jesus, they reported all that had happened to them on their trip throughout the various towns. One could imagine the excitement in their voices as they told Jesus all about their experiences.

1. Being given the power over demons and knowing all the miracles that Jesus had performed with them, what do you think the mood of this meeting was?

2. Imagine that you had been invited to attend your favorite sport's team practice sessions or a production of your favorite television show and spent a week working with the stars. What would you hope to learn?

3. Who in particular would you like to meet and why?

4. Then after a week, you are asked by your schoolteacher to report to your classmates all that you learned. What would you say?

5. Would you be excited or would it be just another boring report due to pass the class?

Feeding The 5,000

Theme: To allow students a comic review of the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000. To help the students retain the story's truths by relating it to a modern-day setting.

Cast: Jesus, apostle(s), policeman, area plan commissioner, environmental activist, conservation officer, crowd. Make nametags for the officials indicating who they are.

Props: A bag with bread (and fish or cheese optional). Costume hats to signify each role.

Setting: Outdoors (weather permitting) on a grassy area. Jesus and the apostles (and the crowd members) are seated in chairs or on blankets. Jesus is trying to teach the crowd when various local officials approach Him with several modern-day issues.

Act I

Jesus: "Take nothing for your journey, except a staff, no bread, no bag, no money in your belts."

Apostle: "Uh, Jesus. I think we have trouble."

(Area Plan Commissioner & Conservation Officer approaches.)

Commissioner: "Sirs, may I see your permit to assemble in this park?"

Apostle: "What do you mean, 'Permit?'"

Commissioner: "You need written permission for a crowd of this size to assemble in this park."

Apostle: "Hey, we were just minding our own business rowing the boat across the lake, and all these people ran to meet us when we got out."

C.O.: "Yes, I saw that you were in a boat a few hours ago. That is why I am here. I need to see your license to operate a marine craft across state waters for which I have jurisdiction."

Apostle: "License? What is a license?"

C.O.: "A license permits you and your group to operate a marine craft across state waters."

Apostle: "And what is a marine craft? We are soldiers for the Lord, not Marines."

Commissioner: "Wait, I asked the first question." *(Sternly)* "Did you, or did you not obtain a permit to assemble in this park?"

Apostle: "Jesus, did we get a permit to assemble?"

Jesus: "My world is not of this world." *(He turns back to the crowd and continues.)* "Wear sandals, but not an extra tunic. Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town."

Apostle (to the officials): "I, uh . . . guess not."

(A police officer approaches)

Officer: "What's the problem here?"

Resource Page

Commissioner: “I am attempting to ascertain whether these people have proper documentation to assemble in this park.”

Apostle: “Like I said . . . We were just minding our own business, rowing a boat across the lake . . .”

Commissioner: “I believe these men are assembling unlawfully without a permit.”

C.O.: “And they rowed a boat across MY lake without a license!”

Officer: “Is this true?”

Apostle: “Like I was saying, we were rowing our boat across the lake, when all these people ran over . . .”

(An environmental activist comes running up.)

Activist: “Hey, am I glad you guys showed up! I’ve been watching these guys all week. The other day, they threw nets into the water and pulled a thousand fish from the lake. And now they got thousands of people walking all over this federally protected wetland. Look . . . over there. Look what that kid’s doing behind that tree!”

C.O. “Whoa . . . you say they were fishing in the lake, too? Ok, guys, now I need to see your fishing permits.”

Apostle: “We need a permit to fish, too?” But some of us are fishermen by trade.”

Commissioner: “Well, as long as you belong to a local union, we might be able to overlook that. What local are you members of?”

Apostle: “Local? Jesus, are we in a Union?”

Jesus: “My disciples are in union with Me as I am with My Father who sent Me.” *(Turns again to the crowd.)* “And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.”

Apostle: “I guess I have to answer ‘no’ to that one, too.”

Commissioner: “Officer, I think you had grounds to arrest these guys.”

Apostle: “Now wait a minute. We were just about to have dinner. Why don’t you fellows join us?”

Officer: “Dinner? For this crowd? Where’s all the food?”

Apostle: “Well, it was supposed to be Peter’s job to organize dinner. Looks like he was out practicing walking on water again instead.”

C.O.: “Does he have a permit for that?”

Apostle: “Jesus, why don’t you send these people away so we can get out of this mess?”

Jesus: “Don’t send them away. You feed them.”

Apostle: “Feed all these people! It would take 8 month’s pay to buy enough food for this crowd!”

Resource Page

Jesus: “How much food do you have?”

Apostle: “Well, we have 5 barley loaves and two fish from some little kid over there.”

Officer: “Bread and fish? For 10,000 people?” *(Sarcastically)* What . . . are you all going to share?”

Activist: “Hey, barley and raw fish? These guys might be pretty cool after all! What else you got in that bag?”

Jesus: “Get the bread and fish and have the people sit in groups.”

Apostle: *(To other apostles)* “Get the people to get into groups of 50 to 100 and sit down for dinner.”

(Walks away calling to the crowd to gather in groups and sit down.)

Act II

Jesus: *(Takes the loaves and looks up to heaven.)* “Father, for what You have provided for Your children, we give thanks.”

(Officials move off as Jesus and apostles distribute the bread)

Commissioner: “What do you all think we should do?”

C.O. : “Well, I don’t see any evidence of the thousand fish they supposedly caught. I mean, if they had caught that many, they might actually be able to feed this crowd.”

Officer: “And I don’t think arresting them would be any worse than what this crowd will do to them once they find out there’s only 5 loaves and two fish in that bag. For all of their supper!” *(Chuckles)*

Activist: “You know . . . that barley still sounds kind of good.”

Commissioner: “Hey, take a look at this! The leader over there is still pulling food out of that bag. He’s passing out more food than you get with the grand slam at Denny’s!”

C.O.: “What’s the deal with these guys? This is kind of weird.”

Officer: “You know, it looks like they are a pretty peaceful bunch, and I haven’t seen them tear anything up. Besides, that bread smells pretty good, and I haven’t had dinner yet myself.”

Activist: “That barley would go good with a handful of dandelion greens!”

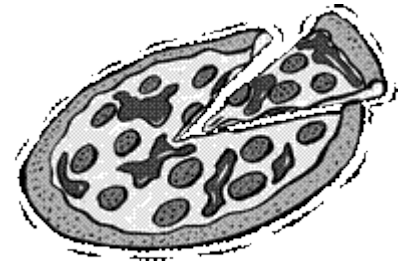
C.O.: “I didn’t actually **see** them rowing that boat across the lake.”

Commissioner: “What do you say we join that group over there? I’d kind of like to hear more of what that Leader has to say.”

Jesus: “Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of man will give you.”

Apostle: “What must we do to do the work God requires?”

Jesus: “The work of God is this: To believe in the one He has sent. For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him, shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. I am the Bread of Life.



My favorite foods are . . .

What makes them good . . .

