



Jesus Feeds Hungry People

Goal: To wonder at Jesus' compassion and power.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Mark 6:30–44

Jesus' compassion and love reached out to individual people and to groups of people in need. The story of Jesus feeding five thousand people is in all the Gospels and testifies to Jesus' power and his compassionate care for hungry people.

In the place where Jesus was teaching the crowd, there was no place to obtain food. The disciples realized it would be expensive to feed the crowd, so Jesus asked what was available. It was five loaves of bread and two fish (v. 38). So, in language reminding us of the Last Supper, Jesus "looked up to heaven, blessed them, broke the loaves into pieces, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people" (v. 41, CEB). All ate until they were full, and there were twelve baskets of leftovers. Jesus' power provided food, as he was later to provide himself for our salvation.

Jesus was compassionate to the crowd "because they were like sheep without a shepherd" (v. 34). So he taught them. Jesus recognized the people's spiritual as well as physical needs. He was concerned for the whole person. Jesus sets the model for our ministries. His grace provides for us in all things, and we are grateful.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

The children will be able to connect with many things in this story. At the heart of the story is Jesus' concern for the people who were hungry. Your children may have had experiences helping feed hungry people. According to John's Gospel, Jesus could share bread and fish with the hungry crowd because a child shared a lunch basket with five loaves of bread and two fish. Children will be able to share stories of times they have shared food with someone or when someone gave them food.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

This may be a familiar story to the children in your group. It is called a miracle story because Jesus multiplied bread and fish and fed the whole crowd. Children may wonder about miracles and whether they still happen. Think about your own understanding of a miracle. Where do you see miracles happening today? Miracles happen when we share what we have with others in need. Miracles happen when we comfort and care for others. Invite the children to think about miracles they have seen or experienced.

Open my eyes, O God, to see the miraculous in the world and in my life. In Jesus' name. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2023–2024

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 10, 21, 22

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

blanket or mats

snack

Guided Play

choice 1: play food

Exploring

choice 1: **SCM 10a**,
copies of **Grace Notes**
(GN) 1

choice 2: copies of **GN 2**

choice 3: copies of **GN 1**

choice 4: copies of **GN 3**

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Before the Children Arrive

Designate a story corner and lay out a blanket or individual mats for the children so their backs will be to the door.

Use **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule,” to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

Select the activities that will work best for you and for your children. You do not need to do everything suggested!

“Exploring God’s Grace” choice 1 requires more prep.

Welcoming and Guided Play

TD **F** **A** **B** **M** **MS**

Greet children as they arrive and say, “Grace and peace be with you.” Prompt them to respond, “And also with you.” Be sensitive to any children who might be coming for the first time. Introduce yourself to parents/caregivers whom you do not know personally. Tell the parents/caregivers that today’s story is about when Jesus fed five thousand people with five loaves of bread and two fish.

Invite the children to choose a guided-play activity to start:

1. **Make a Lunch**—Place play food and baskets or paper lunch bags on a table. Invite the children to make a pretend picnic lunch.
2. **Counting**—Place a large sheet of mural paper on a table. Draw five ovals. Draw a couple of slash lines in the ovals. Tell the children that these are loaves of bread. Invite the children to count them. Invite them to draw five ovals, add slash marks, and count them. Draw two fish shapes. Invite the children to count them. Invite them to draw two fish shapes and count them.
3. **Play Dough**—Give the children play dough and invite them to make bread. Join the children and model steps for making bread, such as adding pretend flour and water, kneading the dough, and shaping the bread. Make fish shapes with the play dough as well.

T *Washing hands can take time! Waiting in line for the sink may make some children anxious. Devise a routine for your group so they know what to expect. Use a song, movement poem, or physical activity to match the time required.*



Transitioning to Story Time

When you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner by singing “Tell Me the Stories of Jesus”—**MM 16; SCM 21**. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate.

Follow Me



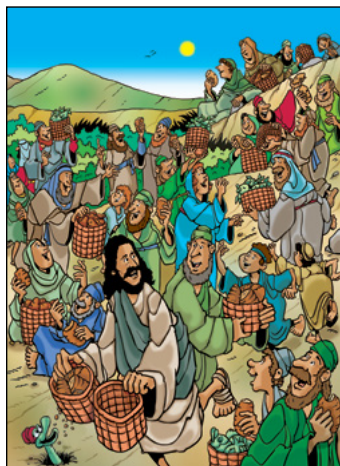
Invite the children to repeat each line after you and follow your motions.

