



Jesus Feeds Hungry People

Goal: To wonder at Jesus' compassion and power to care for others.

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, 24, 27

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

story audio (see p. vii)

tablecloth

candle

ink pads

baby wipes

Responding

Celebrating

graham crackers

Offering

information about a
local food ministry,
poster boards

Extra

copies of **Grace Notes**
(GN) 1, 2' length of yarn
for each child

GATHERING IN GOD'S GRACE

Post **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.

“Celebrating God’s Grace” and “Offering God’s Grace” require more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing



Greet the children by name and with the words “The grace of Christ be with you.” Prompt the children to respond with the same words. Invite children to help prepare the worship space. Provide a tablecloth, a candle, and a Bible for the worship table. Offer a large sheet of mural paper and markers.

Ask the children to make a scene of a lake and hillside on mural paper. As the children create the scene, wonder together what could be done in a setting like this: a big grassy area and a lake. Encourage their responses.

Attach the scene to the wall near the worship table once it is completed.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities, and suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing.

Singing

Invite the children to sit and close their eyes. Ask them to imagine sitting on a hillside by a lake while they listen to “Tell Me the Stories of Jesus”—**MM 16**; **SCM 24**. Then have the children open their eyes and sing as you play the song again.

Praying

Invite the children to gaze on the hillside mural they have created. Turn on the candle as a reminder of Jesus’ presence with us. Ask the children to close their eyes and again imagine they are there. Say these words:

The sun is shining bright, but it’s not too hot. Imagine that you are running in the grass toward the water. Imagine that you dip your hands in the water and it feels nice and cool. In your imagination, look around at the beauty. What do you want to thank Jesus for as you imagine this beautiful hillside?

Allow for a few quiet moments as they silently offer thanks; then say, “Amen.”



Preparing to Hear the Story

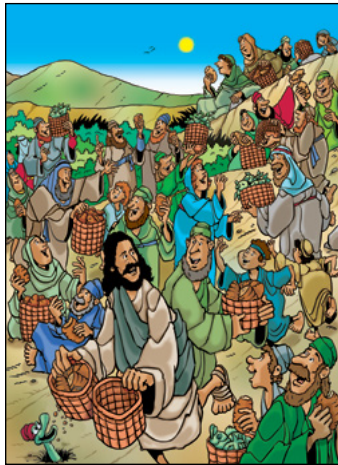
Explain that, before this story, Jesus and his disciples had gone to a quiet place to be alone and rest.

- I wonder, “Why did Jesus and the disciples go to a quiet place to rest?”
- I wonder, “When do you like to be alone?”

Hearing the Story

Invite a child to find Mark 6 in the Bible. Place the open Bible on the worship center. Read **SCM 10**. Conclude the reading by saying, “Word of wisdom, Word of grace,” and prompt the children to say, “Thanks be to God.”

As you read **SCM 10**, use your voice and expressions to make the story engaging. Each time the story includes counting, invite the children to count along with you. When the text calls for counting, say, “We have 1, 2” and pause for children to finish “fish.” Likewise, say, “And 1, 2, 3, 4, 5” and pause for children to finish “loaves of bread.”



Today’s story 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.

Reflecting on God’s Grace



Reflect on the mural created earlier. Ask the children how their image of that scene has changed after hearing the story.

Wonder how Jesus and the disciples felt when a crowd arrived as they were trying to rest and be alone.

Invite children to press their fingertips on the ink pads and then make “thumb-print” people in the mural scene, filling it up. Provide pens or markers to make faces, and baby wipes for them to clean their fingertips. As they fill the mural with “people,” ask the children to imagine that they are there, smushed in with more than 5,000 people.

Have a conversation using the following questions:

- What do you see when you look around?
- What do you hear? Is it loud? What do you imagine people are talking about?
- How does it sound when Jesus starts passing out food?
- What do you smell?
- How do you think the bread and fish tasted?
- How do you imagine it felt to pass and receive the food to and from people around you?
- What do you think was the mood of the people before they ate? After they ate all they could eat?
- What do you think the disciples did with all the leftover food?
- What do we learn about Jesus in this story?



