

Miraculously Making More...

Jesus Feeds the Crowd

Matthew 14:13-21 KJV

Bible Lesson & Activities for Children



THE **SUNDAY SCHOOL** STORE

A Lot from a Little



Jesus can do the impossible, and in His hands, our meager offerings grow exponentially! When we trust and rely on Him for all things, nothing is out of the question. These are the important and memorable truths that we can take from the remarkable story of the feeding of the 5,000. From just a couple of fish and five loaves, Jesus fed a multitude. He cares for our needs and will always provide for them, even in unexpected ways. This message reminds children that everything we have comes from God, and we can lean on Him always.

This miraculous feeding story found in Matthew 14 is a powerful and important reminder that Jesus supplies all of our needs. He cares for our bodies as well as our souls, and promises to provide for us. We might think that some tasks are out of our hands, but nothing is too hard for Him. When we are willing to offer whatever we have to the Lord, He can multiply and use it for His glory!

Passage: Matthew 14:13-21

Target Audience: Kindergarten-6th grade

Materials Needed: Construction paper; decorative supplies; glue; markers or crayons; tape; scissors; paper plates; baskets; toy or paper fish and loaves; goldfish crackers or Swedish fish; sponge or food coloring (optional); boxes or containers; Bibles.

More Resources Online

- Watch the [video demonstration of the object lesson](#).
- Watch the [video example for the craft projects](#).
- Watch the [video Bible story "Jesus Feeds the 5000"](#) from Saddleback Kids Club
- Watch the [video Bible story "Jesus Feeds 5000"](#) from Crossroads Kids
- For more free illustrations, visit [Christian Clip Arts](#) and [Ministry-To-Children](#)

Object Lesson (5 minutes)

Greet children and offer a small snack...

Hello, children of God!

Have you ever felt hungry before? Chances are, if you are a human and alive, you have experienced hunger. Everyone needs to eat. It's a basic requirement of survival. Food is part of our daily lives. If you think about it, you probably woke up and had breakfast today, right? At some point, you'll have lunch, and later you'll need dinner. We rely on food for our physical health and strength. We can't live without it.

Speaking of food, I have something here that I brought to share with you all. How would you like a little snack? *Bring out a paper lunch bag.* Do you think this will feed everyone here? *Pull out a very small snack, like a couple of crackers.* Maybe if I split these into really small pieces, I could give everyone a bite. *Attempt to split the small snack into enough pieces for everyone to share.* That's not going to go very far, is it? It would probably help if I had more for you, wouldn't it? *Bring out more of the snack, enough to pass around.* Good thing I was able to bring out more of that!

Well, it's pretty obvious that this was not a miracle. I just had more of the snack in the bag. But today we are talking about an event that happened in the Bible, when Jesus did miraculously make more food. Jesus was teaching and preaching one day, and there were huge crowds gathered around. Thousands of people had come to hear him and to be healed. It was getting near the end of the day, and the disciples told Jesus that everyone should be sent home for dinner. Jesus gave the disciples some strange instructions, though. He said, "you don't need to send them home. Give them something to eat." Well, there were over 5,000 people there (the Bible (that was just counting the men,

and not the women and children). There was no way the disciples could afford to buy food to feed that many people. They managed to find someone in the crowd who had come prepared, and they brought Jesus the only food they had: five loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus blessed the food, thanking God for it. Then the disciples started passing it out, and something remarkable happened: the food didn't run out! They didn't even have to break it into tiny pieces. They kept on handing it out, and they even had leftovers afterwards! From one simple meal, Jesus fed a multitude.

There are important things we can learn from this true story. For one thing, we see that Jesus cares about our needs, and will provide for them. He knew the people there needed to eat, and He gave them more than enough food. We can trust Him to take care of our needs, too. We have to have food for our bodies, yes, but God will also account for our spiritual needs, taking care of our souls and giving us everything we require for life. We know that we can rely on the Lord for everything.

In this story, we also see how Jesus can take what we have and do amazing things with it. Nothing is impossible for God. Perhaps you don't think that your abilities or talents are that great. Maybe you don't think you can offer much to the church, the community, or the world in general. Bring whatever you have to Jesus. Ask God to help you use what you have for Him. God can do a whole lot with just a little. If He can feed thousands of people with a couple of fish and some bread, imagine what He can do with your life! He does all the work if we are willing to be used.

