

LESSON 1

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Gives Us Life

SCRIPTURE: John 6

GOD'S BIG STORY: After feeding a large crowd with five loaves and two fish, Jesus tells the people that He is the bread of life, promising eternal life to all who trust in Him.

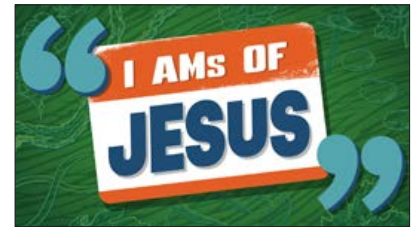
WORD OF WONDER: I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in darkness. They will have that light. They will have life. —John 8:12

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Welcome Question: What kind of bread do you like to eat? What do you like to eat with bread?
- Curiosity Questions
- Discussion Questions for Younger and Older Kids
- Small Group Prayer Time
- Word of Wonder: John 8:12
- Word of Wonder Activity
- LARGE GROUP
- Responding in Worship: Taste and See



Notes! Use the Notes Pages on the back of the Coloring Sheet each week to help kids stay engaged and remember what they are learning. Encourage kids to make notes, draw pictures, and write questions throughout small group and large group. This also provides parents with resources to keep the conversation going throughout the week!



[I AMs of Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

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WORD OF WONDER: John 8:12

There we were—out of water and feeling famished. We were above the tree line and could see the summit of Pikes Peak. All we could talk about was guzzling gallons of water and eating a dozen of the doughnuts they sell at the Summit House.

When we reached the top of Pikes Peak, we did get bottles of water and a dozen doughnuts. I wish I could say they were as satisfying as we had envisioned, but they were not. In fact, they made the car trip down the mountain very uncomfortable. My hunger wasn't satisfied. Instead, I felt sick.

Read John 6:10–14, 25–35. John 6 tells us that Jesus has come to satisfy hunger—the deepest pangs of hunger within us all. Those pangs that go beyond something that bread can satisfy—emotional, psychological, social, and spiritual pangs.

What's more, Jesus also tells the crowd they are looking in the wrong places to satisfy their hunger—much like eating doughnuts after climbing a 14,000+ foot mountain. It's something we all do. In verse 27, Jesus calls this “food that spoils” (NIV).

What are your deepest places of hunger, desire, or need? When have you tried to satisfy that hunger or desire by looking in the wrong places?

Jesus is health. He is life. He is the very bread of life.

—Jeff Stone

Associate Pastor and Professional Counselor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

The crowd was composed of people who were following Jesus around because of His signs—especially healing of the sick. Based on their dialogue with Jesus, the crowd was predominantly or entirely Jewish. They are distinct from Jesus' disciples, who were His students and traveling companions.

WHAT?

After miraculously feeding a large crowd, Jesus is followed to Capernaum by people expecting Him to provide more manna—bread from heaven—as a new Moses. Jesus explains that He Himself is the living bread who gives life to the world. Those who believe will live forever.

WHERE?

Jesus fed the crowd somewhere in the mountainous area known today as the Golan Heights, along the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus then crossed to Capernaum, which is on the northwestern part of the Sea of Galilee.

WHEN?

According to John 6:4, this story takes place near the time of the Jewish Passover Feast, when the people remembered how God delivered their ancestors from Egypt. This may have resulted in a heightened expectation among the crowd for God to provide a new deliverer.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

God provided manna in the wilderness to meet the Israelites' immediate physical needs. Yet they eventually died. Jesus, the bread of life, is a greater provision. He defeated death on the cross and will raise His people to imperishable life on the last day.

Small Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

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Pre-Service Connection (15-20 min)

RESOURCES: Coloring Page, whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils
Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have play stations with various board games, activities, or use games from the extra Games & Activities Guide to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them!

Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group. Allow quieter kids who don't engage with the board games to color. Involve them in the curiosity questions.

As kids arrive..

Invite them to write/draw the answer to the Welcome Question: on the designated board:

“What kind of bread do you like to eat? What do you like to eat with bread?” Set out sheets of paper and colored pencils.

While kids are playing in their opening activity groups..

Pose the following “I’m curious” questions. Say “I’m curious...” before each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

- **What’s your favorite food?**
- **Have you ever seen food that has spoiled, or gone bad, in your pantry or refrigerator?**
Please share about it!

