

John 6:15-69

"I AM The Bread of Life"

Scripture: John 6:15-69 (select verses)

Memory Verse: John 6:35 *"I AM the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."*

Lesson Focus: This is the first of Jesus's seven I AM statements. Our emphasis in this lesson will be on **clinging** to Christ alone as the Bread of Life for salvation and safety. But this requires that we **let go** of worldly things and our own efforts to earn salvation so that we can cling tighter and firmer to Him!

Activities and Crafts: Bread of Life Maze, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring It Home Discussion for 3rd - 5th.
Craft for 1st & 2nd: Physical Food or Spiritual Food Mini Booklets

Starter Activity: Things We Cling To *

As we look at some of the characters in these verses, one common thing we will ask of them is, "What are they **clinging** to?" Let's ask ourselves that first:

Q: What are some things that you guys hold onto tight when you are scared or afraid?

Teachers: To get the discussion going consider sharing with them something you clung to tightly when you were their age (i.e. a teddy bear, a doll, etc.). *

As people get older, they might not cling to stuffed animals anymore, but they will "cling to" other things when they are afraid or worried:

- Older kids may cling to video games as a "safe" place *
- Young adults may cling to their social media virtual life to avoid being in contact with real people in the real world. *
- Adults may cling to pictures of themselves when they were young as they are getting older and afraid of dying. *

The point is that we all can cling to things that make us feel safe and comfortable.

Q: But what do you think God would have us cling to the tightest? Jesus! And I'm not talking about a stuffy of Jesus that we hold onto like a magic charm, but being in His Word, being in prayer, trusting in Him and walking in His ways!

Let's open our Bibles and see what the characters we read about are clinging to.

Bible Study:

John 6:15: Jesus had just miraculously fed the 5000. The people were so excited about their full bellies that they were ready to make Him their earthly king in hopes that He would rescue them from the Romans and restore Israel to its former glory. But that was not why Jesus came (He came to rescue from sin)! Therefore, he slips away.

John 6:16-19: Whoa! Imagine yourself on that boat in the storm trying to just stay alive and then you see some dude walking on the water toward you!

Q: What would you be clinging to at that moment? Maybe a life preserver!

John 6:20-21: But notice what Jesus says: "**It is I.** Do not be afraid!" They welcomed Jesus into the problem and all was well. Jesus would have us look to Him as our superhero Who will take care of us in our troubles. Jesus would have us cling to Himself when we are scared. *

Q: What are some reasons why welcoming Jesus in and clinging to Jesus will help us not be afraid?

A: We remember that He alone is God, that He is good, and that He is in control: the Great I AM! Therefore, if you are a child of God, no matter what happens, He has good plans for you! (**Romans 8:31**).

We don't cling to Jesus as a good luck charm, but as the one true and living God of the universe Who works all things together for good to those who love Him! (**Romans 8:28**)

John 6:22-25: The local people are still seeking Jesus and yet wondering how He got across the lake so fast, for they did not see Him enter the boat with the disciples. Now they have found Him and this leads us into our skit.

Teachers: Transition into the skit (see below). * We will essentially act out John 6:25-35 (with some embellishments). This is the dialogue between Jesus and these Jewish people about Him being the bread of life. Have a leader be Jesus but have either another leader or kids from class act out the Jewish people.

John 6:35-36: So, this is the first of the seven amazing "I AM" statements that Jesus makes revealing Who He is.

Q: What do you think Jesus means when He says, "*I AM the bread of life*"?

A: Jesus is teaching that just as our bodies need physical food (bread) to survive, our souls need Him, the bread of life, to survive spiritually.

Q: What happens if you don't eat food? You will eventually starve and die! You need food to stay alive!

Q: In the same way, what do you think happens if you don't have Jesus?

A: Your soul will also starve and die, both in this life and the next! You will be spiritually dead, because only Jesus Christ and His Spirit can breathe new life into your soul and nourish it.

Q: What would you say these Jewish people are "clinging to"?

