

LESSON 2

JESUS FEEDS THE 5,000

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Shows Compassion

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 14

GOD'S BIG STORY: Jesus shows compassion to the people in the crowd, healing those who are sick and feeding thousands from just five loaves of bread and two fish.

WORD OF WONDER: How great God is! We'll never completely understand him. —Job 36:26a

- Welcome Question: When has someone helped you because you were sad or hurting?
- Curiosity Questions
- Word of Wonder Activity
- God's Big Story
- Discussion Questions for Elementary Kids and Preteens
- Small Group Prayer Time
- **LARGE GROUP**
- Elementary Responding in Worship: The Way of Compassion
- Preteen Responding in Worship: Compassion in Action



INVITATION

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

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If you've ever been around kids who are "hangry" at dinnertime, you know the urgency of getting food as quickly as possible. Once while with my kids at a baseball tournament, as dinnertime approached, we had been in the stands for hours. We were out of snacks, and there was no dinner in sight. The meltdowns were bound to start soon. Just then a friend showed up with hot dogs and chips. It felt like a miracle. It felt like compassion.

I can only imagine what the parents in the crowd must have felt after being with Jesus for hours as it was getting late. The "hangry" meltdowns were about to start. The desperation to get food ASAP was about to set in. Then something miraculous happened: Jesus provided. Even when He was grieving, Jesus cared for people. He cared for their spiritual and physical needs.

Read Matthew 14:13–21. Jesus had compassion for the people. He used something so small—five loaves and two fish—to accomplish something big and show His care, provision, and power.

Jesus didn't just feed the people's stomachs; His compassion fed their souls. And He can do that for us too. Think about ways Jesus has shown compassion for you and offer Him thanks. When your stomach rumbles and then is filled with food, offer thanks to Jesus. And never forget that He cares.

—Lynne Howard

Children's Ministry Leader and Wonder Ink Contributor

Wonder Ink Development Team

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Jesus fed a crowd of 5,000, which is amazing since the populations of the largest villages in Galilee numbered about 3,000 people. That number doesn't include the women and children, who, according to Jewish tradition, would have been counted separately from the men.

WHAT?

After hearing that Herod, the Roman ruler in Galilee, had ordered the execution of Jesus' friend and relative John the Baptist, Jesus withdrew to a solitary place. Still, the crowds followed Him. Jesus showed compassion on them, healing those who were sick and miraculously feeding thousands.

WHERE?

Bible scholars can't say with certainty where Jesus performed this miracle. Generally, this event is thought to have taken place near Bethsaida (Luke 9:10), which was across the Sea of Galilee from where Jesus had been previously (John 6:1) and was likely near the northern shore of the lake.

WHEN?

The book of Matthew follows a progression of the rise and rejection of Jesus as King. This particular miracle takes place just after the death of John the Baptist and before Jesus walks on water.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY:

The feeding of the 5,000 is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels! In this story, Jesus showed compassion to the crowd. Similarly, God didn't want us stuck in our sin, so He sent His Son, Jesus, to live, die, and rise again so our sins could be forgiven. Our God is compassionate (Exodus 34:6)!

Small Group

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

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Pre-Service Connection (15-20 min)

RESOURCES: whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils, board games or games

Games & Activities Guide

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have activities ready 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!

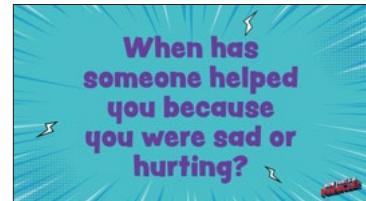
As kids arrive ...

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

Use the Welcome Question and the following "I'm Curious" questions to engage kids. Say "**I'm curious..**" before each question and give kids an chance to think before answering 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.

Consider having a whiteboard or poster for kids to write or draw answers to any of the questions:

- **Which do you think is more powerful: the things you say or the things you do? Why?**
- **When have you shown kindness through your words? When have you shown kindness through your actions?**



Small Group Begins

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

Word of Wonder Activity

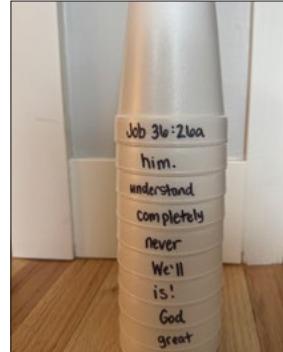
WORD OF WONDER

How great God is! We'll never completely understand him.

