

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

- Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: My God, Always With Me
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Prayer and Blessing





LESSON 2 FOR LEADERS

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)!

LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Shows Compassion

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Welcome

Slide: Series Welcome Loop

As kids arrive...

Walk around the room and welcome as many kids as possible by showing excitement that they have joined you. Give high-fives, fist bumps, encourage them to sit on the floor in their spots, and ask questions about their week.

Video: Countdown

Welcome kids to worship time. Introduce yourself by name.

Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions

RESOURCES: Tac the Cat puppet

Leader: You may remember our friend Tac, the curious cat. He's always asking questions. He has a question for you. Are you ready?

Tac the Cat: Hi, kids! Today I'm curious about something you can find at the grocery store.

Leader: A grocery cart?

Tac the Cat: No, it's something you buy at the grocery store. It's a type of food.

Leader: Cereal?

Tac the Cat: No. You can make a sandwich with it.

Leader: Oh, I know—bread!

Tac the Cat: Yes, that's what I'm curious about! Bread! Kids, do you know how to make bread? How long does it take to make? What ingredients would we need to make it? What are all the different kinds of bread? (Allow the kids to respond.) I like the smell of bread; I'm curious what makes bread smell so good!

Leader: Those are good questions, Tac! Now I'm curious, too! Bread does take a while to make, which is why some people buy their bread at a grocery store. I don't think cats eat a lot of bread though. We're going to hear a story today about how Jesus fed a lot of hungry people. He only had five loaves of bread and two fish. He definitely didn't have time

to make more bread, but He still was able to feed everybody!

Tac the Cat: Oh, fish! I would eat that! That's a good cat-flavored meal! So what happened? I'm curious!

Leader: We'll find out when we hear about God's big story today. We'll learn about how Jesus used bread and fish to show kindness to lots of people.

Tac the Cat: That sounds great! Well, I'm going to go find some fish-flavored crackers to eat because all this talk made me hungry! What would you want to eat if you were hungry, kids?

(Allow the kids to respond while Tac leaves.)

Have you ever been curious about bread or the other food you eat? Allow the kids to respond. **What do you like to eat that makes you curious?** Allow the kids to respond. **We all eat different things every day that can make us curious. Did you ever stop to think that God made everything we need to eat? God is kind to us and always takes care of us.**

Today's Wonder Truth is **JESUS SHOWS COMPASSION**. Today we'll learn how Jesus showed compassion through an awesome miracle.

Declaring God's Wonder

Show the **Early Childhood Declaration Slide** and encourage the kids to say the statements and do the motions with you.

Thank You, God, that You made me! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Make prayer hands, then point up and then to yourself.

And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands on your hips.

Jesus loves me so much. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

His love for me is big. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

The Holy Spirit leads me, (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Bring your arms down from above, making a path in front of you.

And I can follow You. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

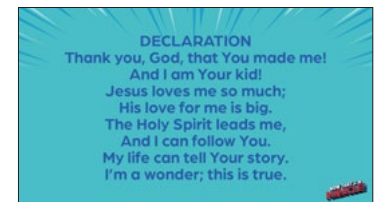
March in place like you're following the leader.

My life can tell Your story. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

I'm a wonder; this is true. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shake your fingers, and celebrate ("praise hands").



Make It Inclusive Any opportunity to use motions or sign language will be helpful for including kids who are nonverbal or have speech limitations. Affirm kids for their efforts to participate.

Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use your own words: **God, thank You for loving us. Thank You for sending Jesus who shows us compassion and takes care of us. We pray Your Spirit will help us understand Your story for us today. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Today we'll learn how Jesus shows compassion; He takes care of those He loves. Let's sing a song and thank God for how good He is to us!

Play [My God, Always With Me](#) worship videos and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible

Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

I open my Bible, and what do I see? (*Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.*)

God's big story, waiting for me! (*Point to yourself.*)

Let's hear part of God's big story, which comes from the book of Matthew in the Bible. That's the first book of the New Testament.

[Show the God's Big Story Video.](#)

GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: scissors (prep only); foam or paper hearts (enough for each kid to have 1 heart)

RESOURCES:

Ahead of time, hide the hearts around the room. Enough for each kid to have 1 heart.

Today you're going to hear a word that you may not know: **compassion**. **Compassion** means to care about and want to help someone in need. Listen for the word **compassion** in today's story.

When Jesus was on earth, He taught about God's kingdom. He talked to many people and helped lots of people. Jesus did amazing things!

So many people heard about Him. They wanted to come see Jesus and listen to Him teach. One day, Jesus got into a boat on a lake because He wanted to be alone. But lots of people heard where Jesus was going and came out to meet Him.

When Jesus' boat got to shore, a really big crowd of people was there. Jesus knew what they needed. Some were sad. Some were hurt or sick. Some just needed to be near Him or hear Him teach. Jesus cared about all the people. He showed **compassion**—that is kindness—to the people. Jesus helped the people who needed help. He healed the people who were hurt or sick.

Did you hear our new word? Let's look for hearts that are hidden around the room. These hearts will remind us how Jesus showed **compassion** to the people.

Pause to allow kids to look for the hidden hearts. Ensure every kid has gotten a heart.

Great job! Hold your heart up the next time I say, "compassion."

It got late and people got hungry. It was time for dinner, but they were far away from home. Jesus' closest followers—His disciples—saw that there was not enough for all the people to eat. They told Jesus to tell the people to leave so that they could go get their own food. But Jesus told His disciples to feed the crowd. They were confused. "We only have five small loaves of bread and two fish," the disciples told Him. There were about 5,000 men plus women and children in the crowd. They didn't have enough food to feed that many people!

Jesus told the disciples to bring Him the food they had. Jesus had compassion (hold up hearts) for the people. They brought Jesus five loaves of bread and two fish. Then Jesus told everyone else to sit down on the grass. Jesus took the bread and fish, looked up to heaven, and thanked God. Then, Jesus tore the bread into pieces and gave the bread and fish to His disciples. The disciples passed out the food to all the people. They showed compassion (hold up hearts) to the people too. Everyone ate until they were full! There was so much food that the disciples collected 12 large baskets of leftovers!

Leader Tip: You can include a snack of fish-shaped crackers or a real loaf of bread torn apart to pass out to the kids as you tell the story. Be aware of food allergies.

Even when Jesus wanted to be alone, He cared more about what the people around Him needed. Jesus cared about the people who were sick and healed them. He showed compassion (hold up hearts) by helping them. And when the people were hungry and there wasn't enough food, Jesus fed them.

This was a **miracle**—an amazing sign that God was at work! Jesus showed compassion to the people that day, and He still shows compassion (hold up hearts) to us today! Jesus shows compassion (hold up hearts).

Leader Tip: You may want to collect the paper hearts after the story, and you can send a heart home with each kid.

Connecting the Wonder Truth

Ask the following question to help kids connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

Our Wonder Truth today is **JESUS SHOWS COMPASSION**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth happen 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. God showed compassion to us when He sent His Son, Jesus, to live, die, and rise again so our sins could be forgiven. Our God is loving and compassionate!

Prayer and Blessing

SUPPLIES: heart from God's Big Story

After pray with them, thanking God for His compassion for us.

You may want to give each kid one of the paper hearts used during God's Big Story time. **Hold up your paper heart (or put your hands on your heart) when you hear me say, "compassion."**

God, thank You for showing compassion (hold up heart) for us. You are so good to us. Help us remember to be thankful and to show compassion (hold up heart) to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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!