

THE FISH-AND- BREAD SIGN

Jesus Feeds
Five Thousand
John 6:1–15
AD 32

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

Our God Jesus provides for us.

BIBLE VERSE

God . . . richly provides us with everything. 1 Timothy 6:17

LEARNER GOAL

I can share the confidence that God has provided all that we need for this life and the next.

LAW & GOSPEL

Our faith is weak, and we fail to trust in God to give us what we need.

For the sake of Jesus, God promises to provide for all our earthly and spiritual needs.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

A crowd of at least five thousand men, plus women and children, had gathered to hear Jesus preach. When challenged to find a way to feed the hungry crowd, the disciples question how this is possible. But Andrew brings one boy's lunch—five barley loaves and two fish. Miraculously multiplying this meager meal, Jesus feeds them all, with abundant leftovers.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read John 6:1–15 and notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read “Apologetics Helps” on the back page in preparation for the “Live” section.

IN DEPTH Read parallel accounts from the Gospels, including Matthew 14:13–21; Mark 6:30–44; and Luke 9:10–17.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- Small ball or bread roll
- Large sheets of paper or a whiteboard
- Markers or dry-erase markers
- Slips of paper

FOR EVERY LESSON

- Student copies of *Defend Journal*
- Bibles
- Pens
- Shareable images from digital resource center
- Supplies for bonus activities



LEADER NOTE

As an option, play using the letters of the alphabet. Or instead of bouncing a ball, toss a bread roll from person to person.



DEFEND JOURNAL

Hand out journals and turn to Lesson 13.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Engage your artistic learners with “Signs.”

LAUNCH

WALK-IN QUESTION

What’s your favorite kind of bread?

DAILY BREAD

Have everyone sit in a circle. Name a need, such as “bread,” and toss a ball to someone. The catcher names a need beginning with the first or last letter of the need you named (“bed” or “drink”). Continue until everyone has at least one chance to list an item.

SAY What is one need that you have right now? Say a silent prayer, asking God to help you with that need.

PRAY Heavenly Father, You give us all that we need for this life. You gave us Your Son, Jesus, so that we can have eternal life with You. Help us to always put our faith and trust in You. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

LEARN

READ “THE BIG PICTURE,” AND TALK IT OUT

▷ Why did so many people flock to see Jesus?

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Jesus had healed many people and cast out demons; when Jesus taught, it was with authority, not as the scribes taught; Jesus showed compassion on people and shared God’s love.

LEARN ABOUT “THE FISH-AND-BREAD SIGN”

Ask youth to put themselves in the disciples’ sandals and make notes in their journals as you read through the following Bible texts.

Read **John 6:1–6**.

▷ What was the “test” that Jesus gave to Philip and the other disciples? Why did He test them?

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Jesus asked His disciples to find a way to feed the huge crowd of people.
- Jesus wanted to strengthen the faith of His disciples. He drew attention to the fact that feeding all those people would be impossible. But God is in the business of doing the impossible.
- God never tempts, but He does test. His tests help to strengthen our faith in Him.

Read **John 6:7–14**.

▷ What lesson did this miracle, or sign, teach the disciples?

- The miracle was a reminder of how God provides for His people. It pointed to Jesus as the chosen one, the Messiah.

Read **John 6:15**.

▷ What did the people want to do, and why wouldn’t Jesus let them?

DISCUSSION POINTS

- The people wanted to make Jesus their king by force.
- Jesus didn’t come to be an earthly king. He came to win victory, not over Rome, but over sin, death, and the devil.

LIVE

DISCUSS “JESUS, BREAD KING?”

Have youth gather around a whiteboard or a large sheet of paper as they consider the question below. Encourage them to write as many things as they can think of. Then continue the discussion, guided by the discussion points below. Youth may want to write their own questions and thoughts in their journals as well.

► What do people want God to do for them?

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Talk about the things that people want God to do for them.
- People today sometimes think of God as our “bread king”—a power to invoke when we want something or need help and have run out of options.
- God wants us to come to Him with our spiritual *and* earthly needs. But He wants us to know Him as our heavenly Father and Savior, not just some power to be summoned.
- We sometimes become so focused on asking for our earthly needs that we forget about our spiritual needs.
- Our most important need is the forgiveness of sins that we have through faith in Jesus as our Savior.

CONSIDER “THIS IS A TEST”

Jesus tested the disciples, asking them how they would feed the crowd. He wanted them to learn to trust in Him as their Savior. God tests us too, always with the purpose of strengthening our faith in Him.

Read **James 1:2–3**: “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.”

► How does this Bible verse change your view of trials you might suffer?

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

As a check for understanding, have youth write on a slip of paper and leave with you the answer to this question: **What does God do for you?**

LEAVE

Read the Bible Verse, written in the *Defend Journal*:

God . . . richly provides us with everything. 1 Timothy 6:17

Ask for prayer requests. Offer to pray, or invite a student to pray for everyone.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus is the true bread of life, who gives us what we really need—forgiveness of sins and the promise of eternal life.



LEADER NOTE

Use the “Apologetics Helps” on the back of this leaflet for support as you discuss this question and related topics of interest.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Help youth live out their faith in service with “Feeding Friends.”



SHAREABLE DOWNLOAD

Connect with youth before and after the lesson by using the shareable images from the digital resource center.

APOLOGETICS HELPS

DEFEND THE FAITH

Aside from Jesus' resurrection, the account of Jesus feeding five thousand is the only miracle that is found in all four Gospels. Matthew adds "besides women and children" to the five thousand number, which means that the actual number of people fed that day could have been between fifteen and twenty thousand!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

► If God gives us what we need, why do some people go hungry?

Relief organizations agree that there is enough food in the world to feed everyone. Then what's the problem? The problem is that not everyone has access to that food. That is where we come in. God made Adam and Eve stewards of His creation (see Genesis 1:29–30). God provides for His creation by working in and through His creation—that includes us.

► How can I help provide for others?

Jesus said to His disciples, "You give them something to eat" (Matthew 14:16). God works through His followers to care for others. We think our little will do little, but God can use our little to work great things.

Martin Luther said, "A Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbor. Otherwise he is not a Christian. He lives in Christ through faith, in his neighbor through love. By faith he is caught up beyond himself into God. By love he descends beneath himself into his neighbor. Yet he always remains in God and in his love" (*The Freedom of a Christian*, 1520; quoted in *Luther's Works*, vol. 31, p. 371).



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God provides for all I need, and He shows me how to serve others with the gifts He gives.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I am a steward of God's gifts, using the time, talents, and treasures that He has given me to serve in the places He has called me to be.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how this lesson builds on previous learning for each age.

ADULT

I can identify and thank God for the different ways He provides for me in my various vocations.

YOUTH

I can share the confidence that God has provided all that we need for this life and the next.

ELEMENTARY

I understand that our Lord Jesus provides for us every day.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know Jesus gives me what I need.

BONUS ACTIVITIES

BASKET TOSS

5–10 minutes

Bring beanbags or rolls. Put baskets around the room. Let students take turns tossing the rolls or beanbags into baskets. Make it a class challenge: students work together to reach a set goal in a certain amount of time.

SIGNS

10–15 minutes

Why are Jesus' miracles sometimes called signs? They pointed to Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God. Have youth make signs to tell who Jesus is. Distribute mini canvases or card stock and paints or markers.

FEEDING FRIENDS

15–20 minutes

Make a snack for the younger kids! Bring in round and fish-shaped crackers. Encourage teens to serve the younger children and clean up. Ask one or two youth to explain how Jesus takes care of us in many ways, including snacks and older friends.