

Jesus Feeds 5,000

(Mark 6:30-44)

Pre-Session Warm Up

[Discuss different kinds of needs people may have. Help the children discover such things as: not enough food, no winter coat, no toys, a crippling handicap, no friends, worries or fears, struggles with schoolwork. Write their ideas on the board.] Do you know someone who is poor...lonely...mean...worried? What is their greatest need? What could you do to help these people? You might say, "I'm just a kid! What can I do?"

A little boy in our lesson today was used in a mighty way to help a lot of hungry people.

Opening Prayer

Father, there are so many people in the world today that have such great needs. Help us not to be stingy or greedy. I pray that You will make us keenly aware of other people's needs and show us ways that we can help them. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

He who gives to the poor will not lack, but he who hides his eyes will have many curses. (Proverbs 28:27)

Lesson

By now Jesus' disciples were going out on their own to teach people the things they were learning from Jesus. We pick up the story today as they were returning to Jesus. They wanted to tell Him all that they were doing among the people.

Mark 6:30

The apostles returned to Jesus from their ministry tour and told him all they had done and taught.

Doing God's work is very important, but sometimes it can be very tiring. Many times missionaries don't get to sleep in comfortable places and often don't get to eat well, either. Jesus and His disciples were exhausted after intense ministry. They wanted to be alone to rest away from the crowds...

Mark 6:31-32

Then Jesus said, "Let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile." He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn't even have time to eat. (32) So they left by boat for a quiet place, where they could be alone.

Jesus and his disciples did not find it easy to get the rest they needed!

Mark 6:33

But many people recognized them and saw them leaving, and people from many towns ran ahead along the shore and got there ahead of them.

As Jesus and His disciples sailed across the lake, many could see His boat coming in. Thousands of people ran to meet Jesus. Maybe they had heard about or seen the miracles He had done. When Jesus saw the crowd He wasn't angry, He was moved with compassion.

Mark 6:34

But many people recognized them and saw them leaving, and people from many towns ran ahead along the shore and got there ahead of them.

As the Lord Jesus looked across the crowd, He knew the needs of each one. He knew they needed someone to love them, they needed peace and joy in their lives, and most of all they needed salvation from their sins. Jesus could meet their needs. He came to earth to show people a better way to live – God's way. And to take the punishment of sin – the wrong things we all do that cause worry,

sadness, and separation from Him. Jesus knew he could meet the needs of each one in that giant crowd and He can meet every one of your needs, too.

The disciples loved Jesus and knew how tired He was. They were all hungry, too. So after Jesus had been teaching and ministering to the people for a long time, the disciples tried to encourage Jesus to send the crowd away to buy food.

Mark 6:35-36

Late in the afternoon his disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. (36) Send the crowds away so they can go to the nearby farms and villages and buy something to eat."

The disciples were still confused, still unbelieving. They did not realize that Jesus could miraculously provide for them. They were so busy ministering to people they hadn't fully recognized that Jesus was the all-powerful God, the Creator of the universe, who could take care of every problem! Jesus can satisfy all of our needs, even hunger!

Mark 6:37

But Jesus said, "You feed them." "With what?" they asked. "We'd have to work for months to earn enough money to buy food for all these people!"

How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus told them to feed all those people? [Teacher, let the children respond.] Have you ever seen people in great need? Have you seen homeless people on the side of the road with signs that say, "*Will work for food?*" Perhaps you've felt bad when you've seen the needs of others and wondered what you could do.

When Jesus asked the disciples to provide food for over 5,000 people, they asked in amazement if they should go and spend eight month's wages on bread! They probably thought it was hopeless.

Jesus wanted to use the disciples in this impossible situation to meet the needs of others. But, what could they do? Jesus asked them to search for food among the crowd.

Mark 6:38

"How much bread do you have?" he asked. "Go and find out." They came back and reported, "We have five loaves of bread and two fish."

They returned to Jesus with a little boy who had five loaves and two fish. Then, Jesus helped the disciples organize the crowd into groups.

Mark 6:39-40

Then Jesus told the disciples to have the people sit down in groups on the green grass. (40) So they sat down in groups of fifty or a hundred.

Then Jesus thanked God the Father for the food.

Mark 6:41

Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he kept giving the bread to the disciples so they could distribute it to the people. He also divided the fish for everyone to share.

Maybe the little boy who shared his lunch wondered how the Lord Jesus could use so little to feed so many. But he was willing to give the little bit he had.

Jesus can use you to meet the needs of others, too. Why would it be important to let Jesus use you to bless others? When you are sharing with someone else, no matter who it is, it's like sharing it with Jesus! You get the biggest blessing! It's not how much you have to give, but how willing you are to give it. As you share the little bit you have with others, Jesus will use you in a mighty way! The little boy must have watched in amazement as Jesus commanded the disciples to pass out his little bit of lunch to that huge crowd.