We need Jesus for everything. We need Him for each breath we take and every move we make. And we can trust that He will always be with us and will give us everything. Bring Him your life, and watch how He will provide for you and use it!

Prayer: (Invite the children to repeat each line)

Dear God,

Thank you for providing for us

And giving us what we need.

Help us to trust in you

And use whatever gifts we have.

Thank you for your love.

We love you, God!

In Jesus name, Amen!

Game & Activities Suggestions

(10 minutes)



The feeding of the 5,000 (plus) is an amazing miracle, and a great story to share as a reminder of God's power and providence. Elements of the meal, multiplying, and miracles can be used to spark attention. To get students thinking and ready to learn, consider an activity opener along these lines:

- **Feed them fast relay:** Have students stand in a line, and give the child at the back of each line a basket. On signal, the basket holder will pass the basket up to the front of the line, and that child will run across the room, pick up a fish or loaf of bread (paper cut-out or a toy), and place it in the basket. They will then run back and hand the basket to the last person in line. Play continues until one line has retrieved five loaves and two fish.
- **Loaves and fishes snack:** Have students help prepare and enjoy a simple snack of "bread and fish." Use goldfish crackers or Swedish fish candy, and crackers or small rolls. You could have them make an extra bag to take home for later and celebrate the story.
- **Watch the spread:** observe a small science experiment to note how God can take a little bit of something and make it grow. Consider placing a few drops of food coloring into water or milk to watch the color spread, or watching bubbles form in water from a small amount of dish soap. You could also dip a sponge into water and watch how it absorbs the liquid.
- **Fish Scramble:** This game is played much like "fruit basket upset." Arrange kids in a circle of chairs, with one student in the center. Designate students as different types of fish (bass, trout, salmon, etc.). Call out the fish names, and have all students assigned to that fish get up and switch spots, while the caller in the center tries to take a spot. If you call out "fishnet upset", all students switch spots.
- **We need food!** Discuss favorite foods and why we need to eat to survive.

Explain that the story today involves an amazing miracle of Jesus that involved food. We will learn how Jesus cares about our needs, and He will always provide us with what we need for life!

Main Bible Teaching (15 minutes)



This passage is not very lengthy, but packs in a powerful lesson. If discussing in depth, take just a verse or two at a time to review and talk about. This is a fun story to act out in parts, or you can simply take turns reading. For younger students, read a simplified or story book version.

It might help to begin with a little bit of context: this story takes place directly after the death of John the Baptist. The cousin and good friend of Jesus had just been killed, and He wanted to get away from everyone and have some time to process His grief alone. However, His plans were interrupted...

Matthew 14:13-14 KJV *When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities. (14) And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.*

Jesus had just heard that his friend had died, and He wanted to retreat for some solitude. However, the people followed Him, and by the time He got to shore from His boat, there was a huge crowd gathered. Jesus didn't ignore them or tell them to go away, though. He felt sorry for the people and He knew that they needed Him. So He took the time to be with them and heal them.

Ask: When do you want to just be alone? What do you think we can learn from the fact that Jesus had times He wanted to be alone, too? (He was human, after all! If He wanted time with just God, it's okay for us to want that, too).

Matthew 14:15-16 KJV *And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. (16) But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.*

After a whole day of healing and helping, there were still crowds of people gathered around Jesus. The disciples thought they should break up the group and let everyone go home for dinner. Jesus, however, gave them a very strange-sounding instruction: He told the disciples to give the people something to eat! There was no way they could get food enough to feed such a huge crowd. They must have been pretty confused and worried.

Ask: What is your favorite thing to eat? What would you make if you had to prepare a meal for a really big group of people?

Matthew 14:17-18 KJV *And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. (18) He said, Bring them hither to me.*

At least someone in the crowd had a little food, but it certainly wasn't much. The disciples told Jesus that all they had were five loaves of bread and a couple of fish. Jesus did not say "I can't do anything with that", though. All He asked was that the disciples bring the food to Him.

Sometimes we think that we don't have anything God can use. Maybe we feel like we aren't enough to really count, or we can't do anything that will please or help the Lord. But God can do anything! It doesn't matter what we have. We can bring any talents or tithes to the table, trusting in Him to use them for His purposes. Jesus had quite a surprise for the disciples, who thought they were bringing Him very little.

Ask: What are some talents or special gifts that God has given you, that He might be able to use?