A: Free breadsticks! They were excited about the free lunch they got before and they wanted more. Jesus has whet their appetites with the feeding of the 5000, but now He presents them with the more important spiritual truth: That He is essential for life. Without Him, they will starve and die!

John 6:37: Jesus stresses people must be drawn to Him by the Father. But notice it also says people must come to Him. Jesus would have us truly come to Him in faith and trust, believing that He is the God-man. He says He will not reject ANYONE!

John 6:38-40: This section concludes with Jesus contesting what these men and most people throughout the world have always clung to: *working for salvation*.

Q: What do you think God wants more from you? Raise your hand if you think #1 or #2.

- 1) To try your best to be good
- 2) To believe and trust in Jesus

If you think #1, you are thinking like the Jews in this section of Scripture and most people throughout the history of the whole world. * Let's review what Jesus has said in this section.

Look at **John 6:28-29** again. The people are clinging to the idea that they must work and earn God's favor (v. 28)

Q: But what does Jesus say the "work of God" is in v. 29?

A: *Believe!*

Look at **John 6:35** again.

Q: What does Jesus say you must do to have your spiritual hunger and thirst satisfied?

A: *Come to Him and believe!*

Look at **John 6:40** again.

Q: What does God want you to do more than anything else? *Believe in Jesus!* Not "be good". Not "do what is right". But put your faith and trust in Jesus just as you are!

This is RADICAL! We come to Jesus, the bread of life, entirely bankrupt. * Instead of God asking us, "what have you done to earn my love", He says to us, "Here's what I've done for you to show my love." Our job is to believe and receive His grace. (**Eph. 2:8-9**)

This can anger people! This requires you to admit that there is NOTHING you bring to the table because you have NOTHING good to offer, being lost in your sin. You must no longer cling to your own works, your own goodness, or your own power. Rather, LET GO of the idea that you can do anything to earn God's favor and cling to His grace. *

John 6:41: It is no surprise that the Jewish people complained. This is the gospel and it is offensive! The gospel humbles and lowers us so that God alone may be exalted!

Teachers: Jesus continues to stress that He is not a "side dish", but the **ONLY** food for our souls in v. 42-65. Consider wrapping up the lesson by contrasting the responses of the people and the disciples in v. 66-69.

John 6:66: Jesus's challenge to humbly let go of their own works and self-serving ideas about Him led many of them to turn their backs on Him! Notice Jesus lets them go! He doesn't force anyone to come to Him!

John 6:67-69: Then He turns to the twelve disciples. But they have a different response! They realize that Jesus is their **ONLY** hope!

Key Point: What is your response? Are you going to cling to your own goodness or are you going to let go and cling to Jesus Christ alone in faith?

I repeat: What does God want from you more than anything else? It is not *BE GOOD*, but it is *BELIEVE IN JESUS*, the Bread of Life! When you truly believe and trust in Him, then He becomes the One you are living for and as He nourishes your soul, He will help you "be good" in response to His lovingkindness toward you!

Jesus and Galilean Jews Script

John 6:25-35: *The act should begin by having the two people from the crowd approaching Jesus in astonishment.*

Person #1: Rabbi, when did you come here and how in the world did you get here?

Jesus: You guys are not here to truly follow me, but you just want another free lunch! * Don't just be working to have your bellies full, but work for that food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you because the Father has approved Him.

Person #2: OK. Well, what work must we do to do the works of God?

Jesus: It's very simple! The work of God is this: that you believe in Him whom He sent!

Person #1: Seriously? We need more proof! What sign will you do that we may see and believe in You?

Person #2: Yeah! Who do you think you are, Buster? Moses fed a lot more than 5000. He fed millions of our fathers with the manna from heaven that God gave us through Moses. Are you better than him?