—Job 36:26a (NIV)

SUPPLIES: Bible, disposable foam cups (8 or 10 per small group), permanent marker (prep only)

Ahead of time, write the Word of Wonder on disposable foam cups, one word or the reference per cup. Turn the cups upside down, writing each word on the “lip” of the cup, very close to the bottom. If you don’t do this, the words won’t show when stacked. You will need a complete set of cups for each small group. (If using NIV, you’ll need 10 cups per small group. If using NIV, you’ll need 8 cups.) Mix up each set of cups so they’re not in verse order.



Today in God's big story, Jesus showed compassion on the people who were sick and hungry and cared for them in a miraculous way! Our Word of Wonder for the Now That's a Miracle! series reminds us of God's power and greatness! Let's say the verse together. Open your Bible to Job 36:26a. Invite kids to read Job 36:26a several times together.

Now let's practice our Word of Wonder with a cup-stacking game! Invite kids to take turns seeing how quickly they can stack their cups in the correct order of the memory verse. Encourage kids stacking the cups to say the verse out loud while they are stacking. For groups with younger kids and for larger groups, invite kids to work in pairs. Those watching the cup-stackers can say the verse along with them! Continue until all kids have had a chance to stack the cups.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

Explain to kids that today's part of God's Big Story comes straight from God's Word, the Bible. They can find it in Matthew 14, which is at the beginning of the New Testament. Guide kids in locating the passage in their Bibles.

After hearing sad news, Jesus went away to be alone, but crowds followed Him. Instead of sending them away, Jesus showed compassion and cared for their needs. When food ran out, Jesus used a small lunch to feed thousands of people. As you read, think about what this story shows about Jesus' compassion and His power to provide.

Read Matthew 14:13–21 together

Elementary Questions

- **Why was Jesus sad in today's story?** (His friend and relative, John the Baptist, had died.)
- **What did Jesus try to do when He was sad?** (He went on a boat to a quiet place to try to be alone.)
- **What happened when Jesus tried to be alone? How did He respond?** (A large crowd gathered around Him. He showed compassion to them.)
- **Compassion is feeling deep sadness or understanding for someone else and doing something to help them. How did Jesus show compassion to the people in today's story?** (Jesus healed people who were sick and fed over 5,000 people with five small loaves of bread and two fish.)
- **How has God shown you compassion and helped you?**
- **Who can you show compassion to? What can you do this week to help this person?**

Jesus is a real person. He is both God and man, and He has feelings and emotions just as we do. Yet even when Jesus was sad, He showed compassion to others. Our God is compassionate, and our God loves us so much! Let's thank Him in prayer now.

Leader Tip: Pause after each question for kids to think and answer. Wait for them, even when the silence feels awkward. Trust that the Holy Spirit is working in the quiet!

Preteen Questions

- **Why was Jesus sad at the beginning of today's story?** (His friend and relative, John the Baptist, had died.)
- **What is compassion?** (If needed, remind kids of the definition introduced earlier in the lesson: Compassion is a feeling of deep sadness or understanding for someone else and doing something to help them.)
- **How did Jesus show compassion to the people in today's story?** (Jesus healed people who were sick and fed over 5,000 people with five small loaves of bread and two fish.)
- **Do you think it's hard to show compassion for others when you are hurting and sad? Why or why not?**
- **How has God shown you compassion?**
- **Think quietly about someone in your life who is sad or hurting. What can you do to show this person compassion?**

Jesus is a real person. He is both God and man, and He has feelings and emotions just as we do. Yet even when Jesus was sad, He showed compassion to others. Our God is compassionate, and our God loves us so much! Let's thank Him in prayer now.

Small Group Prayer Time

Invite kids to share any prayer requests or praises they have. Encourage them to say “thank You” to Jesus for His love and compassion. Then ask for a volunteer to end the group time together in prayer, making sure to pray for all the requests shared.

Head to Large Group!

Return and finish the rest of this guide before parents arrive.

Elementary Responding in Worship: The Way of Compassion

SUPPLIES: writing utensils, coloring utensils

RESOURCES: [The Way of Compassion Sheet \(1 per kid\)](#), [Now That's a Miracle! Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, print a copy of The Way of Compassion Sheet for each kid.

Today we heard about a time when Jesus was very sad but still had compassion on those around Him. He loved the people who crowded around Him that day. And when they were sick and hungry, He stopped what He was doing to care for their needs.



We see Jesus showing compassion to people throughout the Gospel books of the Bible (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). When are some other examples in the Bible of Jesus showing compassion to others? Invite kids to brainstorm Bible stories. If they aren't sure where to start, remind them of passages from the Hanging Out with Jesus series, like Jesus seeking out Zacchaeus and Jesus healing the men who had leprosy.