I am looking for God. (*cup hands around eyes*)
I am following God. (*march in place*)
I am learning to share. (*move both hands away from you with palms up*)
I am being kind. (*hug a neighbor's shoulder*)
I am loving God. (*cross hands over chest*)

We Are God's Family

Say the action poem, inviting the children to follow your motions:

You and you and you and you (*point to those in the circle*)
are part of God's big family. (*hug yourself*)
I stretch my arms to hold you all, (*stretch your arms around each child on each side*)
a great big circle we will be. (*all hold hands together*)
God's arms reach around the world (*stretch arms out wide*)
and hold each child in loving care. (*hug yourself*)
For God gives us all we need each day (*pat your head on top*)
and God loves it when we share. (*hug yourself and then stretch your arms out wide*)



Today's story from John's Gospel can be found in *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), www.pcusastore.com.

Consider using the loaves and fish from “Guided Play” choice 2 to count while reading the story the second time.

Hearing the Story



Open the Bible to Mark 6 so the children know the story comes from the Bible. Tell the children that they are going to hear a story about when Jesus fed more than five thousand people with five loaves of bread and two fish.

Read **SCM 10**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.”

Read the story again and invite the children to count with you. You may count in different ways, inviting children to stand and say a number, clapping hands on each number, or jumping on each number.



EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE



This is not a game with a winner and losers. All children should fill up their card at the same time.

1. Loaves and Fish Game

*Before the session, cut out the die on **SCM 10a** and assemble it.*

Provide crayons and copies of **GN 1** for the children. Invite the children to sit with their papers in a circle.

Let the youngest child roll the die first. That child will call out, “fish,” “loaf,” or “basket” depending on what is showing. Allow the children to color in that spot on their papers. Then have the first child pass the die to the child on their right and let that child take a turn rolling. If all of an item are called, (for example, both fish) simply pass the die to the next person to roll.

When all the items are colored, the game is finished. If children are enjoying the game, provide additional copies of **GN 1** and play again.

2. Many Loaves and Fish



Give each child a copy of **GN 2** and invite them to color the seven items in the strip of five loaves of bread and two fish. When they have finished coloring, cut out the strip for each child and show them how to fold the loaves and the fish on the dashed lines, accordion-style.

Retell the story and have the children hold up the folded-up loaves. When you say that Jesus shared the bread, have the children hold the top of the accordion strip and let it fall so the bread is multiplied. Do the same with the fish. You can count all the loaves and fish of all the children if you would like.

3. Multiplying Loaves and Fish



*Before the session, cut apart the loaves, fish, and basket on copies of **GN 1**, making one set for each child.*

Provide each child with a paper bag or envelope to use as a “basket” and have them glue or tape their basket picture to it. While the children are preparing their “basket,” hide all the cutout loaves and fish around the room.

When all are ready, invite the children to fill their baskets with loaves and fish. When all the “food” is found, have the children empty their baskets onto a table. Let the children divide the loaves and fish so that every child has the same amount.

Gather all the loaves and fish together and let children take turns hiding them as the other children close their eyes.



Use “wonder” questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wondering questions help a child think aloud. Answers are neither right nor wrong. They help teach children to speak from their hearts.

4. Coloring Page



Hand out copies of **GN 3** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture of Jesus and the baskets of leftovers. Engage the children in conversation as they color, using the following wondering questions:

- ▼ I wonder, “What did the disciples think when they handed out the food to the crowd?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What did the fish and bread taste like?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What did the disciples think when they gathered up so many baskets of leftovers?”

T *Transitions can be difficult. This may be a good time for some quick physical activities, such as skipping, touching toes, jumping jacks, and so forth in groups of fives or twos.*

LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Call the children together, singing “With My Hands Open Wide”—**MM 20; SCM 22**. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate.

Remind the children that Jesus did a miracle that shared food so that everyone had more than enough to eat. Ask the children what they can do to share this week.