Small Group Begins

After the Opening Activity, Large Group Leader will begin small group time by reading the Welcome Question aloud and inviting everyone to open their Bibles and begin.

Small Group Discussion: Younger Kids 5–8 min

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid); Bible Story Picture (1/SG)

Help kids use the table of contents in their Bibles to find John chapter 6. As kids find the passage, explain that today's portion of God's big story comes from the book of John, which is the 4th book of the New Testament.

Read John 6:5-14; 35-40. aloud. Then discuss the following:

Notes! Have kids turn to the Notes Pages on the back of the Coloring Sheet and draw a picture of the story as you read.

- **How many loaves and fish did Jesus use to miraculously feed the big crowd?** (five loaves and two fish)
- **How many people were in the crowd?** (5,000 men plus women and children)
- **What Old Testament miracle did Jesus mention to encourage the crowd to seek the true bread from heaven?** (God providing manna for the Israelites)
- **What does the miracle in today's part of God's big story show us about Jesus?**
- **Jesus told the crowd to believe in the person God sent to them. Who is that?**
- **Why did Jesus call Himself the "bread of life"?**

"God provided bread from heaven called *manna* to feed His people in the wilderness. But God has provided us with something far greater—His Son, Jesus! Let's take some time now to pray to Jesus, the true bread from heaven who gives us life!"

Prayer Time: Younger Kids

Invite the kids to enter into a time of prayer. Ask them for prayer requests and praises, and consider sharing one or more yourself. Remind kids that when they pray, they are talking with Jesus, who gives us life.

Make It Inclusive!

For many kids, thinking of things to pray aloud can feel intimidating. Consider providing several simple prayer prompts on a whiteboard or craft sticks and reading them to the kids. For example: "Jesus, thank You for _____," "God, please help _____ to feel better," "God, please help me _____."

Small Group Discussion: Older Kids 8–10 min

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid), Bible Story Picture (1/SG)

Help kids use the table of contents in their Bibles to find John chapter 6. As kids find the passage, explain that today's portion of God's big story comes from the book of John, which is the 4th book of the New Testament.

Turn to Page 3 of this guide and help kids understand the context of this passage.

Invite three volunteers to read John 6:5–14, 6:32–35 and 47–51 Then discuss the following:

Notes! Have kids turn to the Notes Pages on the back of the Coloring Sheet and write the Scripture and any words that stand out to them.

- **What small amount of food did Jesus use to miraculously feed the big crowd?** (*five loaves and two fish*)
- **How many people were in the crowd?** (*5,000 men plus women and children*)
- **After miraculously providing bread for thousands of people, Jesus talked about another time when God's people received bread through a miracle. What was He referring to?** (*God providing manna for the Israelites*)
- **How was it possible for Jesus to turn five loaves of bread and two small fish into a meal to feed thousands of people, and then have leftovers?**
- **Why did Jesus call Himself the "bread of life"?**
- **Jesus told the crowd to "work for food that lasts forever." What do you think He meant by that?**

"God provided bread from heaven called manna as the Israelites wandered in the wilderness. But God has provided us with something far greater—His Son! Jesus is the true bread from heaven. The bread we eat doesn't last long, but Jesus, "the bread of life," can give us eternal life when we trust in Him. Let's take some time now to pray to Jesus, the Son of God, who gives us life!"

Prayer Time: Older Kids

Invite the kids to enter into a time of prayer. Ask them for prayer requests and praises, and consider sharing one or more yourself. Remind kids that when they pray, they are talking with Jesus, who gives us life.

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WORD OF WONDER

I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me
will never walk in darkness. They will have that light.
They will have life.

—John 8:12 (NirV)

Word of Wonder

2–3 minutes

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid); **Word of Wonder Poster (1/SG)*** keep for entire series

"Today we're learning about an amazing miracle that Jesus did—feeding a huge crowd of people—and the important teaching He gave afterward. Jesus often used everyday items or experiences that people are familiar with to teach big truths. In God's big story today, He did this with food, and in our Word of Wonder, He uses light and darkness. Let's check out our Word of Wonder to learn more!"