Mark 6:42

They all ate as much as they wanted,

The disciples did everything they could by gathering the available food and organizing the people into groups. Then, in answer to prayer, God did the impossible. When you are facing a seemingly impossible task, do what you can and ask God to do the rest. He may see fit to make the impossible happen!

Mark 6:43

and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftover bread and fish.

The disciples gathered twelve baskets full of leftovers (one for each disciple!)

Mark 6:44

and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftover bread and fish..

There were probably 15,000 or 20,000 people in all, counting the women and children.

Why didn't Jesus simply make food appear by His power? [Teacher, let the children respond.] He wanted the little boy and the disciples to be part of the miracle. He wanted them to share the joy of meeting the needs of so many people. Isn't it exciting to know that God can use you to meet the needs of others? You may be saying, "I'm just a child. How could I be used by God?" Will you let God use your two hands, five fingers, two eyes, two ears, two lips, two feet to do His work in special ways this week? As you share the little bit you have with someone else, God can multiply it in ways you can't imagine. If you don't have food or clothes to share, give a hug or some kind words. Sometime people just need a friend to talk to and play with. Let's ask Jesus to help us see the needs of others.

Closing Prayer

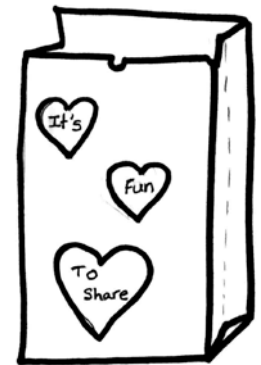
Father, we want to be Your arms and hands. We want to be used by you to be a blessing to others. Help us see the needs of others. Then give us the strength and ability to help meet those needs. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

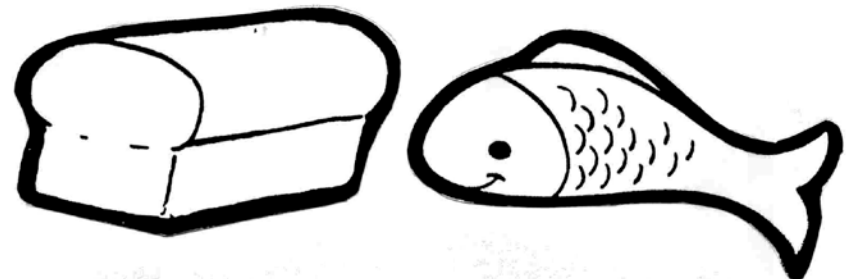
It's Fun To Share Lunch Sacks

Have each child decorate a lunch bag with hearts, ribbons, and so forth. Write on the hearts "It's fun to share." In each sack put 2 cheese fish crackers and 5 soda crackers. Let each child give their sack to someone special.



Take Home Paper

Using the patterns below, draw five loaves and two fishes on take-home papers. Encourage children to record in one loaf or fish each day a way Jesus used them to meet a need.



Game Center**Fish and Bread Tic-Tack-Toe**

1. Cut out strips of paper for the lines of tic-tac-toe (or use yarn).
2. Give one team "fish" pieces; the other team "bread" pieces.
3. When a team correctly answers a question, they can place their marker in a square.
4. The team that gets three in a row across, diagonally or vertically is the winner.

12-Basket Bean Bag Toss

Set out 12 baskets of various shapes and sizes. Number them. Challenge children to toss a bean bag into a basket. Give them the number of Gold Fish snack crackers per the number of the basket.

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. Why were Jesus and His disciples so tired? (They had spent a lot of time ministering to others and probably hadn't eaten or slept well.)
2. Where were Jesus and His disciples going when they were met by thousands of people? (They wanted to be alone to rest away from the crowds.)
3. Why did the disciples tell Jesus to send the crowds away? (Jesus had been teaching a long time and everyone was tired and hungry.)
4. What did Jesus tell the disciples to do about the hungry crowd? (He told them, "*You give them something to eat.*")

5. How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus told them to feed all those people? (Overwhelmed with the impossible task.)
6. How much money would it have taken to feed all those people? (About 8 month's wages.)
7. How did Jesus tell His disciples to meet the needs of the people? (Go and see how much food was among the people.)
8. Who was the only one who offered to share his food? (A little boy had 5 loaves and 2 fish!)
9. What did Jesus do before He broke the loaves? (He thanked God the Father for the food.)
10. Why is it important to let Jesus use you to meet the needs of others? (You get to be used by the Lord to bless others!)
11. Did people get enough to eat, or only enough to tide them over until they could get home? (They were all filled!)
12. How much leftovers were there? (12 baskets full.)
13. Why didn't Jesus simply make food appear by His power? (He wanted the disciples and the little boy to be part of the miracle; to share in the joy of meeting the needs of so many.)
14. What are some ways you can be used by God to be a blessing to others?