

LESSON 21

# Jesus Feeds the Multitude

JOHN 6:1-15



**BIBLE TRUTH**

THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS IS SUFFICIENT TO FEED ALL

**LESSON SNAPSHOT**

**1. OPENING REVIEW . . . . . 5 MIN**

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

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

Read John 6:1–15 from the Scriptures or read story 99, “Jesus Feeds the Multitude,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

**3. OBJECT LESSON 1 . . . . . 10 MIN**

**A Test of Faith**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ large container of animal crackers

**4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION . . . . . 10 MIN**

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

**5. OBJECT LESSON 2 . . . . . 15 MIN**

**I Can Multiply**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ a can of expanding spray foam insulation
- ✓ a small loaf of bread or a roll
- ✓ a large cloth napkin
- ✓ a disposable plastic-coated tablecloth
- ✓ three paper plates
- ✓ an opaque bag large enough to hold the above supplies

**6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5 MIN**

**7. ACTIVITY TIME . . . . . 10 MIN**

**Color a Picture**

**SUPPLIES:**

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

LESSON SNAPSHOT

8. CLOSING PRAYER ..... 5 MIN
9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON ..... 15 MIN

Act It Out

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ a sheet or other covering to serve as a costume
- ✓ a small loaf of bread
- ✓ any other props you would like, e.g., a walking stick, a sheet for a cloak, and a rope belt
- ✓ Bible (optional: a Bible with the words of Jesus in red)

**TOTAL 85 MIN**

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

**Crowds gathered to see Jesus' miracles**—Massive crowds gathered as Jesus traveled with his disciples, teaching the people and healing their sick and demon-possessed. All wanted to catch a glimpse of this amazing man who could open blind eyes and restore crippled legs (Matthew 14:14). In Luke's gospel, we read that the disciples had just returned from being sent out by Jesus to preach and heal (Luke 9:6, 10). Attracted by his miracles but unaware of who he really was, people came in droves to see Jesus for themselves. Jesus had compassion on them for he saw them as "sheep without a shepherd" (Mark 6:34).

**Jesus revealed his creation power**—After a long day of teaching about the kingdom and healing those who were sick, it was time for supper. The disciples encouraged Jesus to send the crowd away (Luke 9:12). To test them and demonstrate his power, Jesus told the disciples to give the people something to eat. But all they had were a few fishes and loaves. Jesus sat the people down. Then, demonstrating his power as creator, he multiplied the fish and loaves. The details of how this was done or what it looked like are not given to us. But we can be sure of this: Jesus created enough food out of those fish and bread for twelve basketfuls of leftovers to be collected! This miracle is found in all four gospels.

**The crowd sought to appoint Jesus king**—After multiplying the fishes and loaves, the people wanted to make Jesus their king. They wanted him to feed them and to use his powers against their Roman oppressors. They didn't want to worship Jesus, nor did they understand he came to deliver them from a greater enemy. The Jews assumed God's promised king would reign on David's earthly throne, liberating Jerusalem and the surrounding lands of Israel. The crowd was prepared to force Jesus to be their king. But Jesus would not be forced to do anything. He was already King of kings, ruling over heaven and earth. His mission was far more important than just overthrowing Rome; Jesus came to overthrow the dominion of sin and death for all who would believe.

## 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.

### THE LESSON

#### OPENING REVIEW . . . . . 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

#### BIBLE STORY . . . . . 10 MIN

Read John 6:1–15 from the Scriptures or read story 99, "Jesus Feeds the Multitude," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

#### OBJECT LESSON 1 . . . . . 10 MIN

##### A Test of Faith

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ large container of animal crackers

After reading the Scripture and talking a bit about what Jesus did, call for a few volunteers to come to the front of the class. Then ask the class if anyone is hungry and would like something

to eat. The class should respond yes. At that point give each of your volunteers an animal cracker and tell them to divide it to feed the class. Explain that they are permitted to break up the crackers into smaller pieces. Watch as they complete the task.

Ask the class if they are satisfied or if they would like some more. They should say that they want some more. Then pull out the large container of animal crackers and start liberally passing them out.

