

Jesus Feeds 5,000 People

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Scene Summary

Jesus feeds 5,000 people presents the miraculous story of bread and fish that multiples. Scenes include: Jesus speaks to a crowd...Jesus asks Philip how to provide food...tells disciples to feed the people...a boy offers his lunch...Jesus blesses the bread and fish...He breaks the food...the disciples distribute it...the people are satisfied...they gather 12 baskets of leftovers...the people recognize Jesus as a prophet from God.

Scripture

(Luke 9:11-17 NIV) 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. { 12} 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." { 13} 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." { 14} (About five thousand men were there.) But he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." { 15} The disciples did so, and everybody sat down. { 16} 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. { 17} They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

(Mark 6:34-44 NIV) When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. { 35} By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. { 36} Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." { 37} But he answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages ! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" { 38} "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five--and two fish." { 39} Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. { 40}

So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. {41} Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. {42} They all ate and were satisfied, {43} and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. {44} The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

(John 6:1-14 NIV) Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), {2} and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick. {3} Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. {4} The Jewish Passover Feast was near. {5} When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "**Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?**" {6} He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. {7} Philip answered him, "Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!" {8} Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, {9} "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" {10} Jesus said, "**Have the people sit down.**" There was plenty of grass in that place, and the men sat down, about five thousand of them. {11} Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. {12} When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "**Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.**" {13} So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten. {14} After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world."

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Players

- **Narrator** – The play's "catechist" or teacher should be a good reader with a clear voice.
- **Jesus** – God's one and only Son, our Savior.
- **Philip** – The disciple who was tested.
- **Andrew** – The disciple who brought the boy to Jesus.
- **Disciples** – The other disciples.
- **Person 1, 2** – People that came to hear Jesus.
- **Blind person** – Person lead to Jesus.
- **Lame person** – Person limping to Jesus.
- **Crowd** – Others that came also.

Special Props

- Normal items from the prop box such as cloaks, veils, robes and headdresses.
- The initial small loaves and fish.

Script – Jesus Feeds 5000 People

Narrator: [stage right] The people were so eager to see Jesus that they followed Him into the country. He told them about God. He made sick people well.

[Everyone comes on stage from the left to center stage. Some are blind, sick with pain or lame. Some are helpers to those who are sick. Jesus stands; everyone else sits.]

Person 1: [bringing a blind friend to Jesus] Can you help my friend?

Blind person: [begging] Lord, if I could see again.

Jesus: [touches the person] Be healed!

Blind person: [no longer blind, now very excited] I can see! I can see! Praise God!

Person 2: [helps a friend with a cripple leg to Jesus]

Lame person: [pleading] Lord, I cannot work with this bad leg. Please help me.

Jesus: [touches the person] Be healed!

Lame person: [excited now, jumps and dances with person 2] My leg! My leg is works again. Thank you! Thank you Jesus!

Jesus: Do to others as you would have them do to you. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Narrator: The people stayed and listened to Jesus all day. [pause] It was getting late and soon the sun would be going down. Philip went over to speak with Jesus.

Philip: [going over to Jesus] It is time to eat. The people have no food. Send them away to the towns and villages so that they can buy themselves something to eat.

Jesus: You give them something to eat.

Philip: [surprised] Where shall we buy food for this crowd? [shaking his head] There are so many people, even if we had all the money a man could earn in half a year, it would not be enough to buy bread for everyone here.

Andrew: [speaking to Jesus] There is a boy here with his lunch. He has five brown rolls and two small fish. [looking around] But there are so many people.

Jesus: [to the boy smiling, taking the boy's lunch] Thank you for sharing your lunch.

Jesus: [to the disciples] Tell the people to sit down on the grass. Have them sit together, about fifty in a group. [takes the bread and fish, looks up to heaven] Heavenly Father, we thank you for this food. Amen.

Jesus: [breaks the bread and hands the pieces to the disciples; pointing them to the crowd] Give the bread to the people. [the disciples turn and go]

Narrator: [excited] As they gave the food the disciples soon realized there was always more. Back and forth the disciples went with fish and bread.

Philip: [handing a piece of bread to a man sitting down] Here, take another piece. There is plenty of bread and fish for everyone.