Singing

Play and sing “Sing Thanks to God”—**MM 23; SCM 27**. Invite the children to sing, clap, dance, shout, and praise as they sing each corresponding verse.

Turn off the candle.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and for the time available.

Claiming God’s Grace



Invite the children to talk about the Bible story, explaining that they will use their ideas to create a poem. Start a conversation about the story. Use questions to encourage conversation:

- What does the story mean to you?
- What did you like about the story?
- Finish this sentence: “Jesus is . . .”

As you listen to their ideas, write down what each child says—a few lines, a thought, or a few words. Then invite the children to take some of the ideas, words, and phrases and put them together to make a short poem. Remind the children that the poem doesn’t have to have rhyming words but can express an idea or paint a picture. For example:

I like crowds
but not being hungry
and I don’t like fish

They fed the crowd.
How did it happen?
I want to know.

Write the poems on sheets of paper, read them to the group, and then tape them to the mural created in “Welcoming and Preparing.”



Celebrating God’s Grace



Provide a few graham crackers. Make sure that you don’t have quite enough for each child. Explain that you brought some food, but not enough for everyone. Encourage children to consider how they might make sure that everyone gets a snack.

Pass out the food according to the group’s decision. Ask the children to pause before eating and say a blessing, giving God thanks, just as Jesus blessed the loaves and fish in the story. Say together:



Thank you for the food. (*tap your knees in rhythm*)
A-men. (*clap on each syllable*)
(*repeat*)

As they eat, invite the children to share table graces they say at home. Suggest that they could use this pat-and-clap grace at home. Suggest that they can also do the pat and clap, and say the words silently to themselves, making a silent grace with rhythm they know. Tell them God knows they are whispering in their heads and hearts, “Thank you for the food—Amen!”



Offering God's Grace



Before the session, gather information on a local food bank, food pantry, or other food-sharing ministry in your area.

Remind children that Jesus cared for the people, but that Jesus also asked the disciples to help. Jesus told them, “You can give them food to eat.” Jesus is compassionate; Jesus invites us to be compassionate too.

Share information on a local food bank, food pantry, or other food-sharing ministry in your area. Marvel together at the way this ministry cares for those who are hungry. Invite children to make a plan on how your group can offer support to this ministry.

Make posters to hang around the church, communicating: (1) the ministry your group is helping, (2) how others can get involved (what food is needed and where to bring it), and (3) the deadline for making donations. Give the poster a title, such as “Jesus fed hungry people. You can too!” Display posters around the church. Plan to follow up.

Extra Activity



Provide copies of **GN 1**, crayons or markers, scissors, glue, and yarn. Remind the children that, just as Jesus cared for others, so can we. Invite the children to write or draw in the open spaces on the basket one or more ways that they can care for others. Encourage them to decorate the basket and fish patterns in any fashion before cutting them out. Help them punch holes in the basket and fish as indicated by the small open circles.

To make the fish 3-D, help the children cut the fish tails along the dotted lines and weave the four tail pieces. Begin by crossing the B piece over the C, and put a dab of glue on the dot on C to secure. Next, bring D over B and glue in place. Finally, weave A under C, then over D and glue in place.

String the three pieces in any order along the length of yarn. The children can secure the pieces in place with small pieces of tape if desired. Encourage them to take the mobile home and hang it as a reminder of Jesus' care and compassion for others.





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).