Finally, ask the class if they would like a treat even greater than the crackers. They should say yes. Explain to them that at first the volunteers could only give them a tiny bit, then you fed them with an abundance of crackers. But now you are going to give them something to eat that will fill them so that they are never hungry again. After you have piqued their curiosity, share the gospel with them. Explain that knowing Jesus is greater than eating something to fill your stomach; Jesus fills us with his Holy Spirit. Those who believe will one day live with him in heaven and never be hungry again!

**TEACHING/DISCUSSION . . . . . 10 MIN**

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

**OBJECT LESSON 2 . . . . . 15 MIN**

**I Can Multiply**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ a can of expanding spray foam insulation
- ✓ a small loaf of bread or a roll
- ✓ a large cloth napkin
- ✓ a disposable plastic-coated tablecloth
- ✓ three paper plates
- ✓ an opaque bag large enough to hold the above supplies

Prior to class cut a hole through the center of the bread to fit the applicator tube of the foam canister. The idea is you are going to have an adult helper use the foam to reenact the multiplying of the fish and loaves. The applicator tube will go through the small loaf of bread, and stick just out of the end, while the foam canister is concealed under the napkin. When the trigger on the canister is depressed it will look like the foam is coming out of the end of the bread. Load all the supplies into the bag and give it to your helper.

After you've taught the lesson at a prearranged time have the adult helper rush to the front of the room with the bag of supplies. While she is setting the table with the tablecloth and paper plates, she should excitedly announce that she can multiply the bread just like Jesus did. (The foam canister should be set up in the bag all ready to be lifted out, concealed by the napkin.)

The helper should ask the class if they want to see her multiply the loaf. Once the class responds, she should pull the trigger and the foam should immediately begin to flow out the side of the bread and onto the paper plates. She should continue commenting on how amazing it is, exhausting the full supply of foam. She should then pull the canister away from the loaf and throw it into the bag, continuing to brag about her accomplishment.

Interrupt her celebration and ask her to go ahead and taste the multiplied bread. She should respond by pinching off a small piece of the real loaf and eating it. Stop her and ask her to taste the multiplied part. Once she refuses, expose her fakery along with the class's help. Leave the foam to harden. Use it next week to remind the class about what they learned in this week's lesson. Talk about how what Jesus did was much more amazing and lead them to tell you why what Jesus did was so incredible. (By creating more bread and fish Jesus demonstrated that he is the Creator.)

**SWORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5 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 worker.

**ACTIVITY TIME . . . . . 10 MIN**

**Color a Picture**

**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.)*

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

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day’s Scripture passages.

**BONUS OBJECT LESSON . . . . . 15 MIN**

**Act It Out**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ a sheet or other covering to serve as a costume
- ✓ a small loaf of bread
- ✓ any other props you would like, e.g., a walking stick, a sheet for a cloak, and a rope belt
- ✓ Bible (optional: a Bible with the words of Jesus in red)

Act out the story as though you were part of the crowd of five thousand people who were fed by Jesus. When you describe the multiplying of the fish and loaves, avoid explaining just how they were multiplied. Tell the children you saw the boy with five loaves and fishes, but you could not see exactly what happened because as soon as the Lord broke the bread and gave thanks, those in front of you stood up and would not sit down.

Tell the class that the bread and fish kept coming and that everyone ate as much as they wanted. Then everyone passed the leftover pieces to the disciples, who collected them so as not to waste any of them.

Talk about how they all wanted to make Jesus their king and how they couldn’t find him.

Go on to say that you looked for the Lord all the next day and finally found him. Open up your Bible to John 6:26–40 and read it to the class while staying in character and personalizing the comments from the crowd. (If you use a red-letter edition you will more easily distinguish Jesus’ words from the comments of the crowd.)

Ask the class to summarize Jesus’ message to the crowd the next day when he tried to teach them. (Jesus tried to teach them to follow him for more than just the food—Jesus could give them eternal life!)



LESSON 21 - JESUS FEEDS THE MULTITUDE