Narrator: There was plenty of food. Everyone ate and ate.

Andrew: [to members of a group] Would you like more fish or bread?

Person 1: [with a contented sound] No thank you. We can't eat anymore.

Narrator: The disciples sat down to eat too.

Jesus: [to the disciples] Gather up all the food that is left. We must not waste it.

Narrator: [as the disciples gather up the remaining food] The disciples went back through the crowd, gathering up all the food that people had not eaten.

Philip: [excited] Look at all of the food left over!

Andrew: [amazed] 12 baskets of leftover from one boy's lunch!

Blind person: [with joy] Thank God, I can see!

Lame person: [excited, jumping] I can walk!

Person 1: Everyone had plenty to eat in this wilderness.

Person 2: Jesus must be the Prophet that God promised to send.

Everyone: Let's make Jesus our King.

The End

Supplemental information

After Jesus began His public ministry, He seldom had an opportunity to be alone. During the day, He taught His disciples about God and what God wanted them to do. Sometimes He taught the people about God also, and often He healed those that were sick.

One day, Jesus wanted to get away from the crowd. Perhaps He wanted to rest, or to have some quiet time with His disciples. He and His disciples got into a boat and rowed away from the city of Capernaum to a quiet place, farther down the shore of Galilee. The people who had been left behind wanted to see Jesus. They wanted to see the Person that could make sick people well. They wanted to hear Him talk about God, for they had heard that He was a great Teacher. The people watched as the little boat pulled away from shore. Quickly they guessed where Jesus and his disciples were going so they hurried along the road to the place, about five miles away.

It was springtime, maybe early April. As Jesus and His disciples neared the shore they saw the green grass on the hillside and the fresh wildflowers growing here and there. When they got out of the boat, they saw that the people were already arriving. The people were so happy to see Jesus.

Jesus did not want to turn the people away. He went up on the hillside, sat down, and taught the people about God. The people listened carefully for hours. It was now past mealtime. Jesus knew that the people were hungry. They did not take time to pack a lunch when the people left Capernaum so hastily. There was no place to buy food. Philip pointed out, even if they had a place to buy food, it would take a lot of money to buy food for such a large crowd. There were about five thousand. Philip mentions “200 pennyworth of bread.” A penny in those days bought much more than a penny does in our money today. A penny was the average wage for a man for a full day’s work. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the Samaritan gave the innkeeper two pennies to take care of the sick man. So two hundred pennies would be the amount that a man would earn in two hundred days. That is more than six months.

A young boy offered to share his lunch with Jesus. The lunch was two dried fish and five brown rolls his mother had made from barley flour. It was just enough to feed one hungry boy. Jesus knew just what He would do to feed the crowd. First he told the disciples to seat the people on the soft grass in groups of fifty. Jesus knew that they would be more comfortable if they were seated. It would be easier to serve them if they were seated in groups.

Jesus then took the boy’s lunch and He prayed to His Father in heaven to bless the bread and the fish. Then He began to break the bread and fish into pieces, giving them to the disciples. As they were broken, there was always more. There was plenty of bread and fish for the people to have as much as they wanted.

Jesus had one boy’s small lunch. Through His power He made the lunch large enough to feed the entire crowd, plus there were leftovers. When everyone had finished eating, there was

more food left over than what the boy had given to Him. The people could hardly believe what had happened.

The people thought that Jesus was a great Prophet. They did not understand that Jesus was God's Son. Some of the men in the crowd thought that they would like to make Jesus their King. They thought that Jesus could lead an army against the Romans and make the Jews free people again. Jesus knew what the men were thinking. He knew that this was not His Father's plan. Jesus told his disciples to get back into the boat and go back to Capernaum while He sent the crowd away.

Suggested Activity

Perhaps there are children in your class that do not regularly say grace before meals. Why not teach them a table grace that they can say at home or school before eating. This story would be a good occasion in your classroom to serve cookies and juice. Use the blessing you just taught them before the children eat.

A Table Blessing:

Thank You for the world so fair;
Thank You for Your loving care.
Thank You for this food so good;
Help me do the things I should.
Amen.