- 🕒 *Children who struggle with attention may have difficulty following directions. Provide specific instructions and time for children to complete each step.*

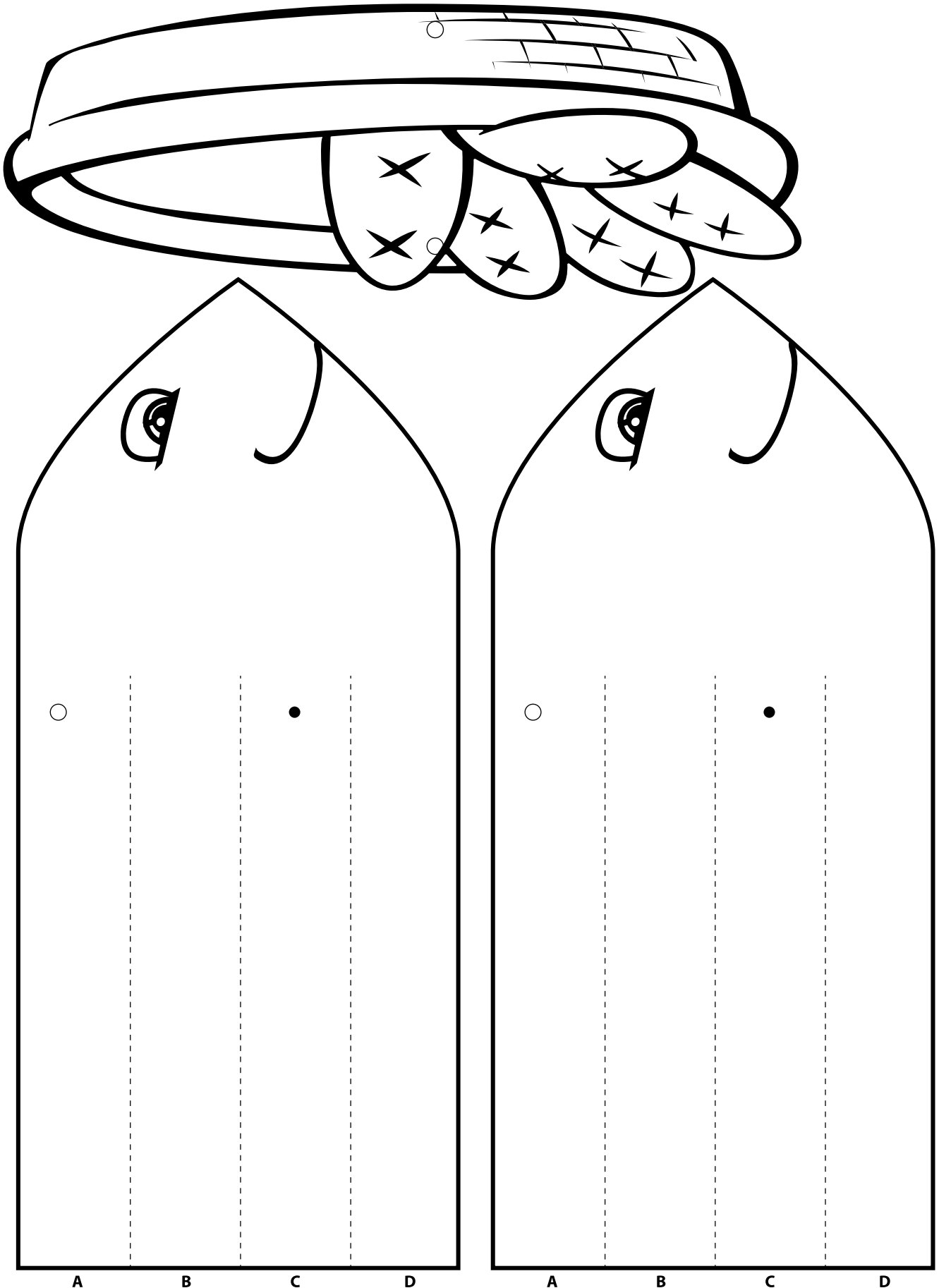
LOVING AND SERVING GOD

Invite the children to gather, and lead them in cleaning up the worship space.

Pray:

God, thank you for Jesus and for the compassion he shows all people. Give us courage to show the same care. Give us the chance this week to share Jesus' care with others. For your goodness, we are grateful. Amen.

As children depart, give each one a blessing. Say to each: “(Name), go and show others the kindness of Jesus.”



A

B

C

D

A

B

C

D

