


the
Jesus 
Storybook
Bible
Curriculum

Filled full!

The feeding of the 5,000, from Matthew 14; Mark 6; Luke 9

☉ Please see the curriculum Introduction .pdf for more guidance on praying with your group and on Scripture memory.

☉ The total allotted time per lesson is 45 minutes. This is the minimum amount of time it would take to complete the whole lesson. The time can easily be extended to increase the lesson to as much as 1.5 hours. If you have more than the allocated 45 minutes, please use the extra time to extend the time for activities, to learn the memory verse, and to pray.

☉ The “Notes for Teachers on the Text” section is intended as explanation of the Bible text and advance preparation for you only; it is not expressed in terms or language the children could understand.

The Jesus Storybook Bible Curriculum
By Sally Lloyd-Jones and Sam Shammas

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Recap of the Previous Story

3 min. 

☉ Welcome the children and ask them to sit in a circle.

☉ Briefly recap the main point of the previous story: “Last time we read that Jesus was able to calm a storm by speaking. Jesus is God, so he has power over things that other people do not. He has power over sickness and death, and he has power over storms, over nature. We memorized a verse about that.”

☉ Ask them to recite together the verse they learned at home about the story. “Matthew 19:26 — ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’”

☉ To lead into the theme of today’s story, say: “Even though Jesus calmed the storm and has shown the disciples his power again and again, they still do not know who he is. They ask each other: ‘Who is this, even the wind and the waves obey him?’ We know the answer. We know that Jesus is God, so he has power over the wind and the waves. But the disciples still do not know who Jesus is.”

Activity Introducing the Story

10 min. 

Aim: To expend energy and learn about identity.

Materials: A blindfold.

1. Say: “Sometimes it is hard to know who someone is. Sometimes you need clues or evidence so you can know who someone is. May I have a volunteer put on this blindfold and go to the center of the circle.”

2. Pick a child and then explain the game: The child in the center wears the blindfold. You will count to five, allowing everyone in the circle to jump up and swap places. The blindfolded child then points to someone in the circle and asks: “Who are you?” The person stands up and answers something truthfully about themselves; e.g., “I have blue eyes,” or “I am wearing red.” The blindfolded child has to guess who the person is.

3. Explain that the other child has to continue to say things about themselves until the blindfolded child is able to guess who they are (but obviously they cannot say their name). When the blindfolded child guesses correctly, the two swap places. If you want to make the game more difficult, you could ask them to disguise their voices.

4. Say: “You want the blindfolded person to guess correctly as quickly as possible, so try to think of things that you can say about yourself that will act as clues to who you are. Ready?”

5. Play the game. Keep saying: “What can you say about yourself that is a clue as to who you are?”

6. If it is taking too long to guess, give hints to help the process along.

7. In between each new blindfolded child, ask everyone in the circle to swap places as you count to five so that they can expend some energy and so the blindfolded child does not know where everyone is seated.

8. At the end of the allocated time, say: “The disciples have been given many clues as to who Jesus is. In our story today, they get another one.”

For larger groups: You may want to divide the group into smaller circles, each with a blindfold so that everyone gets a chance to play.

Join the children in the circle and announce the title of the story. Read aloud pages 244–249 from *The Jesus Storybook Bible* or listen to CD3 track 2.

Notes for Teachers on the Text

Jesus' feeding of the 5,000 cannot be seen as a "rescue" of any kind. The need for food was not acute and the availability of food was not that problematic. Yet the feeding of the crowd is one of the only miracles recorded by all four Gospels. This was a crucial teaching miracle. Jesus is telling people who he is.

At first sight, Jesus' reply in Matthew 14:16 (and similarly in Mark 6:37 and Luke 9:13) seems unreasonable. The disciples had made a very rational proposal—that Jesus should send the people away so they could get something to eat. Instead, Jesus insists that the disciples give the people something to eat. What is Jesus doing? He is vividly showing them that they do not have the resources to meet the needs of others. Their first response to his direction is to add up what it would cost to feed the people—and they conclude that it is far beyond them. Of course that is true; that was Jesus' point. In Jesus' hands, however, seemingly inadequate resources can be multiplied. In the hands of Jesus, the insignificant becomes significant, the insufficient becomes sufficient, the five loaves become a feast.

In his account, Mark uses the Greek word for "desert" three times (Mark 6:31, 32, 35; see also Matthew 14:13, 15; Luke 9:12). The NIV translates them "quiet place," "solitary place," "remote place." It is clear by the disciples' statements that though the place was relatively quiet, there were towns nearby. Why then did Mark push the idea of this place being desolate? The word Mark uses means "wilderness," and he is seeking to evoke the memory of Moses leading and feeding the people in the wilderness. Exodus 16:2–12 says: "In the desert the whole community grumbled against

Moses and Aaron... 'You have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.' Then the Lord said to Moses, 'I will rain down bread from heaven for you.... Tell them, 'At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.'"