Just like Jesus cared for the people in today's story, Jesus loves and sees you. When you're hurting or sad or scared, He feels deep sadness and understanding for you. He is with you and wants to help you. Jesus shows us compassion!

Set out writing and coloring utensils and give each kid a copy of The Way of Compassion Sheet. Find the place on your sheet that says, "Jesus Shows Compassion." Pause for kids to find this on their sheets. Help younger kids if needed. I invite you to spend some time thinking about ways Jesus has shown compassion to others, including you! Maybe He has answered your prayer, healed you from sickness, or helped you feel joy again after a sad time. The most amazing act of compassion took place when Jesus died so that our sins—the wrong things we say and do—could be forgiven and we can be with God forever! In the frame on the left side of your sheet, write your ideas or draw a picture of Jesus showing compassion.

Give kids several minutes to write and draw quietly. Consider quietly playing music from the [Now That's a Miracle! Elementary Spotify playlist](#) during this time.

Now look at the right side of your sheet. Show kids the words, "I Can Show Compassion" on The Way of Compassion Sheet. Now let's spend time thinking about how we can walk with Jesus in the way of compassion by showing care to someone this week. Who do you know who is sad or going through a difficult time? Pause for kids to think quietly.

What can you do to help or encourage them? Write or draw a picture of your idea in the frame on the right side of your sheet. If you can't think of an idea right away, that's OK! Ask the Holy Spirit to give you creative ideas! Then when you have an idea, write about it or draw a picture of it on your sheet.

Again, allow several minutes for kids to write or draw quietly while music plays quietly in the background. Be available to help kids think of ways they can show compassion to someone in their life. When they're finished, invite kids to share their ideas with the group.

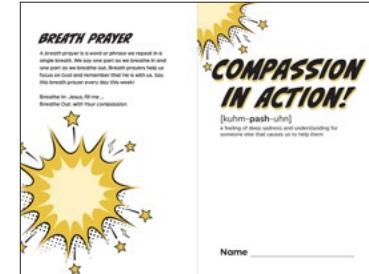
Preteen Responding in Worship: Compassion in Action

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid), writing utensils, coloring utensils

RESOURCES: [Compassion Book \(1 per kid\)](#), [Now That's a Miracle! Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, print a copy of the Compassion Book for each kid. (Print on both sides with the flip on the short edge.) Fold each sheet in half to create a small four-page book.

Today we heard about a time when Jesus was very sad but still had compassion on those around Him. He loved the people who crowded around Him that day. And when they were sick and hungry, He stopped what He had planned to do to care for their needs.



We see Jesus showing compassion to people throughout the Gospel books of the Bible (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). Let's work together to remember other times in the Bible when Jesus showed compassion to others. Encourage kids to form small groups of 2–4 kids.

Give a Compassion Book to each kid and make sure everyone has a Bible. Set out writing and coloring utensils. Ask kids to write their name on the front cover of their Compassion Book. Then have them turn in their books to page two. Invite small groups to brainstorm stories in the Bible in which Jesus shows compassion. If they aren't sure where to start, encourage them to turn to the first four books in the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). Give them a few ideas from the Hanging Out with Jesus series to get started, such as Jesus visiting Zacchaeus and healing the 10 men with leprosy. They can list the stories or draw quick stick figure drawings of each one. After a few minutes, invite groups to share their examples.

Jesus showed compassion to people in the Bible, but He also shows compassion to us! Maybe He has answered your prayer, healed you from sickness, or helped you feel joy again after a sad time. The most amazing act of compassion took place when Jesus died so that our sins—the wrong things we say and do—could be forgiven and we can be with God forever! On the same page in your Compassion Books, I invite you to write or draw about one way Jesus has shown compassion to you. Give kids time to write and draw. Consider playing music from the [Now That's a Miracle! Elementary Spotify playlist](#) during this time.

Now take a look at page three in your books. As followers of Jesus, we can show God's compassion to other people. Spend some time thinking about someone you know who is sad or going through a hard time. What is something you can do to show compassion to them this week? Write or draw your ideas in the box on page three.

Allow time for kids to write and draw quietly. Play music quietly as they work.

Let's turn now to page four in your books. On it, you'll see a breath prayer. A breath prayer is a simple prayer we can repeat anytime and anywhere as we breathe in and out. We say the first part as we breathe in, and we say the second part as we breathe out. We can pray breath prayers silently or out loud. Let's say this one together now. Repeat this breath prayer several times with the kids:

Breathe In: Jesus, fill me ...

Breathe Out: with Your compassion.

Invite kids to share what they wrote or drew in their books. Then encourage them to look for opportunities to show the compassion of Jesus to people around them this week, assuring them that God gives us, His followers, His Holy Spirit to help!