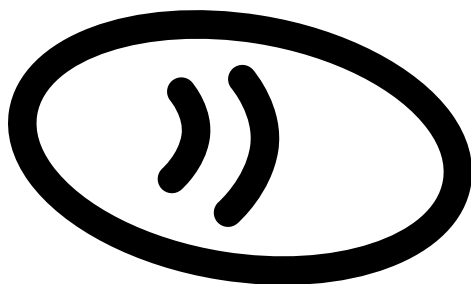
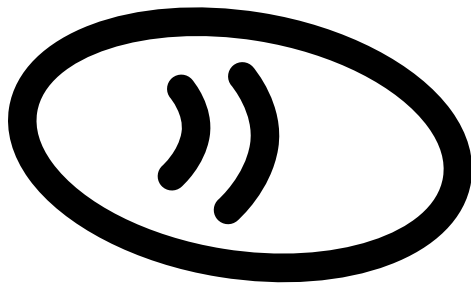
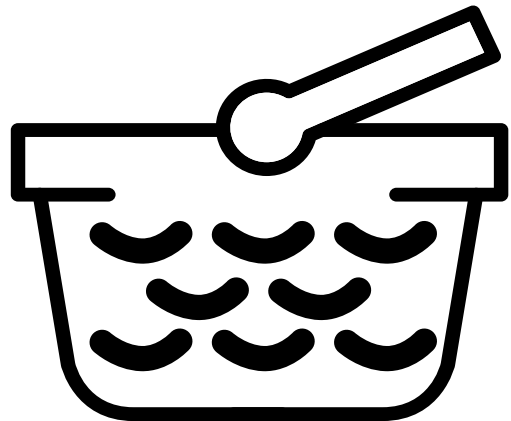
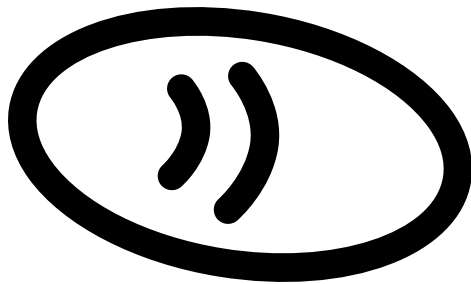
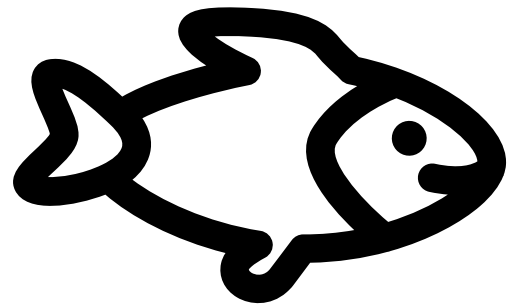
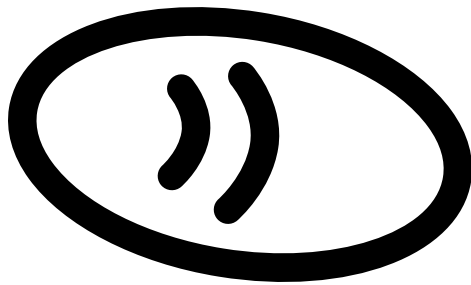
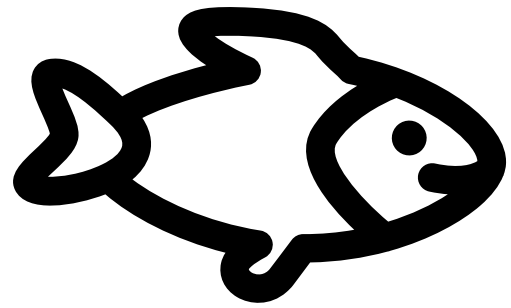
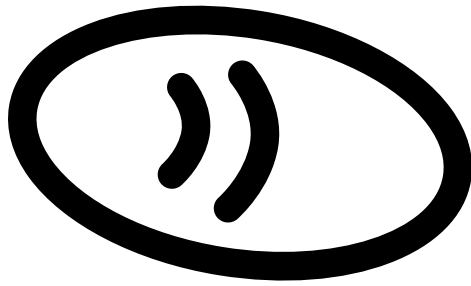
If you would like to share a snack, now would be a good time. Pray, inviting the children to repeat after you:

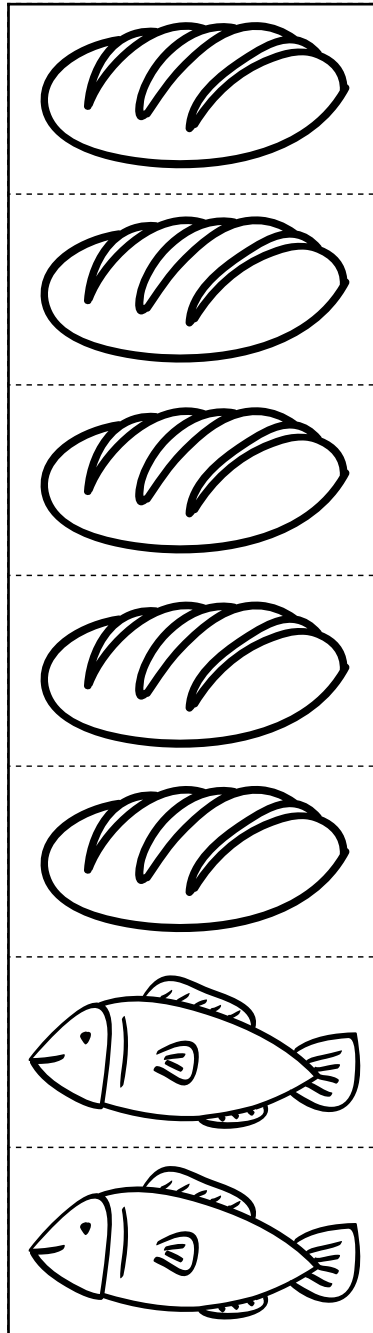
God is great /
and God is good,
and we thank God /
for our food. /
By God’s hand /
we all are fed. /
Give us, Lord, /
our daily bread. /
Amen. /

As the children leave, bless them: “(Name), may you share God’s love this week. The grace of God goes with you.”

