

LESSON 21

# Jesus Feeds the Multitude

JOHN 6:1-16



— BIBLE TRUTH —

THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF CHRIST IS SUFFICIENT TO FEED ALL

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION . . . . . 5 MIN

**SUPPLIES:** loaf of bread

2. BIBLE STORY . . . . . 10 MIN

**SUPPLIES:** *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 99)

3. BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION . . . . . 5 MIN

Where Is the Gospel?

**SUPPLIES:** Bible (ESV preferred); Review “Where Is the Gospel?” to prepare

4. SNACK QUESTIONS . . . . . 10 MIN

**SUPPLIES:** snack food and beverage

5. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5-10 MIN

6. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MORE) . . . . 20-30 MIN

Coloring Activity

**SUPPLIES:** coloring page for NT Lesson 21—one for each child; markers or crayons

I Am the Bread of Life

**SUPPLIES:** a piece of moldy bread (A week or so before the lesson, put a piece of bread in a resealable plastic bag along with a few drops of water. Seal the bag and allow the bread to mold. Prior to class double bag the bread in see-through zip-closure plastic bags.)

**NOTE:** Keep the bread sealed in the bag; some children might be allergic to molds.

Multiply the Bread

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ 30 fish cut out of blue construction paper
- ✓ a loaf of bread
- ✓ bottled water
- ✓ a basket
- ✓ 30 cups (enough for one per child)
- ✓ a stapler

7. CLOSING PRAYER . . . . . 5 MIN

**TOTAL 60-75 MIN**

**THE LESSON**

**OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION . . . . . 5 MIN**

In today's lesson the children will hear how Jesus fed the multitude.

Bring a loaf of bread to class.

Place a loaf of bread on a table in front of the class. Explain that you want them to multiply the loaf of bread so that you can give some to everyone in the church.

Before anyone tries to multiply the bread ask them to first describe how they are going to do it, because if they can't do it, you want to know so you can ask someone else. Play out this exercise and finally ask the children why none of them can multiply the bread. They should say because only God can do a miracle like that. Remind the children just how different we are from God and how powerful he is.

Take time to pray and thank God for providing all of our needs. Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

**BIBLE STORY . . . . . 10 MIN**

Read story 99, "Jesus Feeds the Multitude," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

**BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION . . . . . 5 MIN**

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion:

- **Why were five thousand people following Jesus?**  
*(The people were amazed that Jesus was healing the sick so they followed him.)*
  
- **What did Jesus ask Philip?**  
*(Jesus asked Philip where they could buy bread for so many. He asked this to test Philip's faith. Philip thought it would be impossible to get bread for so many people and did not expect Jesus to provide miraculously.)*

- How did they feed the crowd?

*(A young boy had five barley loaves and two fish that the disciples took to Jesus. Jesus blessed the food and multiplied it to feed the people with enough left over to fill twelve baskets!)*

**SNACK QUESTIONS . . . . . 10 MIN**

While the children are eating the snack, engage them by asking the following questions:

- What lesson do you think Jesus was trying to teach Philip?

*(Jesus wanted to teach Philip that he was able to provide for the needs of man because he was God.)*

- What did the people try to do after they witnessed this miracle?

*(They tried to make Jesus their king.)*

- Why did Jesus slip away and not allow them to make him king?

*(The people wanted to make Jesus a king over an earthly kingdom. Jesus already had a heavenly kingdom. Jesus came to deliver people from sin and not their Roman rulers.)*

**Where Is the Gospel? \_\_\_\_\_**

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

In John 6:35 Jesus said, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." Jesus' providing food for the five thousand is a picture of a greater salvation he would bring. He is not just the multiplier of the fish and the loaves. He himself is the Bread of Life. John 6:40 continues, "For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

The disciples, with but a few loaves and fish, could not feed the thousands gathered. What an apt picture of our inability to save ourselves. But if we turn to Jesus, he has the power to supply what we need. Just as Jesus multiplied the fish and the loaves to feed the multitude, so today he offers us himself.

**SWORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5–10 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult.

**ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS. . . . . 20–30 MIN**

**Coloring Activity**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 21—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- What does the little boy have in his basket?  
*(a few small loaves of bread and a few fish)*
- What do we learn about God from this story?  
*(God is all-powerful and is not limited like we are.)*
- What do you think Philip learned when he saw Jesus multiply the fish and the loaves?  
*(Philip probably saw how his faith was weak and that he was quick to doubt. He likely learned that Jesus was no ordinary man—Jesus was God.)*

**I Am the Bread of Life**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ a piece of moldy bread in a resealable plastic bag

A week or so before the lesson, place a slice of bread into a resealable plastic bag, along with a few drops of water. Seal the bag and allow the bread to become moldy. Note: Keep the bread sealed in the bag; some children might be allergic to molds.

Read John 6:22–35 to the children. Explain to them that this section of Scripture is really part two of today’s lesson teaching. Jesus was saying here that he is the one who supplies our needs. Jesus reminds us that normal bread doesn’t last, but Jesus, the bread of life, endures forever.

Show the kids how bread gets moldy in a short time. Then use the point to emphasize that Jesus is the bread that never perishes.

### Multiply the Bread

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ 30 fish cut out of blue construction paper
- ✓ a loaf of bread
- ✓ bottled water
- ✓ a basket
- ✓ 30 cups (enough for one per child)
- ✓ a stapler

Prior to class, cut out the fish from blue construction paper (make a simple template so they are all the same size). Stack and staple the fish into two equal piles. (You will use this to simulate multiplying the fish.)

During class, after reading the story, tell the children you want to act out the scene. Assign the roles of Philip, Jesus, and the little boy. The rest of the class can be the hungry multitude.

Help the children act out the story as you narrate. When it comes to multiplying the bread, the child playing Jesus can distribute the bread. Then, show the children the two fish (the two stacks of fish). Start tearing the individual construction paper fish from the stapled stack. Play this up a bit as though you are surprised that the fish are multiplying.

Ask the class if they know how you did this. Once they make a few guesses, tell the children about the stapled stacks. Ask them if they can tell you how Jesus multiplied the fish and bread to feed so many. You want to help them see that Jesus was no ordinary man and did not use a trick like you did. Jesus could do the multiplication because he was God!

Allow the children to eat the bread and then send someone around to pick up the scraps in a basket. Remind them that Jesus had twelve baskets full of leftovers. Then discuss how the skit helped them understand the story.

**CLOSING PRAYER . . . . . 5 MIN**

Take time at the end of class to thank God for what you learned today. Include parts of your Bible lesson in your prayer as a way for the children to remember today's lesson.

LESSON 21 - JESUS FEEDS THE MULTITUDE

