

Lesson 18: 5 Loaves, 2 Fish, and 5,000 Full Bellies

Key Takeaway

When we trust Jesus, we see he has the power to care for us.

Scriptural Basis

John 6:1-14

Bible Verse

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” (Hebrews 13:8, NLT).

Learning Objectives:

- Children will learn that God can use anything we give him.
- Children will think of ways they can use what they have to help others.
- Children will understand that Jesus cares about our needs and wants us to care for others too.

Materials Needed for Small Group:

- A Bible
- Name tags
- A snack per child

Activity: Pass the Basket

- Small basket or bowl
- Printout 1, one per group
- Markers
- Something to play music

Activity: Would You Give It?

- Printout 2, a list of everyday items, actions, or situations
- Optional: A large "YES" and "NOT SURE" sign for each side of the room

Activity: "Care Cards" for Someone in Need

- Construction paper or pre-folded blank cards (1 per child)
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Stickers (hearts, smiley faces, crosses, etc.)
- Optional: Glue sticks, tissue paper, or small decorations

Materials Needed for Large Group:

- A Bible
- Bag of snacks or candy, enough for the whole group
- (Optional) Basket or bowl
- (Optional) Printout 1, enough copies to pass out to each student

Materials Needed for Games:

Game: Loaves and Fish Toss

Materials:

- Two baskets or buckets, bean bags or small balls labeled as "loaves" and "fish" (or printouts of bread and fish)

Game: Leftovers Relay Race

- 12 small baskets or buckets
- Plastic play food
- Bean bags, or small items, timer

Game: Five Loaves, Two Fish Freeze Dance

- Music
- Fish and bread cutouts (or simple drawings)

Game: Basket Balance Challenge

- Baskets
- Small balls
- Bean bags, or toy food items

Game: Bread Hunt Scavenger Game

- Bread cutouts (paper or foam) hidden around the room

Small Group Session 1

15 Minutes

Distribute name tags and snacks. Choose one of the following activities to do together while children eat their snack.

Share and Listen

Option 1

Ask the children to share their highs and lows (the best and worst things that happened to them either today or from the past week).

Option 2

Ask the children to take turns sharing how they are feeling today using the ["How Are You Feeling?" chart](#).

Pray Together

Collect prayer requests from the students. The leader or a student can pray for the entire group, or a leader can pair up students and invite them to pray for one another.

Opening Questions

- ***"Have you ever had to share something small with a lot of people?"***
- ***"What happened?"***
- ***"Was there enough for everyone?"***
- ***"How did it feel to share?"***
- ***"Was it hard or easy? Why?"***

"Today, we are going to hear about a young boy who shared his small lunch, and Jesus did something amazing with it to take care of a huge crowd. Let's find out how Jesus provides more than enough for everyone!"

Activity: Pass the Basket

Objective: To introduce the idea of trusting Jesus with what we have and how he provides more than enough.

Materials Needed:

- Small basket or bowl
- Printout 1 – Slips of paper with items or situations
- Markers

- Something to play music.

Setup:

Prepare the slips of paper by printing and cutting them apart.

Place all slips in the basket or bowl.

Have the children sit in a circle on the floor or around a table.

Let them know they'll be playing a game to help them think about how Jesus uses what we give him — even the small stuff!

Instructions:

Play music softly while the children pass the basket around the circle.

After about 10–15 seconds, pause the music.

The child holding the basket pulls out one slip and reads it aloud. (If they can't read yet, a leader can read it for them.)

Ask a follow-up question like:

- ***“How could Jesus use this to help someone?”***
- ***“How is this a way to show kindness or love?”***
- ***“Have you ever done something like this?”***
- ***“Why do you think trusting Jesus with this matters?”***

“Sometimes we think what we have isn't enough — maybe we don't have a lot to give, or we feel small. But Jesus can take a small lunch, a kind word, or a simple prayer and use it to help others. Jesus can do big things even with the small things we give him!”

Large Group

10-15 Minutes

Welcome the students to Crossroads and tell them you are glad they came this week.

Optional Starters

“Who is Jesus” call and response

Prayer Prompt: “God, you are powerful because...”

(Share what reminds you that God is powerful—like the stars, the oceans, or miracles you read about.)

Opening Song: “Victory” by Go Fish

Opening Prayer

Tell kids that closing their eyes and folding their hands together can help keep them focused and not distract those around them.

Opening Question

- ***“Have you ever had a time when you were really hungry, and there was not enough food? How did it feel?”***

Set the stage:

“Close your eyes and imagine you are out in the countryside, on a hill. You have walked a long way from home because you want to hear Jesus teach. You came out here in the morning and now it’s late afternoon, it’s hot and you have not eaten all day.

Open your eyes and listen to what happens in our Bible story.”

The Story: Jesus Feeds and Provides

Choose a volunteer or several volunteers, depending on your group size. Hand them a basket with snacks or candy inside. Have the volunteer pass out the snacks while you read the story.

Helpful Hint: Some wrappers can be loud and distracting. Consider what snack or candy would work best for your club.

