

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

- Play Stations:
 - Making Dinner
 - Counting People
 - Jesus Feeds The 5,000 Coloring Sheet
- Word of Wonder: Job 36:26a
- God's Big Story
- Circle Time: Jump in the Middle
- LARGE GROUP
- Craft: Five Loaves and Two Fish
- Game: Collecting Fish





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

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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)!



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

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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Play Stations

SUPPLIES: toy food, toy people figurines or stuffed animals, coloring utensils, play grocery carts or bags (optional), play cooking utensils (optional), toy plates and serving utensils (optional), craft sticks or pom-poms (optional)

RESOURCES: [Jesus Feeds The 5,000 Coloring Sheet \(1 per kid\)](#)

Greet the kids warmly and briefly explain the play stations to them. Invite them to play at any of the stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help you get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas about what we'll be learning today?

Play Station: Making Dinner

Set up: Set out toy food. You may add play grocery carts or bags to one side of the play station and cooking utensils at the other side. You can also set out play plates and serving utensils.

Play: Invite the kids to pretend they're buying food at the grocery store to make dinner. After buying their food, kids can pretend to make dinner. Ask kids what they are cooking and let them share their favorite meal.

Play Station: Counting People

Set up: Set out toy people figurines or stuffed animals. Instead of people, you can set out a large quantity of craft sticks or pom-poms.

Play: Invite the kids play with the toy people. Encourage them to count how many people are there. After kids have played and counted, they can position the toy people so they're ready to listen to Jesus. They can also count the craft sticks or pom-poms. For older kids, let them sort the objects into piles of five.

Play Station: Jesus Feeds the 5,000 Coloring Sheet

Set up: Ahead of time, print one copy per kid of the coloring sheet. Set out the coloring sheets and coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of their favorite food.

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: paper (1 sheet per kid), coloring utensils, play dough

WORD OF WONDER

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

—Job 36:26a

Our Word of Wonder for the Now That's a Miracle! series is Job 36:26a. Let's practice saying the Word of Wonder together. Practice the Word of Wonder verse one time together, then give each kid a sheet of paper and coloring utensils.

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

- **HOW GREAT**—Put one arm straight up for each word.
- **GOD IS!**—Point up.
- **WE'LL NEVER**—Cross arms back and forth in front of you.
- **COMPLETELY**—Bring both arms down from above you, to your sides.
- **UNDERSTAND** —Point to your head with both hands.
- **HIM.**—Point up.
- **JOB 36:26a**—Hold your hands together in front of you, palms open, as if opening a book.

We discovered today that Jesus shows compassion. What is something that God has done that makes Him great? Draw a picture of what comes to mind. Allow the kids to draw a picture of a reason or example of how God is great.

Leader Tip: Review with kids how Jesus showed compassion in God's big story. After kids recall how Jesus helped the people, help kids brainstorm all the different ways God helps us.

Some kids may prefer creating shapes with play dough rather than drawing pictures. Provide play dough and encourage the kids to create something that makes them think of how great God is.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **What is something great about God that you learned this week?**
- **What is one question you'd like to ask God today?**

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible; Bible Story Picture (1/SG)

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.

[Read pages 310-315 in the My First Hands On Bible.](#)

Circle Time: Jump in the Middle

Have kids stand up and form a circle.

We heard today about how Jesus had compassion for people who needed help. We're going to play a game that will show us how everyone needs help sometimes. I'll ask a question and if your answer is "Yes," jump into the middle of the circle.

Give kids an example before you begin, such as "Are you wearing a white shirt? If so, jump in the middle." After each question, choose someone to answer one of the discussion questions from the list below. You can use the examples below or come up with your own questions:

- **Do you need help being nice to your brother or sister?**
- **Do you need help tying your shoes?**
- **Do you need help listening to a grown-up at home?**
- **Do you need help picking up your toys?**
- **Do you need help getting to school or church?**
- **Do you need help getting food?**
- **Do you need help when you get hurt or sick?**
- **Do you need help when you're scared?**
- **Do you need help when you disobey God?**

Leader Tip: Each group has its own personality, and this activity can be altered to fit our group's needs. For example, use this activity to direct talkative kids during discussion time by telling them only kids in the middle can answer the next discussion question.

We all need help sometimes. The people in our story from the Bible today needed help from Jesus. They were sick and needed to be healed. And they were hungry and needed food. Let's discuss and answer some questions together.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **How many people were in the crowd who followed Jesus?** (Over 5,000 people)
- **Why were the disciples worried in this story?** (It was dinnertime, and they didn't have enough food.)
- **What did Jesus use to feed the crowd?** (five loaves of bread and two fish)
- **Why do you think Jesus gave everyone food?**
- **What's a problem you have that you want to ask Jesus to help with?**
- **What food would you want Jesus to give you if you were hungry and needed food?**
- **Why do you think Jesus has compassion for people?**
- **How has Jesus shown compassion to you?**
- **How can you show compassion to others this week?**

We all need help sometimes, and we can ask Jesus to help us. Jesus shows us compassion and cares for us because He loves us so much! Let's talk to God now in prayer and thank Him for sending us Jesus.

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That's OK! Encourage them to pray silently and thank God for hearing us and caring about us. God hears all our prayers!

Head to Large Group!

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

Craft: Five Loaves and Two Fish

SUPPLIES: stamp pads, glue, small crackers (5 per kid- or bread stickers), ; wet wipes, markers

RESOURCES: Fish and Loaves Sheet (1 per kidback of coloring sheet)

We're going to make a picture by covering our paper with two fish and five loaves of bread. Whenever you look at your picture, you can remember how Jesus showed compassion to the crowd, and you can know that He has compassion for you!

Give each kid a Fish and Loaves Sheet and set out stamp pads, glue, and five crackers. Set out wet wipes nearby to clean kids' hands.

Put each kid's hand on a stamp pad so it's covered in ink. Have them place their hands on their papers so their fingers are pointing to the left, which will become a fish shape on their pages. You can also trace their hands with markers instead of using ink. The palm of their hands will make the fish's face. Then draw eyes and smiley faces on the fish's faces. Repeat this process so there are two fish on each child's page. Then let the kids glue five crackers next to the fish to represent the five loaves of bread.



Take your pictures home to help you remember how Jesus showed compassion for the crowd and how He shows compassion to us. He loves you so much, and He helps us when we need help.

Active Game: Collecting Fish

SUPPLIES: large buckets or bins (1 for the whole group and 1 for every 3–5 kids), small balls (or toy fish), smaller pails (1 for every 3–5 kids)

In today's story, Jesus made so many fish and bread that He was able to feed over 5,000 people, and there were 12 buckets of leftovers when they were all done eating! Let's play a game where we'll collect the leftovers in buckets.

Divide kids into teams of 3–5 kids. Each team will form a line. At the end of each team's line, set out a small pail filled with balls or toy fish. Place buckets at the end of each line, as well. At the front of the line will be one large empty bucket or bin.

The kids will work together as a team. When you say, "Go," the last kid in the line will begin filling an empty pail with plastic balls or toy fish from the large bucket. She will then pass the pail to the kid in front of her. Kids will continue passing the pail forward until the first kid in line receives the pail and dumps the balls or fish into the big bucket at the front. The last kid will then begin filling the next pail with more balls from the bucket and will pass this pail to the next kid. Kids will continue to pass pails and fill the larger bucket until all balls or fish from the large bucket at the end of their line have been moved to the large bucket at the front of their line.

Today we learned about when Jesus showed compassion by helping people. We worked together and helped one another move our buckets of fish to the front of the line. Jesus showed us compassion, and we can show others compassion too!