In the same way, Jesus now feeds people with bread from heaven. He is the same God who said to the hungry Israelites in the wilderness, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you." He is the Redeemer King, the Good Shepherd. He cares for the people's needs and meets them miraculously. Since Jesus is a shepherd, he cares; and he will continue to heal the broken, find the lost, and support the weak. Since he is also God (an omnipotent shepherd), he cannot fail to be successful in these endeavors. Jesus is the Christ. That is what the feeding miracles were pointing to.

Note also that Jesus' miracles look back to the world God created originally, to the Garden of Eden. Feeding miracles look back to when no one was hungry; healing miracles look back to when no one was blind or broken or sick; nature miracles (like the calming of the storm) look back to when there was total harmony between humanity and nature. But the miracles do not only look back; they also look ahead. They point forward to the new heaven and new earth. This means that we should not primarily think of miracles as the suspension of the natural order but as the restoration of the natural order. God did not originally design us to be sick, diseased, hungry, and poor. So Jesus' miracles are a foretaste of the salvation that is coming, the restoration of all creation by the ruling power of God.

Understanding the Story

15 min. 

Aim: To understand that Jesus can do things other people cannot do because he is God.

Materials: Your packed lunch (e.g., a sandwich and a piece of fruit); decorating items, e.g., stickers, pieces of colored paper, tin foil, etc.; child-safe glue; crayons; copies of the handout (the last page of this document).

1. At the end of the story, say: “Jesus is able to feed all those people with a little boy’s packed lunch. And they were all full. And still there were leftovers.”
2. Show them the picture on pages 248–249 of *The Jesus Storybook Bible*.
3. Say: “Just like the little boy in the story, I have my packed lunch.”
4. Take out your lunch and display it in the center of the circle for all to see.
5. Ask: “If I wanted to share my lunch, how many of you in the circle might get a bite?”
6. Get appropriate answers; then ask: “Could we all eat and get full if we were to share my lunch?”
7. Get the appropriate answer; then ask: “Could we feed everyone in church with my lunch?”
8. Get the appropriate answer; then say: “You’re right, we couldn’t possibly feed all those people with such a small amount of food, but in our story Jesus did. We read in the Bible that ‘The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.’”
9. Put away the lunch and give each child a copy of the handout. Distribute the crayons and decorating items.
10. Say: “On your paper you can see some empty boxes. Let’s fill the empty boxes.”
11. Read aloud all the words and instructions on the handout, saying “blank” where there is a missing word or number. Ask them to work in pairs to fill in the missing numbers in the handout and to draw and decorate the pictures. Help anyone who is struggling.
12. Toward the end of the allocated time, ask them to share their answers and show others their drawings, commenting appropriately. Ask them to help you put away the decorating items.
13. Ask: “Why is Jesus able to feed all those people with such a small amount of food? Correct, because he is God. The disciples have seen Jesus raise the dead, heal the sick, calm a storm, and now they see him feed more than 5,000 people with a packed lunch. What should the disciples know about who Jesus is after all they have seen?”
14. Get the appropriate answer.

Drawing the Story to a Close

1 min. 

Say: “What the disciples do not yet understand is that Jesus is perfect and powerful in every way. He has power over sickness, over death, over nature, and he can feed more than 5,000 people with a few loaves and fish.”

Say: “Jesus is God and so he can do things other people cannot do. He can take nothing and make it everything. That is who he is.”

Jesus in the Story

2 min. 

Ask: “What did we discover about Jesus from today’s story?”

Get a few children to share their answers aloud, commenting appropriately; then ask everyone to write an answer in the space on their handout.

Praying about the Story

5 min. 

Pray aloud, thanking God that he is powerful and that he is able to take nothing and make it everything.

Ask the children to think of something to praise or thank God for in prayer. They can start their prayers with: “God, we praise you that ...”

A Verse from the Story to Learn at Home

2 min. 

☉ Introduce the verse: “Jesus did something in our story today that seemed impossible.”

☉ Announce the verse: “So, your verse to practice at home is Matthew 19:26 – ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’”

☉ Read the verse out loud together as a group.

☉ Remind the children to give the handout to their parents and to memorize the verse for next time.

Jesus had loaves of bread

Draw the loaves of bread.

Jesus could do this because he is _____!

and fish

Draw the fish.

yet he fed more than people.

Draw the people.

☺ Jesus in the Story



What did you discover about Jesus from this story?

Jesus

☺ A Verse from the Story to Learn at Home

With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.
(Matthew 19:26)



Notes for parents: From the story we learned that Jesus fed more than 5,000 people with a few loaves and fish. Jesus is God and so he can do things other people cannot do.

Please help your child to memorize the verse and the Scripture reference for next time. Please review with them the place of the book of Matthew, using the diagram above.