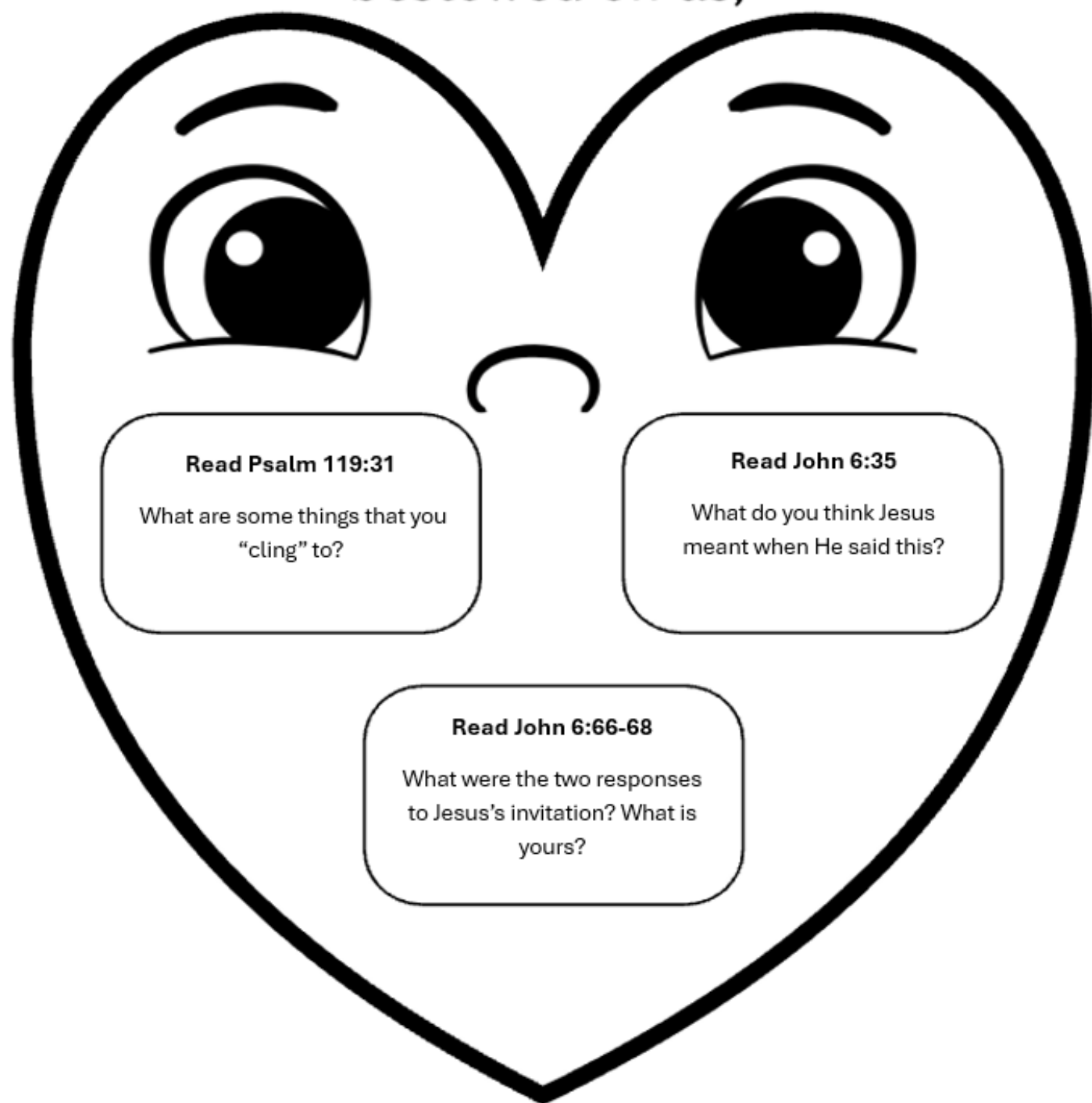
Jesus: I tell you the truth! Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world!

Person #1 and #2 Together: Sure, whatever you say. Just give us this bread, because we're hungry!

Jesus: I AM the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst!

BRING IT HOME

BEHOLD what manner of **LOVE** the Father has bestowed on us,



that we should be called children of God!