

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

- PRE-SERVICE:
 - OPTION 1 Interactive Game: Saying and Doing
 - OPTION 2 Interactive Game: Match and Dash!
- Welcome Question: When has someone helped you because you were sad or hurting?
- SMALL GROUP
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: Praise The Lord, Goodbye Yesterday
- God's Big Story: Hear It, Watch It, Experience It!
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- In Awe of God's Wonder
- Responding in Worship: Great Are You Lord
- Blessing Your Kids



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)!

Large Group

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

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As kids arrive...

Around 20 minutes before service begins, display series theme loop. Play high-energy music in the background.

LG Leader walks around the room on mic and greets kids by name as they enter the room. Be extra intentional about introducing yourself to new parents and kids.

SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN (2min OR 30sec) Start a countdown to begin game 10 minutes prior to service start)

OPTION 1– Interactive Game: Saying and Doing

SUPPLIES: balls (40 tennis or table tennis, or 12–20 playground), buckets or clean trash cans (4)

Ahead of time, gather the tennis, table tennis, or playground balls. Place half the balls in one bucket or a clean trash can and the other half in another bucket or a clean trash can. You need more balls in each bucket than one person can carry on his own (approximately 20 tennis or table tennis balls, or 8–10 playground balls per bucket). Both buckets must have the same number and type of balls. Set two additional buckets or clean trash cans at the end of the room opposite of the ball buckets.

Display the [Saying and Doing Slide](#) and gather the kids. Help kids form two equal teams and invite them to gather at one end of the room. Give each team a bucket of balls and ask kids not to touch them yet. The two empty buckets should be at the opposite end of the room. **Let's play a game to get us started today! For this game, one person from your team will carry all the balls in your team's bucket from one side of the room to the other. Your team's carrier can carry as many balls as possible and place them in the empty bucket on the other side of the room. She will go back and forth until all the balls are in the bucket on the other side. She may not carry the bucket itself, put balls in her pockets, kick the balls, or carry them in her clothing. The first team whose carrier gets all the balls from one side of the room to the other wins. The rest of you can cheer on your carrier with your words only. Your team's carrier will be the kid whose birthday is closest to today.**



Give teams time to figure out whose birthday is closest to today. Then start the game by saying, “Go!” Encourage the kids not carrying balls to cheer for their teammates! The first team whose carrier gets all her team’s balls into the opposite bucket wins.

Have kids gather with their teams again. Address the ball carriers directly: **That looked like a hard task! I bet you’re tired! Can you think of anything that would have made your job easier?** Allow the carriers to share their ideas.

Those are great ideas! Let’s play the game again. Only this time, everyone gets to help carry the balls. Challenge the two teams to carry all the balls in their buckets to the other side of the room. When you say, “Go,” everyone can help carry, and they don’t have to take turns. Again, they can’t put balls in their pockets or clothes, kick the balls, or move the buckets themselves. Whichever team gets all its balls into its bucket on the opposite side of the room first wins!

Make It Inclusive: Invite kids with physical limitations or disabilities to be full-time encouragers. They can shout encouragement during both rounds of the game. Remind them that helping people with our actions and our words is important!

When the game is finished, gather everyone together and ask:

- **What was the biggest difference between the two rounds?**
- **Which round of the game went faster? Why?**

Yes! The game was a lot easier and faster when everyone was able to help. Cheering others on and encouraging them with our words is important, but helping with our actions is often the most powerful thing we can do for others. We’re going to hear today about a time when Jesus helped others not just through the words He said but through what He did. Display the 5,000 Wonder Truth Slide. When Jesus saw people who were sick and hungry, He felt deep sadness and understanding for them and did something to help them. We call this compassion. Our Wonder Truth today is JESUS SHOWS COMPASSION.



OPTION 2– Interactive Game: Match and Dash!

SUPPLIES: large boxes or bins (2), apples or other fruit (2), bandages (2), jackets or hoodies (2), umbrellas (2), bottles of sunscreen (2), bottles of lotion (2), water bottles (2), flashlights (2), maps or compasses (2), pillows (2), scissors (prep only), baskets or bowls (2)

RESOURCES: Match and Dash! Slips Sheet (2 copies) ****BY REQUEST**

Allergy Caution: This activity includes possible food allergens!

