

An illustration of Jesus and his apostles feeding a crowd. Jesus, with a long brown beard and wearing a blue robe, is in the center, looking down with a joyful expression at a large fish in a woven basket. To his right, another apostle with a beard and a blue head covering also looks on with a smile. In the foreground, two more baskets filled with fish are visible. The background shows a crowd of people in a field under a bright sky.

UNIT 26 | SESSION 1

JESUS FED A CROWD

MATTHEW 14; MARK 6; LUKE 9; JOHN 6

KEY PASSAGE: John 11:25

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why do we need to be born again? Because of sin we are spiritually dead, but Jesus came to give us new life.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Jesus miraculously fed thousands of people with five loaves and two fish. This miracle showed that He is God's Son. Jesus is the Bread of Life. He meets our greatest need—not just for food, but for forgiveness and eternal life with God.

STORY POINT: Jesus miraculously fed thousands of people with five loaves and two fish.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

The feeding of the 5,000 is the only public miracle, other than Jesus' resurrection, recorded in all four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. We should pause and ask, “Why this one? What about this miracle made it so unforgettable that no Gospel writer could leave it out?”

We can get a clue toward the importance of the miracle through its framing in the book of Luke. The miracle sits between two key questions: “Who is this?” (Luke 9:9), asked by a bewildered and disturbed King Herod, and “Who do you say that I am?” (Luke 9:20), asked by Jesus of His disciples immediately following the miracle.

Throughout the book of Luke, Jesus declares important truths during meals. From the dinners at Pharisees' houses to the last supper, meals in the book of Luke often carry significant meaning. And this miracle of feeding the 5,000 is no different. It's not just a moment of compassion—it's a moment of revelation and foreshadowing. It's the answer to the questions posed by Herod and Jesus Himself.

It's fitting that Luke ends the section with Peter's declaration: “You are the Christ of God.” That's where every true encounter with Jesus should lead. The one who takes, blesses, breaks, and gives is not merely a miracle-worker. He is the Messiah—the one who fills us, sustains us, and saves us. And when we recognize Him as such, our only right response is the same as Peter's worship and confession declaring, “You are the Christ.”

This week, lead kids to be ready to answer the question, “Who is Jesus,” by recognizing Him as Messiah and Lord.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



Scan the QR code to listen to The Gospel Project for Kids Weekly Leader Training Podcast.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ "Fill the Baskets" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ "Five Loaves and Two Fish" printable
- ☐ baskets, 2

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ "Five Loaves and Two Fish" printable
- ☐ blue paper
- ☐ brown paper



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ "Silent Skit Situations" printable

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ stapler
- ☐ construction paper

Reflection and Prayer

- ☐ Bible story coloring page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video
- ☐ Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "Jesus Fed a Crowd" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ playdough (optional)

Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 26, Session 1" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ "Intro to Deaf Peoples" video

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "The One Who Believes in Me (John 11:25)" song
- ☐ "26.1 Key Passage Activity" printable
- ☐ stickers
- ☐ ribbon
- ☐ hole punch
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “Today we will learn about a time Jesus fed thousands of people with just a few pieces of food. If you could choose any food for Jesus to multiply, what would you choose?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “Fill the Baskets” activity page.

SAY “Today we will learn that **JESUS MIRACULOUSLY FED THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WITH FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISH**. I am looking forward to sharing this story with you!”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: LOAVES AND FISH RELAY

Prior to the session, print and cut apart the “Five Loaves and Two Fish” printable. Place a basket for each team on one side of the room and five loaves and two fish cutouts for each team on the other side of the room. Form kids into at least two teams and direct them to line up behind their team’s basket. When you say, Go!, challenge the first kid in line to pick up the basket, race across the room, pick up one cutout, place it in the basket, and bring it back to his team. Direct kids to continue until they have taken all their cutouts back to their team. The first team to complete the relay, wins. Repeat as time allows.

SAY “Today we will see how **JESUS MIRACULOUSLY FED THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WITH FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISH**, showing the people that He is God’s Son who meets all our needs.”

☐ OPTION 2: MULTIPLYING LOAVES AND FISH

Prior to the session, print and cut apart the “Five Loaves and Two Fish” printable. Invite kids to sit around tables and distribute a sheet of brown paper, a sheet of blue paper, a pencil, and scissors to each kid. Direct kids to fold their brown and blue papers back and forth like an accordion until they have four sections on each paper. Then, direct kids to use the fish and the bread loaf templates to trace an outline of the picture onto their paper while still folded like an accordion. Make sure they arrange the cutout so it touches both folded sides of the paper. Once kids have traced the shapes, challenge them to use scissors to cut out their pictures. Warn them to be careful not to cut the side of the paper. Then, encourage them to unfold their paper and see how one fish and one bread loaf turned into many.