Tell the rest of the group that they are part of the crowd of 5,000 people.

Read John 6:1-14 aloud for the group. As you read, stop after reading the verse listed below and ask a question. Consider giving tickets for each student that answers a question to help keep students engaged with the story.

John 6:1-2:

“After this, Jesus crossed over to the far side of the Sea of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Tiberias. A huge crowd kept following him wherever he went, because they saw his miraculous signs as he healed the sick.”

- ***“Why did the crowd follow Jesus?”*** (They saw his miracles and healing)

John 6:3-7:

“Then Jesus climbed a hill and sat down with his disciples around him. (It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration.) Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him. Turning to Philip, he asked, ‘Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?’ He was testing Philip, for he already knew what he was going to do.

Philip replied, ‘Even if we worked for months, we wouldn’t have enough money to feed them!’”

- ***“What was Philip’s response to Jesus asking to buy bread for everyone?”*** (He said it would take months to save enough money to buy bread for everyone.)
- ***“Have you ever had a problem that felt too big to solve?”*** (Jesus cares about our needs.)

John 6:8-9:

“Then Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up. ‘There’s a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?’”

- ***Verse 9 – “What did Andrew say to Jesus when he heard Jesus wanted to buy bread for the crowd?”*** (He said they have 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish, but asked, “But what good is that with this huge crowd?”)
- ***“Why do you think Jesus used the boy’s small lunch instead of making food appear?”*** (God can use anything we give him.)
- ***“What are some small things you have that God could use to help someone else?”***

John 6:10-11:

“‘Tell everyone to sit down,’ Jesus said. So they all sat down on the grassy slopes. (The men alone numbered about 5,000.) Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to the people. Afterward he did the same with the fish. And they all ate as much as they wanted.”

- ***“How many people were in the crowd?”*** (There were 5,000 men, which means there were more than 5,000 people there.)
- ***“What did Jesus do with the 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish?”*** (He prayed over them and gave thanks to God, then he had it given to the people.)
- ***“What does this tell us about how Jesus cares for people’s needs?”*** (Jesus cares and provides.)

John 6:12-13:

“After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples, ‘Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted.’ So they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves.”

- ***“How much did the people eat?”*** (They ate until they were full.)
- ***“How much was left over?”*** (There were 12 baskets of food left.)
- ***“What does this show you about what Jesus can do with something small?”***
(God provides more than enough.)

John 6:14:

“When the people saw him do this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, ‘Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!’”

- ***“What was the response of the people after this miracle?”*** (They thought Jesus was a prophet.)

“In this story we see that Jesus cares for our needs. Jesus saw that the people were hungry and cared about them enough to provide food.

Jesus showed his power as God’s Son by multiplying the food.

We see the boy’s faith who shared his small lunch, trusting Jesus with what he had.

We see that God provides more than enough. Did you notice that there was more food leftover than when they started!”

Close in Prayer

Thank God for being the One who always provides for our needs.

Small Group Session 2

20-25 Minutes

Share the Key Takeaway: When we trust Jesus, we see he has the power to care for us.

Activity: Would You Give It?

Objective: Help children reflect on generosity and trust by physically responding to examples of things they might give to Jesus.

Materials Needed:

- Printout 2, a list of everyday items, actions, or situations
- Optional: A large “YES” and “NOT SURE” sign for each side of the room
- Open space where kids can move freely

Instructions:

“In our story today, a boy gave Jesus his small lunch, and Jesus used it to feed thousands of people! Sometimes we think what we have isn’t enough or isn’t important, but Jesus can use anything we give him to help others. Let’s play a game to think about that!”

If kids would give the item or help in that situation, they stand up or move to the ‘YES’ side of the room.

If they’re not sure or would hesitate, they stay seated or move to the ‘NOT SURE’ side.

Read one scenario at a time and let kids move to show their response. After each one, ask a follow-up question or give a quick 5-second explanation of how Jesus could use that.

After the final round, bring everyone back to the center and say:

“It’s not always easy to give what we have, especially when it feels small or hard to share. But just like the boy with the little lunch, when we give what we have to Jesus—our time, our kindness, our words, our help—he can do BIG things through it. Nothing is too small for Jesus to use!”

Ask:

“What’s one thing you think you could give to Jesus this week to help someone else?”

Helpful Hint: Use the [Story Cards](#) to have students retell the story in John 6:1-14. Ask some follow-up questions to help them think through what happened in the story and what it shows us about Jesus.

Activity: “Care Cards” for Someone in Need

Objective: Children will understand that Jesus cares about our needs and wants us to care for others too.

To help children express care and encouragement to someone who may be sad, sick, lonely, or struggling—showing them that their words and actions can reflect Jesus’ love.

Materials Needed:

- Construction paper or pre-folded blank cards (1 per child)
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Stickers (hearts, smiley faces, crosses, etc.)
- Optional: Glue sticks, tissue paper, or small decorations
- Optional: Printed Bible verses like:
 - “Jesus loves you!”
 - “God cares about you.”
 - “You are never alone.”
 - Hebrews 13:8 – “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

“Jesus cares about our needs, and he wants us to care about others too. One way we can do that is by sending a kind card to someone who might need encouragement.”