Ahead of time, gather two of each of the following items: apples (or other fruit), bandages, jackets/hoodies, umbrellas, bottles of sunscreen, bottles of lotion, water bottles, flashlights, maps or compasses, pillows. Place one of each item in each of the large boxes or bins so that both containers have the same 10 items in them. Print two copies of the Match and Dash! Slips Sheet and cut apart the slips. Place one set of slips in each basket or bowl. Place the two large boxes or bins across the room from where the kids will gather.

Your friend is really hungry!
Your friend fell and skinned her knee. Now she's bleeding!
Your friend is really cold!
Your friend is outside in the rain!
Your friend is outside on a hot, sunny day!
Your friend's skin is very dry!
Your friend is really thirsty!
Your friend can't see where he's going in the dark!
Your friend is lost!
Your friend is tired and sleepy!

Wonder Ink LESSON 2 MATCH AND DASH! SLIPS SHEET POSTER

Display the **Match and Dash! Slide** and gather the kids. Help kids form two equal teams and invite them to line up at the end of the room opposite of the large boxes or bins. Set a basket or bowl of Match and Dash! Slips in front of each team. **Let's play a relay game to get us thinking more about how we can help other people. Each team has a bin.** Point to the large bins or boxes on the other side of the room. **In your bin are 10**



items that you could use to help a friend. Each team also has a basket of slips. Point to the basket or bowl of slips in front of each team. **On the slips are 10 different situations that a friend might be in. Each person on your team will take turns pulling a slip, reading the situation, running to your bin, finding the item that could help our friend in that situation, and running it back to your team. Then the next person in line will go. Once your team has matched all the slips and objects, I will check them to make sure the matches are correct. Whoever successfully matches all the slips and objects first wins!**

Once kids are ready, say, "Go!" and cheer for them as they match and dash! Once each team finishes, check that the teams correctly matched their slips and objects. Here's a list of the pairs for your reference: Your friend is really hungry! (apple/fruit); Your friend fell and skinned her knee. Now she's bleeding! (bandage); Your friend is really cold! (jacket/hoodie); Your friend is outside in the rain! (umbrella); Your friend is outside on a hot, sunny day! (sunscreen); Your friend's skin is very dry! (lotion); Your friend is really thirsty! (water bottle); Your friend can't see where he's going in the dark! (flashlight); Your friend is lost! (map or compass); Your friend is tired and sleepy! (pillow).

Leader Tip: If your group is large and there are more than 10 kids on each team, have kids pair up and run to and from their team's bin with a partner. If your group is small, some kids can go multiple times. If your group is very large, consider preparing additional sets of Match and Dash! Slips and bins of objects so that more than two teams can race.

Make It Inclusive: If any kids have limited mobility and are unable to dash to their team's bin, invite them to be the official "Slip Giver," who pulls Match and Dash! Slips from the basket and gives them to their teammates.

Congratulate the winning team, collect all the objects back into the bins, and gather the kids. **Great job finding items you could use to help a friend in each situation! We're going to hear today about a time when Jesus helped others not just through the words He said but through what He did. Display the 5,000 Wonder Truth Slide. When Jesus saw people who were sick and hungry, He felt deep sadness and understanding for them and did something to help them. We call this compassion. Our Wonder Truth today is JESUS SHOWS COMPASSION.**



Welcome Question

SUPPLIES: paper, coloring utensils, poster board OR , whiteboard, dry-erase markers (if needed)

SLIDE: WELCOME QUESTION

At service start time, draw kids' attention to the Welcome Question.

Invite kids to write answers on the poster board or whiteboard.

We've all experienced difficult things. We've been sad, hurt, scared, or sick. Maybe we've even been really, really hungry. Today we're going to hear about a time when Jesus saw people who were sick and hungry and did something to help them. But first, it's time for small group.