SAY “Today we will learn how Jesus used a boy’s lunch of just five loaves of bread and two fish to feed a crowd of thousands. I am looking forward to sharing this story with you!”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Welcome, kids! I am so glad you are here. My name is [your name], and today I get to share a true story from the Bible with you. If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out? (Distribute Bibles to kids who do not have one.) Today as we learn about Jesus feeding a crowd of people, let’s ask God to prepare our hearts to hear from His Word. ‘Lord, You are our Provider. Remind us that You faithfully meet all our needs, but most importantly, You meet our greatest need, the need for forgiveness and eternal life. In Jesus’ name, amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ As we study God’s Word together, we like to think about a big picture question and answer to help us focus on an important truth. Our big picture question is: **Why do we need to be born again?** The answer to this question is: **Because of sin we are spiritually dead, but Jesus came to give us new life.**

Today we will be reminded how Jesus provides for our physical needs, but most importantly, He provides for our spiritual needs. Through Jesus believers have forgiveness for sins and new and eternal life in Him. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ Throughout Jesus’ earthly ministry, He taught the truth of God through His words and through His actions. He performed miracles, taught about God’s kingdom, and healed many of sickness and disease. Today we will see that **JESUS MIRACULOUSLY FED THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WITH FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISH**, proving that He is God’s Son who meets all our needs. Jesus meets our physical needs, but most importantly, He meets our greatest need, the need for forgiveness and eternal life. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 14; Mark 6; Luke 9; John 6. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jesus Fed a Crowd.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

JESUS FED A CROWD

“Jesus had been teaching and healing people. He got into a boat with His disciples to go to a quiet place to rest.

But many people saw Jesus and His disciples leaving. Crowds ran ahead and met them when they reached the shore! Jesus looked at the large crowd of people and had compassion for them. He cared for them like a shepherd cares for his sheep. He taught them about God’s kingdom and healed those who were sick.

As the day went on, the disciples came to Jesus. “It’s getting late,” they said. “Send the people away so they can find food.”

Jesus said, “You give them something to eat.”

The disciples were surprised. They said, “We would have to work for months to buy enough food for everyone!”

Andrew, one of the disciples, said, “There’s a boy here with five small loaves of bread and two fish, but that’s not enough for so many people.”

Jesus told the disciples to have the people sit down in groups. Jesus took the loaves and fish, looked up to heaven, and gave thanks. Then He broke the bread and fish into pieces and gave them to the disciples to pass out.

Something miraculous happened. The bread and fish never ran out! The people—about 5,000 men plus women and children—ate as much as they wanted. When everyone was full, the disciples gathered 12 baskets full of leftovers.

The people saw this miracle and said, “This really is the Prophet who is to come into the world!”

Later, Jesus taught the crowd again. “Don’t work for food that will only last a short time,” He said. “Work for the food that lasts forever. I am the Bread of Life. Whoever comes to Me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in Me will never be thirsty.”

Christ Connection: Jesus miraculously fed thousands of people with five loaves and two fish. This miracle showed that He is God’s Son. Jesus is the Bread of Life. He meets our greatest need—not just for food, but for forgiveness and eternal life with God. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Volume and pitch: Vary your pitch and volume as you tell the story to help keep kids engaged.

Sculpt: Distribute playdough and invite kids to sculpt five loaves and two fish as you tell the story of Jesus feeding the crowd.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ After a full day of ministry, Jesus and His disciples went to find a quiet place to rest, but the people were so eager to hear Jesus teach that a crowd ran ahead of Him. The Bible says Jesus had compassion on these people because they were like sheep without a shepherd. He began to teach, and as the day went on, the people were getting hungry. The disciples encouraged Jesus to send the crowd away so they could go find food. What did Jesus say to the disciples? **[Allow responses.]**

Jesus told the disciples to give the crowd something to eat. The disciples were confused and surprised. Jesus told them to see what food the people had with them. How much food was given to Jesus to feed the crowd? **[Allow responses.]** Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, prayed, and gave the food to His disciples to give to the people. What happened then? **[Allow responses.]** There was enough food for all the people to eat and be satisfied. Not only that, Jesus provided so much food from the loaves and fish that there were 12 whole baskets leftover! This story reminds us that God always meets our needs and provides abundantly more than we could ask or imagine.

Jesus miraculously fed thousands of people with five loaves and two fish. This miracle showed that He is God’s Son. Jesus is the Bread of Life. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Today we saw that Jesus meets our greatest need—not just for food, but for forgiveness and eternal life with God. If you would like to learn more about trusting Jesus as your Savior, you can talk with your parent or a church leader. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 26, Session 1” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Are there kids in the Bible?
2. What is a way you can serve God with what you have?



