



What a Mess

Jesus Feeds 4,000 People

BIG IDEA: I can say, “Thank you, Jesus!”

BIBLE BASIS: Matthew 15:29–39

KEY VERSE: “Give thanks to the LORD, because He is good. His faithful love continues forever.” Psalm 107:1 (NirV)

SCHEDULE

2S & 3S CLASSES

ARRIVAL & PLAYTIME

10:30-10:55

2S & 3S LARGE GROUP

10:55-11:10

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

11:10-12:00

PRE-K & K CLASSES

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

10:30-11:15

PRE-K & KINDER LARGE GROUP

11:15-11:40

REVIEW ACTIVITIES

11:40-12:00

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LEADER DEVOTIONAL

If you've ever eaten at Chick-fil-A, you've probably heard an employee use the phrase, "My pleasure!" It always makes me smile. I was in a customer service job for many years, and we learned from Chick-fil-A how to make customers feel appreciated and valued. This week the kids will have a chance to say, "Thank you, Jesus." It dawned on me that Jesus probably coined the phrase, "My pleasure!" He loves giving His children every good gift, from the simple food we eat, to our friends, church, families, shoes, glasses, vacations, homes, health, etc. He delights in giving to us, and I think He delights even more when we take the time to simply say, "Thank you, Jesus!" Matthew 7:11 says, "Even though you are evil, you know how to give good gifts to your children. How much more will your Father who is in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!" (NIV)

Just like the kids will do this week, let's take some time and tell Jesus "thank you" for those good gifts. Here are a few prompts to get you started, but don't stop there!

- For the food we eat, let's say, "Thank you, Jesus!"
- For the house we live in, let's say, "Thank you, Jesus!"
- For our families, let's say, "Thank you, Jesus!"
- For our friends, let's say, "Thank you, Jesus!"
- For the children we minister to, let's say, "Thank you, Jesus!"

Hopefully, when you spend some time telling Jesus "thank you," you can hear Him respond with "My pleasure!" and a big smile will appear on your face too.

Mindy Rausch
GO! Contributor



SMALL GROUP SKILL BUILDING

The Magic Circle

When it comes time for you to sit down with your small group, there is no better configuration than a circle. If you have a group of younger kids who find it difficult to seat themselves in a nice circle, have them first hold hands in a circle and then sit down. The benefits of sitting in a circle are well worth the time it takes to organize your kids in the beginning. Here's why:

Everybody feels like they are a part of the group. When your group is arranged in a big clump, the kids sitting toward the outside often don't feel like they're a part of what's going on and their attention goes elsewhere. In a circle, no one is on the outside.

The kids will talk to one another, not just you. You are the facilitator of conversation, not the center of it. If you organize your group like a miniature classroom, kids will become accustomed to talking and listening only to you. A circle allows kids to feel like they're connected to everyone in the group.

It's easier to manage. When there's a direct line of sight between you and all of the kids, they're more apt to behave. You can quickly and easily address interruptions. Are there two kids distracting each other? Separate them in the circle. Is there a kid who is more difficult to manage? Seat him next to you in the circle.

You can use eye contact to your advantage. Eye contact invites participation. If you have a kid who seldom participates, consider placing her across from you in the circle where she'll get more eye contact. Conversely, you can place kids who dominate conversation next to you.



☆ PLAY TIME ACTIVITY

Along with your other play time activities, present the following activity to children as they first arrive in the preschool room. Choose a leader to facilitate the activity. The activity is designed to introduce kids to the Bible story and Big Idea for the day.

PLAYDOUGH PARTY

Supplies: Playdough (enough for each child)

Directions: Tell the children they have to prepare playdough food for a big party with 4,000 people. Tell them, “That’s a LOT of people.” Encourage the children to shape their playdough into various foods such as cookies, pizza, hot dogs, etc. Periodically ask them if they think they have enough food to feed everyone yet.

Say: It’s hard to make enough food for 4,000 people. That’s a LOT of people! In today’s true Bible story, Jesus has to feed 4,000 people, but all He has is seven fish and three loaves of bread. We’re going to hear how He does it in just a little bit. We’re also going to learn that I can say, “Thank you, Jesus!”