Small Group

Introduce small group time. While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is _____ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! We are going to pray as we prepare our hearts to worship God!"

Declaring God's Wonder

Display the 5,000 Declaration Slide. Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

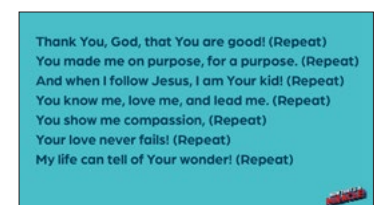
And when I follow Jesus, I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

You show me compassion, (Kids repeat.)

Your love never fails! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)



Prayer of Invitation

Lead kids in a prayer of invitation before entering into worship and God's big story: **God, thank You for seeing us and showing us compassion. We set aside distractions and busyness to be fully here, and we welcome Your Holy Spirit in this place. Please lead us. Guide us. Teach us. We are Yours. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Today we'll hear how Jesus showed compassion for people who were sick and hungry by healing and feeding them. Let's thank Jesus for His compassion by singing praises to Him!

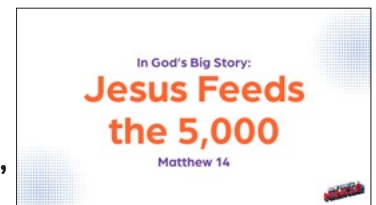
Play worship songs [Praise The Lord](#), [Goodbye Yesterday](#) and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

[Display the 5,000 Title Slide](#). Remind kids that today's part of God's Big Story comes straight from God's Word, the Bible.

Today we are learning about an amazing miracle where Jesus fed a huge crowd with just a little food. Watch how Jesus shows compassion, gives thanks to God, and provides more than enough for everyone. As you watch, think about how Jesus can use small things to do big things.

[VIDEO: GODS BIG STORY](#)



LESSON 2 JESUS FEEDS THE 5,000

EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: scissors (prep only); bell; m&m or skittles candies; large clear, shatterproof container with lid; paper (1 sheet per kid); writing utensils (1 per kid)

RESOURCES: Clues Sheet (1/LG)

Ahead of time, print the Clues Sheet and cut apart the clues
Place the container in the front of the room where all the kids will see it. Fill a one-gallon clear container with hard-shelled chocolate candies (or skittles) and challenge kids to guess how many candies are in the jar. (Approximately 5,000 candies will fill a one-gallon container.) At the end of the story, give each kid a handful of candy! (Just be aware of food allergies and sensitivities and have alternatives on hand for those kids.)

Prepare to ring a bell at the designated places in the script.

Hand each kid a sheet of paper and a writing utensil. Then hold up the container of paper pieces for kids to see and give it a gentle shake. **Whoa! Look at all the paper! Do you think you could guess how many pieces of paper are in here?** (Don't reveal the answer!)

A miracle is an amazing sign that God is at work! And today we're going to hear from God's big story about a time when Jesus did an incredible miracle. Let's play a game as I tell the story. At different points in the story, we'll get clues to help us figure out how many pieces of paper are in the container. Listen carefully for a bell. When you hear it ring, it'll be time for a clue!

Right now, take a moment to write your best guess as to how many papers are in this container! Then we'll compare your guesses at the end. Allow time for kids to write their guesses on their paper. When finished, they can set their paper and writing utensils in front of them.

Jesus had a friend and relative who was called John the Baptist. John the Baptist was a preacher sent by God to prepare the people for Jesus and His message. John told the people about how God would make the world new and those who followed Jesus would get be a part of it! John baptized people, or submerged them in water, as a symbol that they were turning from their old ways and God was washing them clean of sin, which is the wrong things they say and do. John even baptized Jesus (even though He had never sinned)!

Ring a bell to indicate it's time for the first clue. **It's time for our first clue! Let's take a look.**



Leader Tip: For Preteens. Invite three preteens in your group to come up and read the three clues during the story.

Read Clue 1: **It takes this many miles to go from one coast of the United States to the other and back!**

Hmm ... does anyone know the answer to this? If you do, keep it to yourself, but write it on your paper! If you don't know the answer, just write your best guess. Pause for kids to do this. **OK! Let's keep going in our story.**

During the time Jesus was on earth, a man named King Herod ruled Israel for the Roman Empire. Herod was angry at John the Baptist for preaching God's truth, so when Herod had the chance, he ordered John to be killed.

