

Give Us Today the Food We Need

(Matthew 6:9-13)

Introduction

[Teacher, discuss *Needs* verses *Wants*. Bring magazine pictures in of things to which your students can relate and get a discussion going. Make two lists on the board, one for *Wants* and the other for *Needs* and let the children decide which column each item goes in.]

Today we're going to learn that God promises to provide for our needs. All we have to do is ask! Jesus taught us to pray, "Give us today the food we need."

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You for giving us everything that we need, including the food we eat and the air that we breathe. Thanks for taking care of us. It feels good to be loved by You. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Give us today the food we need. (Matthew 6:11)

Lesson

We've been learning the Lord's Prayer. Can anyone recite it? Let's review what we've learned so far:

Matthew 6:9-10a

Our Father in heaven

May Your name be kept holy.

May Your Kingdom come soon.

May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

First, we learned that God wants us to have a close relationship with Him. He wants us to call Him, "Father." He is a loving Father who cares about us, understands what we're going through, and can comfort us. When Jesus gave His disciples this "recipe" for prayer, He told them to begin prayer by calling out to, "Our Father in Heaven."

Next, Jesus taught us that it is important for us to keep God's name holy. That means that we are to keep His name special. When you pray, it's important to remember Who you're talking to. Then begin your prayer by honoring God's name. Pray, "Father, we admire You and adore You. We honor Your holy name."

Next, we learned that someday Jesus is coming back to Earth. When He gets here, He will set up His wonderful kingdom and live among us as our King. That will be an exciting day, indeed! That is a time we should all be longing for — and praying for. It thrills God's heart when we let Him know in prayer that we are eagerly looking forward to that day. Pray, "May Your Kingdom come soon."

In the meantime, we should be praying that people would do things God's way here on Earth! Pray, "Father, while we wait for Your return, help us to do Your will here on earth just as the angels do in heaven."

The next phrase in the prayer is...

Matthew 6:11

Give us today the food we need.

Jesus taught the disciples to pray first for God's will and then for their own needs. Some Bibles say it this way: "Give us today our daily bread." Bread is one of the most basic foods that we need. You could exist on bread and water alone, if that was all you could get. There is nothing wrong with asking God for your own basic needs. But remember to put God's will first.

Matthew 6:33

Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

Many children living in North America never experience true *want* because we live in such a rich land. You've probably never asked God to give you food to eat. But we must never lose sight of the fact that

God is our provider. He provides for us the food we eat. He makes the sun to shine and the rain to come down to water the plants. It's God who makes the seeds to sprout and grow into food to eat. God gives our moms and dads the jobs they have so they have money to buy the food we need to grow up strong and wise. It is God that provides for our every need. So, after we ask for God's will to be done, it's good and right to ask Him to provide for our needs. Just remember, God doesn't promise to give us everything we want. He knows what things would be good for us to have and what things we'd be better off without. He wants the very best for us. We can ask Him to provide for our needs.

Got the Gripes?

Having the right attitude makes a big difference. Have you ever been around someone that whines and complains a lot? How do you feel when you're around a complainer?

Tell me if you would complain about some of these situations:

- Your find out you're having brussels sprouts for dinner.
- Your brother ate the last piece of cake.
- Your teacher gave you extra homework.
- Your brother is sick and your dad asked you to do his chores on top of your regular chores.

Sometimes it's easy to complain when things aren't going our way. We can be upset when we can't have things that we want. What should you do when things don't go our way or we want something that we don't have? (Have a thankful heart!) The Bible tells us to be thankful in all things. Remember how gracious and kind God has already been to you.

When Jesus gave His disciples this "recipe" for prayer and He taught them to pray, "*Give us today the food we need*", it reminded them of a special time in their nation's history.

God's people had been slaves in Egypt. God sent Moses to come and rescue the people and lead them out of Egypt and take them to the Promised Land, just like how God sent Jesus to rescue us from our sins and lead us to Heaven.

Three days after they started off on their journey through the wilderness, they ran out of water. And they complained to Moses.

Exodus 15:22-24 [Teacher, read...]

Then Moses led the people of Israel away from the Red Sea, and they moved out into the desert of Shur. They traveled in this desert for three days without water. (23) When they came to the oasis of Marah, the water was too bitter to drink. So they called the place Marah (which means "bitter"). (24) Then the people complained and turned against Moses. "What are we going to drink?" they demanded.

After seeing God open the Red Sea for them to escape from their enemy, the Israelites should not have doubted that God would take care of their every need. But instead, they complained.

Exodus 15:25a

So Moses cried out to the Lord for help, and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. Moses threw it into the water and this made the water good to drink.

God provided for their needs. And, God has provided everything *you* need in life, too; maybe not everything you want, but everything you need. Complaining is sin. It's like slapping God in the face and saying, "*What You've given me isn't good enough!*" When you complain, you are saying that He doesn't know how to care of you or meet your needs.

The Israelites traveled on. Pretty soon the people ran out of the food they'd brought from Egypt and they began to worry again.