Invite kids to open their Bibles to John 8:12 and set out the Word of Wonder poster in the middle of your group or on the wall where kids can see. Younger kids, or kids who are unfamiliar with the Bible, may need help finding it. Read the verse several times together. Consider having the kids line up behind you for a game of Follow the Leader, a reference to the part of the verse that states: "Anyone who follows me will never walk in darkness" (NirV). March around the room, saying portions of the verse and having the kids repeat them after you as they march. Do this long enough so the kids can say the verse several times.

Talk through these questions:

- **Why do you think Jesus refers to Himself as "the light of the world"?**
- **How can we have the light of Jesus in us?**

Notes! Have kids turn to the Notes Pages on the back of the Coloring Sheet and copy down the Word of Wonder as you practice together.

Word of Wonder Activity

5–8 minutes

SUPPLIES: flashlights (1 per SG) or battery-powered tealight candles (1 per kid)

Start by modeling the activity for the whole group: Dim the room lights or turn them off and have the kids say portions of the Word of Wonder while you turn the room lights on and off according to the pattern below.

NirV:

I am the light of the world. / Turn on light.

Anyone who follows me will never walk in darkness. / Turn off (or dim) light.

They will have that light. / Turn on light.

They will have life. / Flicker lights on and off.

John 8:12 / Turn on light.

PAUSE for Large Group time, then continue...

Responding in Worship: Taste and See

SUPPLIES: small, disposable cups (1 per kid); fish crackers (2 per kid); pre-cut bread cubes or croutons (2 per kid); drawing utensils; paper or journals (1 per kid)

RESOURCES: [Response Pictures \(1 set/SG\)](#), [I AMs of Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Allergy Caution: This activity includes possible food allergens!

Ahead of time, gather small, disposable cups, one per kid. Place two fish crackers and two pre-cut bread cubes or croutons in each cup. Print Response Pictures and cut out.



Invite kids to participate in a call-and-response prayer/praise time that combines the sense of taste and physical movement! Provide each kid with a small, disposable cup containing two fish crackers and two small, pre-cut bread cubes or croutons. You'll share the following four calls to action with the kids, and each time you do, invite the kids to respond in particular ways while also eating one of the food items in their cups.

- 1. When thousands of people were hungry, Jesus fed them with just five small bread loaves and two small fish. Jesus did a miracle!**
Let's praise Jesus for His amazing power! Show the first Response Picture. Say the following prayer of praise and ask kids to think about a physical motion that helps express the words. Then invite them to repeat the prayer while doing a motion of their choice:
Jesus, You are powerful! Invite kids to eat a fish cracker.
- 2. When thousands of people were hungry, Jesus provided for their needs. Let's praise Jesus for His provision.** Display the second Response Picture. Say the following prayer of praise and ask kids to think about a physical motion that helps express the words. Then invite them to repeat the prayer while doing a motion of their choice: **Thank You, Jesus, for providing for us!** Invite kids to eat a fish cracker.
- 3. In the Old Testament, we see that God provided manna to temporarily remove the hunger of the Israelites as they wandered in the wilderness. But many years later, God provided us the true bread from heaven—His own Son, Jesus—to forever remove our sins, or the wrong things we do.** Display the third Response Picture. Say the following prayer of praise and ask kids to think about a physical motion that helps express the words. Then invite them to repeat the prayer while doing a motion of their choice: **Thank You, Jesus, for removing our sins!** Invite kids to eat a bread cube/crouton.
- 4. Jesus defeated death on the cross so we can live forever with God. Let's thank Jesus together.** Display the fourth Response Picture. Say the following prayer of praise and ask kids to think about a physical motion that helps express the words. Then invite them to repeat the prayer while doing a motion of their choice: **Thank You, Jesus, for giving us life!** Invite kids to eat a bread cube/crouton.

Close your response time by playing the worship song “The Light of the World” from the [I AMs of Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#) and allowing kids to draw and journal their praises. Encourage them to respond in their artwork and journals to the following prompts: **Jesus is the bread of life, and He gives us life! How does that make you feel? What do you want to say to Jesus in response to these truths?**

Leader Tip: For Older Kids. Invite older kids to come up with their own prayers of praise and share them with the group.

Notes! Have kids turn to the Notes Pages on the back of the Coloring Sheet and use the 2 right hand columns to take notes, write prayers, or draw pictures of what they are thinking/feeling. and what has stood out to them about the story today.