Question: Have you ever been in a giant crowd of people? Where were you? What were you doing?

2s & 3s – Large Group at 10:55
Pre-K & K – Large Group at 11:15



★ SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

After the Large Group story time is over, help the children transition into the small group activity time. There are multiple activity options designed to help kids remember the Bible story and Big Idea, discover personal application, and respond to God through art, prayer, and Bible reading. Offer as many activities as your time and space allows.

BREAD HUNT (Application Activity)

Supplies: “Bread Hunt” cards (1 set per group)

Say: In our story for today, the disciples found seven loaves of bread and three fish, then they brought them to Jesus. Let’s pretend to be the disciples and look for the bread and fish.

Directions: Have your group sit in a circle. Spread the game cards face down in the middle of the children. Allow the children to take turns flipping over cards and revealing the picture. If they find a loaf of bread or a fish, have the child share something they’re thankful to Jesus for. Place the loaves and fish in a pile. If they find a “Caution” card (ex., lion or thunderstorm), have the entire group evade danger by performing the physical activity indicated on the card. Continue until all of the cards have been selected.

Pray: Jesus has given us so many things to be thankful for. Let’s say a prayer and thank Jesus for all of the things you just shared. (*Pray with children.*)

BIBLE BRIDGE (Bible Memorization Activity)

Supplies: None

Today’s Bible verse:

“Give thanks (*put hands in prayer position*)
to the LORD (*point up*),
because He is good (*two thumbs up*).
His faithful Love (*put hands over heart*)
Continues forever.” (*Spread hands out*)
Psalm 107:1 (*extend hands like you’re holding a book*).

Directions: Practice the verse together several times. Next, choose two children to form a “bridge” by facing each other and holding hands in the air. Tell the other children to get into a line and walk in a circle under the “bridge.” As the children march in a circle, sing the following words to the tune of “London Bridge Is Falling Down.”

Can you say our memory verse, memory verse, memory verse?

Can you say our memory verse?

It’s your turn!

At the end of the tune, have the two children forming the bridge lower their arms around the child who is under the bridge. Encourage the child who is trapped under the bridge to say the verse aloud. When finished, have the “trapped” child replace one of the children making up the bridge and repeat. Continue until everyone has had a turn saying the verse.

8.2 Small Group Lesson | 2s & 3s



STORYTIME WITH MABEL (Bible Story Review Activity)

Supplies: Messy Mabel picture or pig plush toy (1 per group)

Directions: Ask the children the questions below. Each question will help them recount a part of today's Bible story. When a child wants to answer a question, hand them the Messy Mabel plush or picture. Remind the children that they can only talk if they're holding Mabel. Continue until the whole story has been recounted.

1. Who came to see Jesus on the hillside?
(*A big crowd of people, including people who were sick or couldn't walk.*)
2. What did Jesus do for the people who were hurt or sick?
(*He healed them and made them all better.*)
3. How long were the people with Jesus before they got hungry?
(*Three days!*)
4. What food did the disciples have to share with the crowd?
(*Seven loaves of bread and a few small fish.*)
5. What happened after Jesus prayed and shared the food?
(*Everyone ate until they were full, and there were seven baskets of leftovers!*)

THANKS FOR MY FOOD (Response to God Activity)

Supplies: GO! Home Guide (printed on back of coloring sheet, 1 per child), crayons

Directions: Give each child a GO! Home Guide and some crayons or markers. The sheet will have a space for children to draw. Tell the children to draw a picture of their favorite food to eat. When finished, ask the children to show their pictures and tell about them.

Say: We get most of our food from the grocery store, but it's still a gift from Jesus. Every good thing we have comes from Jesus. Let's say a prayer and thank Jesus for giving us the food in our drawings.

Prayer: Begin by asking if any of the children would like to pray. Allow any children who want to pray the opportunity to do so. When they're finished, close the prayer by thanking Jesus for the food in the children's drawings as well as all of the other gifts He blesses us with.

Question: What was your favorite part of this story? Why did you like that part?

Question: If you were in the crowd of people, what do you think you would have said to Jesus when He gave you bread and fish to eat?