How do you think God's people felt when they realized that they were out of food? What would you do if you thought you might starve in the middle of a desert? Soon they were grumbling.

Exodus 16:2-3

There, too, the whole community of Israel complained about Moses and Aaron. (3) "If only the Lord had killed us back in Egypt," they moaned. "There we sat around pots filled with meat and ate all the bread we wanted. But now you have brought us into this wilderness to starve us all to death."

The people were so upset, they told Moses that they'd rather return to being slaves. They remembered all the food in Egypt and wished they still lived there, even if it meant they would be slaves again.

So you see, even after the miracle of throwing the tree into the bitter waters of Marah to sweeten them, they were complaining about the lack of food. How quickly they forgot how faithful God had been to them all along. He provided that tree to sweeten the bitter waters, just like He has provided the cross of Jesus to sweeten our lives.

God heard the people grumble. He wasn't happy about their complaining, but he loved them and knew that they needed food.

Exodus 16:11-12

Then the Lord said to Moses, (12) "I have heard the Israelites' complaints. Now tell them, 'In the evening you will have meat to eat, and in the morning you will have all the bread you want. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.'"

God promised to meet the Hebrew's need for food in the desert. They didn't have to whine or complain to get their needs met. We have a good God who *wants* to meet our needs!

And He has provided a spiritual food for us that is even more nourishing than bread. Jesus said...

John 6:27

But don't be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man can give you. For God the Father has given me the seal of his approval."

Jesus said not to worry about getting enough food to eat. Food is here today and gone tomorrow.

John 6:32-35

*Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, Moses didn't give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. (33) The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." (34) "Sir," they said, "give us that bread every day." (35) Jesus replied, "**I am the bread of life.** Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."*

Was Jesus telling his disciples that He was a loaf of bread? No! Jesus was telling His disciples that just like the Father gave the Israelites manna from heaven during their 40-year journey through the wilderness to the Promised Land, the Father gives Jesus to people during their journey through life towards heaven.

Jesus was comparing Himself with bread, a common, everyday thing that everybody can understand. [Break and eat a loaf of bread with the children. Discuss similarities of bread and Jesus.]

Bread is the basic food of life (the staff of life). You and I cannot live very long without eating, can we? Bread brings you nourishment and makes you grow. In the same way that food is the only source of life here on earth, Jesus is the only source of eternal life.

As our bodies feel hunger for food, so our souls feel hunger for forgiveness and peace. Only Jesus can satisfy the hunger of your soul. Just as bread will not do you any good unless you take it into your body, Jesus will not save you until you receive Him as your Savior from sin. Once you do, the Lord will continue to "feed" you spiritually through His Word.

So, you see, the Israelites didn't need to whine and complain. God wasn't about to let them starve. And, we don't need to whine or complain to have our needs met, either. God promises to provide for our needs. All we have to do is ask! Jesus taught us to pray, "*Give us today the food we need.*"

Closing Prayer

[Teacher, allow the children to thank God for being their great Provider.]

Father, we have many things that we need you to provide for us. Thanks so much for loving us and wanting to provide for our needs. We will ask you for everything that we need. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Picture This

[Teacher, let the children cut pictures out of magazines and catalogs of things they can ask God for. Then after you collect quite a few, draw a line down the middle of a poster board and write *Wants* at the top of one side and *Needs* at the top of the other.

Set a poster board in the middle of the circle and go through the pictures one by one. Let the children decide together whether it is a *want* or a *need*. Let children glue the pictures to the poster.]

Bread is one of the most basic foods that we need. When Jesus taught us to pray "*Give us today our daily bread,*" He was telling us to ask for the things that we need. God doesn't promise to give us everything that we want, but He will give us what we need.

Game Center

Use the following questions in a game of your choice:

Review questions:

1. What should you pray for *before* you ask God to provide for your needs? (For His will to be done.)
2. Why do we say that God is our Provider? (He provides the food we eat, the air we breathe and our very life itself.)
3. Why is it that we complain about things sometimes? (Things don't go our way; we get upset when we can't have things we want.)
4. What should you do when things don't go your way? (Have a thankful heart.)
5. Why did the people complain to Moses after they had been rescued from slavery in Egypt? (First, they needed water and then, they needed food. They didn't trust God to supply their needs.)
6. Why is it a sin to complain? (It's like saying that God doesn't know how to take care of you.)
7. How do you think the people felt when they realized that God had provided for their needs by giving them the manna?
8. How does God provide for your needs?
9. Why is it important to ask God to provide for the things we need?
10. How do you think God feels when you complain about things you don't have?
11. Why doesn't God always give us what we want?

12. What's the best part of knowing that we can ask God for what we need?
13. How does God meet your need for "*daily bread*"?
14. Why does God want us to ask him to provide for all our needs? (It proves our dependence on Him.)
15. Why did Jesus compare Himself to a loaf of bread? (Like bread brings you physical nourishment, Jesus is our source of eternal life.)

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