Jesus was heartbroken when He found out John had been killed. Jesus wanted to be alone to grieve so He went on a boat to a quiet place. However, many people found out where Jesus was, and they followed Him on foot. By the time Jesus reached the shore by boat, a large crowd had gathered.

Ring a bell to indicate it's time for the next clue.

Time for the next clue! Clue 2 says: The average person will use approximately this number of toilet paper rolls in their entire lifetime! Write your guess on your paper. Give kids time to think and write their guesses.

Let's keep going. **Even though Jesus was sad and wanted to be alone, He cared more about helping the people who had gathered to see Him. Jesus understood their hurts and sadness and showed compassion on them, healing those in the crowd who were sick.**

Evening came and people got hungry, but Jesus' closest followers—His disciples—realized that there was nothing to eat. They told Jesus to tell the crowds to leave so that they could buy their own food in town. Instead, Jesus told His disciples to feed the crowd. They were confused. "We only have five small loaves of bread and two fish" they told Him.

Ring a bell to indicate it's time for the final clue.

This is our last clue! Let's see if this is one you might know. Clue 3 says: This is the number of people Jesus fed in today's story (not including women and children)!

All three of the clues actually have the same answer. And it's approximately the same as the number of paper pieces in the container. Maybe you know this story and know the answer. Write it down if you know it! If not, that's OK. Write your best guess. Give kids a few seconds to write their answer.

If you guessed 5,000, then you're right! Hold up your answer for us to see!

There were about 5,000 men, plus women and children in the crowd. But remember—all they had was five small loaves of bread and two fish. That's not nearly enough to feed that many people! How was that ever going to be enough?

Jesus told the disciples to bring Him the little food they had and told everyone else to sit down on the grass. Jesus took the five small loaves and two fish, looked up to heaven, and thanked God for what He had provided. Then, Jesus tore the loaves into pieces and gave them to His disciples, who then passed out the food to the people. Everyone ate until they were full! There was so much food that the disciples collected 12 large baskets of leftovers!

Even when Jesus was sad and grieving His friend's death, He noticed the people around Him and cared more about their needs than His own. Jesus showed concern for the sick and healed them. And when the people were hungry and His disciples weren't sure how they would be able to feed such a large crowd, Jesus fed them in a miraculous way—an amazing sign that God is at work! Jesus showed compassion to the people in the crowd that day, and He continues to show compassion to us today! Jesus shows compassion.

Connecting the Wonder Truth

Display the 5,000 Wonder Truth Slide. Our Wonder Truth today is **JESUS SHOWS COMPASSION**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.



The four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—tell about Jesus' life and ministry. The feeding of the 5,000 is the only miracle included in all four Gospels, so we know it was a very important event! In this story, Jesus showed compassion to the people in the crowd. Similarly, God didn't want us stuck in the pain of our sin—the wrong things we say and do—so He did something about it. He sent His Son, Jesus, to live, die, and rise again so our sins could be forgiven. Our God is compassionate (Exodus 34:6)!

In Awe of God's Wonder

Spend a few moments allowing kids to think about the wonder of God's story.

Jesus was sad when He found out His relative, John the Baptist, had died. Is it surprising that Jesus became sad over things just like we do? Why or why not? Give kids time to think and share.

Think about Jesus' actions in this story. Consider brainstorming together everything Jesus did in today's story. **Thinking about everything Jesus did in the story, what action do you find most amazing?** Allow kids to share freely. Consider sharing your own answer to the question as well.

Responding in Worship

SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson.

***Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. See the "Worship Posture Tutorial" on the RBKids Resource Page.



WORSHIP VIDEO: GREAT ARE YOU LORD

Blessing Your Kids

Speak a blessing over your kids. Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: May we take comfort in Jesus, who shows compassion. May you love how Jesus loves, and may the compassion of Jesus overflow through your actions!