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

SAY “Most of the approximately 70 million Deaf people around the world have never seen Jesus’ name signed in their language and have almost no access to the Bible in their heart language.”

Show the “Intro to Deaf Peoples” video.

Share that there are more than 300 sign languages. Deaf and hearing missionaries tell people about Jesus and encourage the Deaf community to start new churches because it is one of the largest unreached people groups in the world. Many Deaf people have yet to trust Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

In villages in East Africa, many people who are born deaf have no access to learning sign language. They can make up some signs with their family and friends but are limited in their abilities to communicate. It is also common for Deaf people in Africa to not be able to read or write. This makes their lives difficult in many ways and makes it harder for people to tell them about Jesus. There are presently 33 Deaf people groups in Africa who need missionaries to take the gospel to them.

Pray for the Deaf people to have access to learn sign language so that people will be able to tell them about Jesus. Pray that God will send more Deaf missionaries to places where people need to know about Jesus.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud John 11:25 together.

SAY “It is so important to hide God’s Word in our hearts. Our key passage reminds us who Jesus is—the resurrection and the life. Let’s memorize it together!”

Prior to the session, print out the “26.1 Key Passage Activity” printable. Invite kids to sit around tables and distribute a bookmark to each kid. Place art supplies in the middle of each table. Challenge kids to color and decorate their key passage bookmark. Once they have finished decorating them, use a single hole punch to punch a hole in the top of the bookmark and help kids select and tie a ribbon to the top.

Lead kids to sing “The One Who Believes in Me (John 11:25).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “Thank You, Lord, for always being faithful to provide everything we need and for meeting the most important need we have—salvation and eternal life with You. Help us share this good news with others. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the New Testament Israel Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Luke 9. Explain that our story today comes from the New Testament. The New Testament begins with Jesus' birth and records Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection. It also tells us about the early church. It ends with the book of Revelation, which tells about the time when Jesus will return to earth.

Consider pointing out the location of the Sea of Galilee [D6] on the New Testament Israel Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Luke 9:11, or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “ Jesus and His disciples traveled around teaching and healing. When we first see them in today's story, they were trying to go to a quiet place to rest and eat, but the crowd was so eager to hear and see Jesus, that they followed Him. Instead of Jesus turning the crowd away and telling them He wanted some quiet and rest, the Bible says He welcomed them, taught them, and healed those who needed healing. God is never too busy for us. He loves us like Jesus showed love for the people in this crowd. God wants us to spend time with Him. He wants us to know Him, and He is faithful to meet our needs. He not only meets our physical needs, but He offers to meet our most important need: our need for salvation from our sins. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ How did the miracle of Jesus feeding the crowd show that He is God's Son? ”

Jesus did something no man could do. He took a small amount of food and fed a crowd of thousands. Through this miracle and the other miracles Jesus performed during His earthly ministry, He showed that He is God's Son and has power over everything. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Matthew 28:18.)

SAY “ What is every person's greatest need? ”

Every person's greatest need is forgiveness from sin and eternal life. The Bible tells us that every person has sinned and the payment for our sin is death. God sent Jesus to take the punishment our sin deserves so that we can be forgiven and have eternal life through Him. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Romans 6:23.)

SAY “ How did Jesus meet our greatest need? ”

Jesus is the only one who can meet our greatest need. The Bible tells us no one can come to the Father except through Jesus. Through His death on the cross, Jesus paid the price for our sin, and through His resurrection, He conquered death. Everyone who trusts in Him will have eternal life with God. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 11:25-26.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: SILENT SKIT

Prior to the session, print and cut apart the “Silent Skit Situations” printable. Form kids into groups of three or four kids. Go around to each group and quietly assign them a scene to act out. Be careful that no other team hears the scene. Allow several minutes for groups to plan how they will act out their scene silently for the rest of the group. After groups have had time to plan, invite one group at a time to come to the front and silently act out their assigned scene. Challenge the rest of the group to shout out their guesses as to which scene the group is acting out. Continue until all the groups have presented their scenes. Repeat, assigning other scenes, as time allows.

SAY “ Today we saw that **JESUS MIRACULOUSLY FED THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WITH FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISH**, showing the people that He is God’s Son who meets all our needs. ”

☐ OPTION 2: GRATITUDE CHAIN

Invite kids to sit around tables and distribute scissors, markers, and staplers. Challenge kids to think of some ways God has provided for them and invite them to share some of their ideas aloud. Next, challenge them to cut pieces of construction paper into long strips and write some of the ways God has provided for them on the strips. Then, encourage kids to staple their strips together in interlocking circles, creating a chain. Invite them to take their chains home and remember all the many ways God has provided for them.

SAY “ God faithfully provides for His children. Through Jesus, He provided for our greatest need—forgiveness and eternal life. Let’s remember to praise God for all the ways He provides for us! ”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.