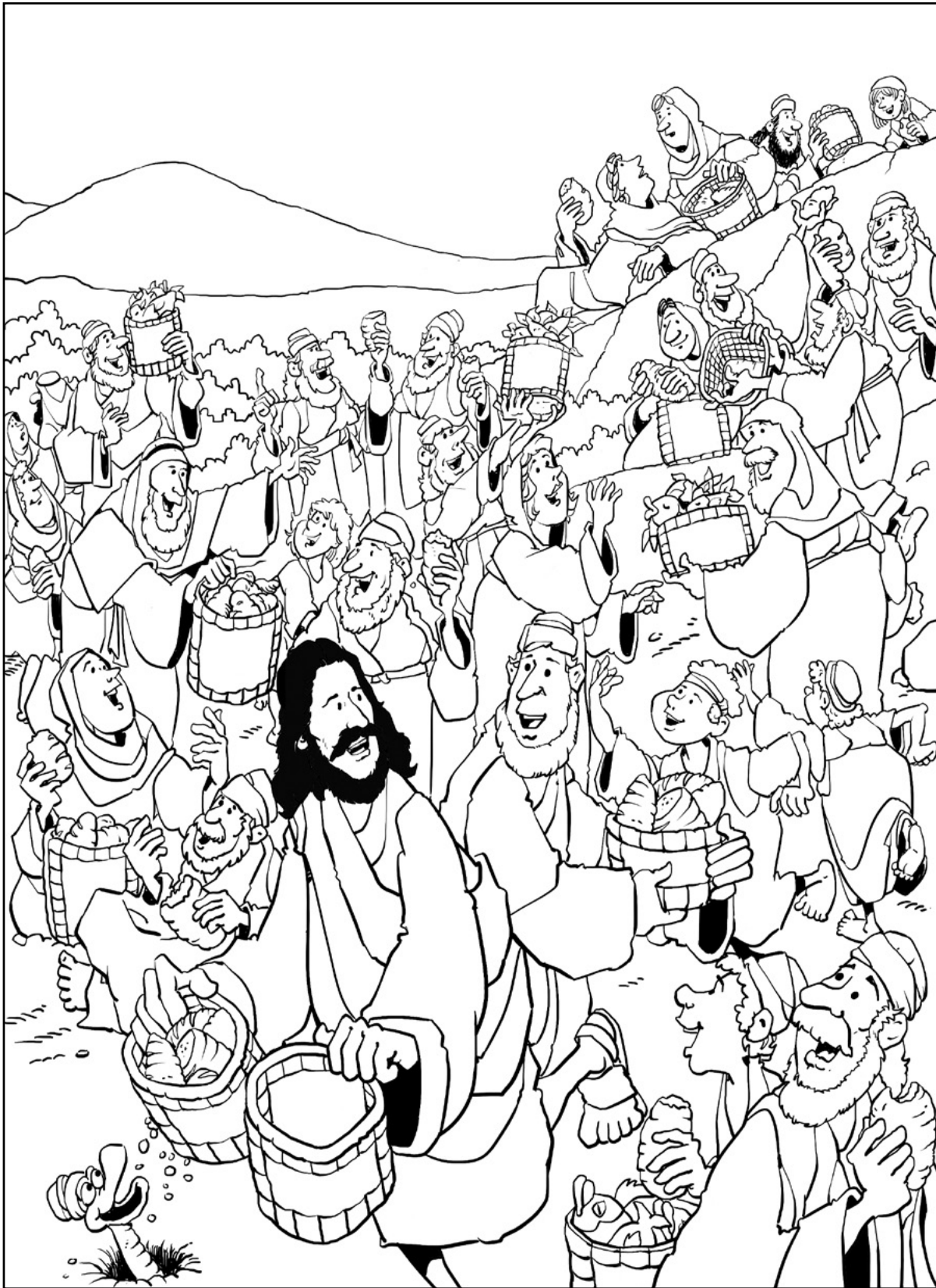


Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads. Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).





Jesus Feeds Hungry People



Jesus and the disciples feed more than 5,000 hungry people.