Ask:

- ***“Who might need a care card today?”***
(Ideas: Someone sick, a lonely neighbor, a classmate having a hard time, someone who moved away, someone in their family.)
- ***“What words could help someone feel loved and encouraged?”***

Let each child choose who they want to make a card for.

On the front: Decorate with drawings, stickers, or encouraging phrases (e.g., “God loves you,” “I hope you feel better,” or “You’re not alone!”).

On the inside: Help them write a short, caring message. For younger kids, provide sentence starters like:

- ***“I’m thinking of you today.”***
- ***“Jesus loves you and so do I.”***
- ***“I hope this card makes you smile!”***

Add a Bible Verse (Optional): Offer a verse they can copy or attach a printed sticker with a verse like Hebrews 13:8.

Going Deeper

- ***“Why do you think the boy shared his lunch with Jesus?”***
- ***“How do you think the disciples felt when they saw all the food multiplying?”***
- ***“What does this story teach us about trusting Jesus?”***
- ***“What does it mean that Jesus is the Bread of Life?”***
- ***“How can we trust Jesus with our needs today?”***
- ***“What are some ways we can share what we have with others like the boy did?”***

Ending Together

5-10 Minutes

- *“How do you think it would feel to get this card?”*
- *“Why do you think Jesus wants us to care for people like this?”*
- *“Who else could you encourage this week?”*

Send the cards home for kids to deliver or mail with their families.

Response and Reflection

Close in Prayer

Print out the Bible verse.

Practice the Bible verse for this unit (Hebrews 13:8). Take a look at the [Memory Verse Game Ideas](#).

Pray with the students and dismiss them.

Games

25 Minutes

Game: Loaves and Fish Toss

Materials:

- Two baskets or buckets, bean bags or small balls labeled as "loaves" and "fish" (or printouts of bread and fish)

How to Play:

- Divide the group into two teams. Each team stands behind a designated line.
- Teams take turns tossing the "loaves and fish" into the baskets from a distance.
- Award points for each successful toss.

Connection to the Lesson: Just like the boy gave his small lunch, you're sharing your 'food' too! Jesus used something small to bless many people.

Game: Leftovers Relay Race

Materials Needed:

- 12 small baskets or buckets
- Plastic play food
- Bean bags, or small items, timer

How to Play:

- Set up the baskets in a row, labeled with numbers 1 to 12, to represent the 12 baskets of leftovers. Divide the kids into teams.
- The goal is to collect as many "leftovers" (small items) as possible and place them in the baskets before time runs out.
- The team with the most "leftovers" wins.

Connection to the Lesson: Remember how Jesus provided more than enough food? There were even 12 baskets of leftovers! God always provides abundantly.

Game: Multiplication Tag

Materials: None

How to Play:

- Choose one person to be "Jesus" and start as the tagger.
- As they tag others, those players join hands with "Jesus," representing multiplying the food and blessings.
- The chain keeps growing until everyone is linked together.

Connection to the Lesson: Just like the food multiplied, the message of Jesus spreads as more people trust Him!

Game: Five Loaves, Two Fish Freeze Dance

Materials:

- Music
- Fish and bread cutouts (or simple drawings)

How to Play:

- Play music while kids dance. When the music stops, call out either "Fish" or "Loaves."
- If you call out "Fish," kids make a fish motion with their hands.

- If you call out "Loaves," kids make a circle above their heads. If they do the wrong motion or don't freeze, they sit out for that round.

Connection to the Lesson: The boy gave just five loaves and two fish, and Jesus made it more than enough!

Game: Basket Balance Challenge

Materials:

- Baskets
- Small balls
- Bean bags, or toy food items

How to Play:

- Divide kids into pairs. One child balances the basket on their head while the other fills it with "loaves and fish" (small objects).
- The pair must walk carefully across the room without dropping the basket.
- If they drop it, they start over.

Connection to the Lesson: The disciples had to gather all the leftovers carefully after Jesus performed the miracle. Jesus gives us more than enough!

Game: Bread Hunt Scavenger Game

Materials:

- Bread cutouts (paper or foam) hidden around the room

How to Play:

- Hide the bread cutouts around the room.
- Divide the group into small teams and have them search for the bread pieces.
- The goal is to collect as many as possible and bring them back to the leader.

Connection to the Lesson: When Jesus performed the miracle, there was more than enough food for everyone, and there were even leftovers!

Game: "Who Can Share?" Circle Game

Materials: None

How to Play:

- Have the group sit in a circle.
- Ask: "If you had one sandwich and two friends who were hungry, how would you share it?"
- Go around the circle and let the kids share ideas. Afterward, explain how the boy in the story trusted Jesus and shared what little he had, and Jesus multiplied it.

Connection to the Lesson: These games remind us how Jesus can take small things and use them for big purposes. Just like the boy's small lunch fed thousands, Jesus can use our gifts and trust to bless others.