Matthew 14:19-21 KJV *And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. (20) And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. (21) And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.*

Jesus started out with a blessing. He thanked God for the food, though it didn't seem like much, and He had the disciples start to pass it around to the crowds. A remarkable thing happened then. The disciples didn't have to break off tiny crumbs to stretch out the meal. They didn't run out right away. They started to feed the crowds with the meal, and they just kept passing out food. Everyone ate and had enough! Not only that, there were twelve baskets of leftovers. All 5,000 men (plus women and children) had plenty to eat, just from a couple of fish and some bread.

It's amazing to see how Jesus could take a small amount of something, and multiply it to a much greater amount. He cared about what the people needed, even supper. He could have made their hunger go away or called a meal out of nothing, but He allowed the disciples to be part of making this miracle happen. He allows us to be part of His work, too! Jesus is still the one directing events, but He can use us in remarkable ways to accomplish His purposes. Jesus will take care of and provide for all of our needs, and we can always trust in Him!

Ask: What are some ways that God provides for you on a daily basis?

Encourage students to look for small miracles in their everyday lives. Invite them to consider how they can serve God and offer themselves up for His work. Discuss how

important it is that we can count on Him for everything we need in life, and He can do miraculous things with whatever we bring Him.

Close with prayer, thanking God for taking care of us and asking for His help in loving and serving Him and His people.

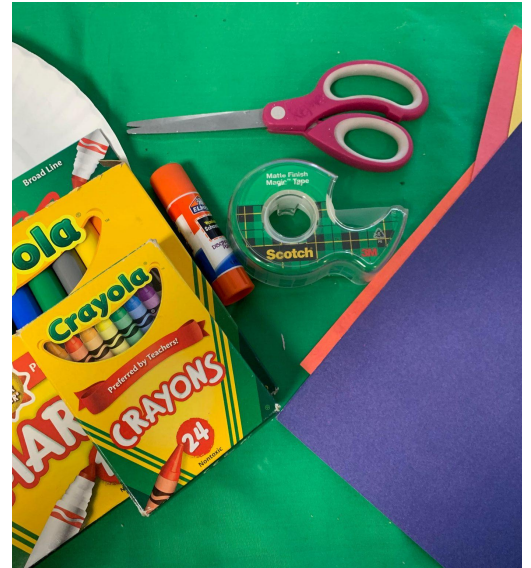
Craft Activities (15 minutes)

The story of Jesus feeding the crowds is a remarkable miracle, and a great reminder of how we can trust in and rely on God to care for our needs. When we are willing to give Him all we have, amazing things are possible! These crafts celebrate the story and its messages. A "Growing Fish Line" paper chain recalls how Jesus made a little lunch stretch far. A "Loaves and Fish Tithe Box" combines story elements with student offerings. Let's get crafty!

Craft one: "Growing Fish Line"

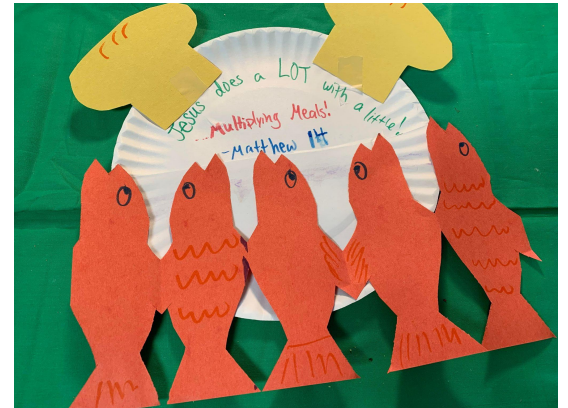
You will need:

- Paper plate(s)
- Construction paper or cardstock
- Markers or crayons
- scissors
- Tape or glue



Procedure:

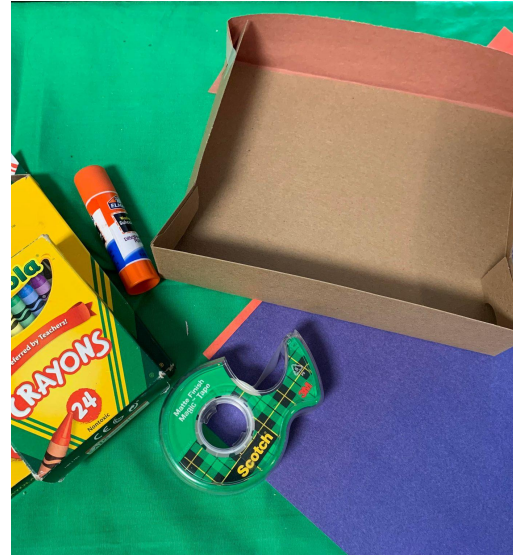
1. Decorate a paper plate backdrop. Add color, verses, and captions to commemorate the story of the feeding of the 5,000.
2. Cut or draw loaves of bread to add to the plate.
3. Make the paper chain fish: Fold the paper accordion-style, creasing it back and forth evenly. Trace a fish shape, being careful to leave space at the edges of the paper. Carefully cut around the drawing, leaving the edges intact. Pull apart to admire the chain of fish!
4. Decorate the fish as desired. Glue or tape them to the plate.
5. Attach a hanging device to display the plate, or leave as it is to remember the story.



Craft Two: "Loaves and Fish Tithe Box"

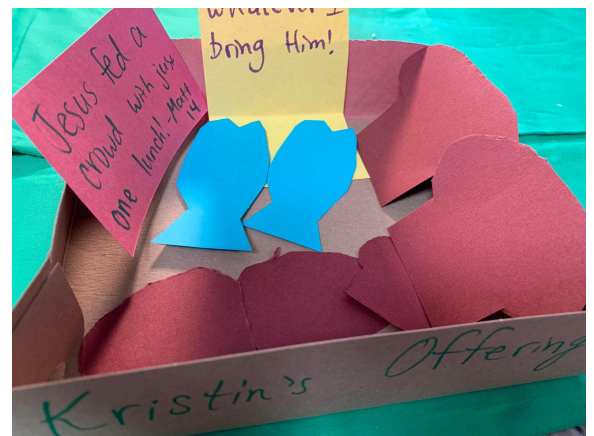
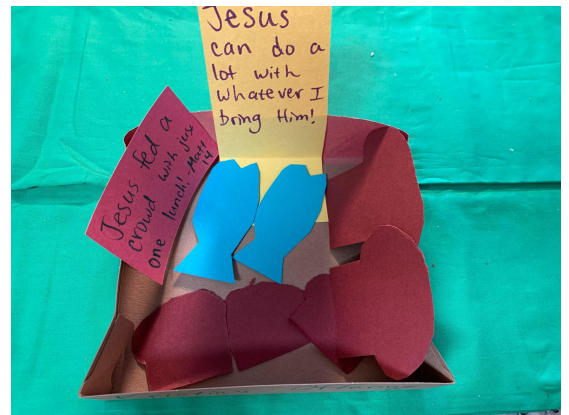
You will need:

- Empty box or container (shoe box, coffee can, etc.)
- Glue or tape
- Markers or crayons
- Construction paper or cardstock
- Extra decorations as desired (stickers, glitter, etc.)



Procedure:

1. Decorate the box with verses, captions, and other desired items (stickers, string, glitter, etc.).
2. Add captions on cut paper to the inside of the box.
3. Cut out paper or cardstock in the shapes of fish and loaves of bread.
4. Add the cut fish and loaves to decorate the box. Use it to collect offerings, or simply as a reminder of the story.



Matthew 14:21 KJV

And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.





Word Search Puzzle

Jesus - Crowd - Disciples - Food - Fish - Loaves

Blessing - Multitude - Eat - Five - Thousand - Compassion

N	T	N	E	Q	C	F	I	S	H	G
I	Q	M	J	L	V	O	I	H	B	N
N	N	U	E	U	B	O	N	V	L	L
K	R	L	S	E	D	D	H	V	E	C
X	Y	T	U	L	O	A	V	E	S	R
O	D	I	S	C	I	P	L	E	S	O
B	Q	T	F	J	B	Z	I	Q	I	W
A	C	U	T	H	O	U	S	A	N	D
X	W	D	O	Z	E	E	Q	M	G	J
G	W	E	A	T	A	L	R	P	Z	B
J	C	O	M	P	A	S	S	I	O	N

Word Search Answers

N T N E Q C F I S H G
I Q M J L V O I H B N
N N U E U B O N V L L
K R L S E D D H V E C
X Y T U L O A V E S R
O D I S C I P L E S O
B Q T F J B Z I Q I W
A C U T H O U S A N D
X W D O Z E E Q M G J
G W E A T A L R P Z B
J C O M P A S S I O N