



# Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

## John 6: 1 – 15

### The Story

John 6:1-15 (From The Message Bible)

### Suggested Activities

- Read the Bible story and historical background. Complete the math and survey activity pages.
- YouTube videos:  
“No Gift Too Small”  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ak\\_zipTFvVk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ak_zipTFvVk)  
“Storytellers”  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OfGjybUn5bE>

### Family Service Ideas

- Cook dinner together, and help with clean up too!
- Make an extra loaf of bread or bake some cookies and deliver them to a neighbor.
- Donate food to a local organization, such as the food pantry, soup kitchen, or meals on wheels program.

### Share Your Work

- If you'd like, email or Facebook message pictures or videos of you at work on your activities or just pictures of the completed items.

**6** <sup>1-4</sup> After this, Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee (some call it Tiberias). A huge crowd followed him, attracted by the miracles they had seen him do among the sick. When he got to the other side, he climbed a hill and sat down, surrounded by his disciples. It was nearly time for the Feast of Passover, kept annually by the Jews.

<sup>5-6</sup> When Jesus looked out and saw that a large crowd had arrived, he said to Philip, “Where can we buy bread to feed these people?” He said this to stretch Philip’s faith. He already knew what he was going to do.

<sup>7</sup> Philip answered, “Two hundred silver pieces wouldn’t be enough to buy bread for each person to get a piece.”

<sup>8-9</sup> One of the disciples—it was Andrew, brother to Simon Peter—said, “There’s a little boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But that’s a drop in the bucket for a crowd like this.”

<sup>10-11</sup> Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” There was a nice carpet of green grass in this place. They sat down, about five thousand of them. Then Jesus took the bread and, having given thanks, gave it to those who were seated. He did the same with the fish. All ate as much as they wanted.

<sup>12-13</sup> When the people had eaten their fill, he said to his disciples, “Gather the leftovers so nothing is wasted.” They went to work and filled twelve large baskets with leftovers from the five barley loaves.

<sup>14-15</sup> The people realized that God was at work among them in what Jesus had just done. They said, “This is the Prophet for sure, God’s Prophet right here in Galilee!” Jesus saw that in their enthusiasm, they were about to grab him and make him king, so he slipped off and went back up the mountain to be by himself.

## Historical Background

(Marsha Crockett, Kingdom Quest)

Jesus was always the center of attention. Many persons from many villages followed Jesus and His disciples everywhere they went. They wanted to hear His words, see His wonders, and experience His love. All day long, the multitude had been with Jesus in a solitary place on a grassy hillside, overlooking the Sea of Galilee. Now they had become hungry and were far from home. Jesus looked upon them and had compassion for them. A boy had a basket of five loaves of barley bread and two fishes. This was the only food found anywhere by the disciples. The boy gladly made his food available to the Lord. Jesus first lifted His head toward heaven and prayed to His Father in heaven. Then, in this amazing miracle, Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes to feed the 5,000. Jesus continually broke the bread and divided the fishes. More than enough was provided. In fact, twelve baskets of surplus food were gathered by the disciples after everyone had finished eating. Jesus always works in an orderly way. He told the disciples to arrange the people in groups of fifty. No doubt, they reclined on the grass like they would in a Roman and Jewish dining room. On three sides of a rectangle area, they reclined as if they were on couches or cushions facing the open central area. The disciples could then serve them with food, entering the area from the open fourth side. The discovery of Pompeii in southern Italy enables us to know what Roman homes were like in New Testament times. Buried by the eruption of the volcano, Mount Vesuvius, August 24, 79 A.D., Pompeii was preserved by cinders and ashes like a time capsule city. Since 1748, Pompeii has been in the process of being excavated. Dining rooms and wall frescoes in the houses uncovered enable us to know much about life in Bible times. Dining rooms were called tricliniums, indicating use of three sides of a table. Some leaders probably would have tossed the broken bread and pieces of fish into the air and let the multitude scramble to get something to eat. Jesus, on the other hand, would never do that. He did all things decently and in order. Avoiding chaos and confusion, His activities were characterized by order, calmness, and peace. Place whatever you have in your hands and life into the hands of the Savior. Wonderful results will multiply.



Reclining at a Roman triclinium



Triclinium of Ancient Rome



Summer Triclinium at Pompeii

**Prayer:** Dear God, Thank you for using whatever we have for your will. Please help us to trust in You. Let our lives be used for your glory. We know you will always provide and make great things out of small things. Thank you for miracles. Thank you for your love. We love you, God! Amen.

## Math Miracles

Read in John 6:3-14 the story of how Jesus multiplied the 5 loaves and 2 fish to feed more than five thousand people. Let's do some figuring so we can really appreciate this miracle.

1. The boy had 5 little loaves of bread. How many times would you have to double this number to reach over 5,000? (Here's how to get started:  $5 \times 2 = 10$ ;  $10 \times 2 = 20$ ;  $20 \times 2 = 40$  . . . )

- a. Now do the same with the 2 fish.

2. Let's think about how many people had to be fed. The Bible says there were 5,000 men there.

- a. Let's assume that only 1,000 men came to the hillside alone.

Total # \_\_\_\_\_

- b. 2,500 men arrived with their wives.

Total # \_\_\_\_\_

- c. 1,000 men had a wife and one child.

Total # \_\_\_\_\_

- d. How many people in all would need to be fed?

Total # \_\_\_\_\_

3. If a leftover basket of fish held 25 fish, and each fish weighed .5 lbs, how many pounds of fish would be leftover in one basket?

- a. Now multiply that number by 12, since the Bible tells us there were 12 baskets, to find out how many pounds of leftovers there were in all.

## LET'S DO LUNCH GENEROSITY SURVEY

In the story of feeding the 5,000, we see how generous Jesus was by giving everyone as much food as they wanted. Answer the following questions to help you determine your level of generosity. Put an X in the box that best describes you. Be honest in your answers.

Question	Usually	Sometimes	Never
1. When friends come over, I ask them what they want to do and try to find a way to do it.			
2. I've been known to give away part of my lunch to someone at school who didn't have much to eat.			
3. If someone in my family asks to borrow something of mine, I let them.			
4. If there aren't enough treats for everyone, I don't mind giving mine up so someone else will have one.			
5. I don't mind giving up my bed and sleeping on the floor whenever we have special company.			
6. I try to give in some way to people who have less than I do.			
7. When the church has a special mission project, I try to think of ways to help out.			

### RESULTS

1. If most of your answers were in the "Usually" column, you have a generous heart, and God may have even given you a special spiritual gift of giving to use for His work.
2. If most of your answers were "Sometimes," thank God that you are growing in your generosity toward others.
3. If most of your answers were "Never," ask God to show you how to begin to think of others' feelings and needs. Remember, God has promised to give you everything you need when you are willing to be generous for Him.

### Math Miracles Answers:

1. Double the five loaves 10 times to reach 5,110. Double the fish 12 times to reach 8,192.
2. a. 1000; b. 5000; c. 3000; d. 2000; e. Total 11,000 people.
3. Each basket weighs 12.5 lbs. 12 baskets of leftovers would weight 150 lbs.