

## LESSON 2

**JESUS FEEDS THE 5,000**

## LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** Jesus Shows Compassion

**SCRIPTURE:** [Matthew 14](#)

**GOD'S BIG STORY:** Jesus shows compassion to the people in the crowd, healing those who are sick and feeding thousands from just five loaves of bread and two fish.

**WORD OF WONDER:** How great God is! We'll never completely understand Him. —[Job 36:26a](#)

## FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

**WHO?**

Jesus fed a crowd of 5,000, which is amazing since the populations of the largest villages in Galilee numbered about 3,000 people. That number doesn't include the women and children, who, according to Jewish tradition, would have been counted separately from the men.

**WHAT?**

After hearing that Herod, the Roman ruler in Galilee, had ordered the execution of Jesus' friend and relative John the Baptist, Jesus withdrew to a solitary place. Still, the crowds followed Him. Jesus showed compassion on them, healing those who were sick and miraculously feeding thousands.

**WHERE?**

Bible scholars can't say with certainty where Jesus performed this miracle. Generally, this event is thought to have taken place near Bethsaida ([Luke 9:10](#)), which was across the Sea of Galilee from where Jesus had been previously ([John 6:1](#)) and was likely near the northern shore of the lake.

**WHEN?**

The book of Matthew follows a progression of the rise and rejection of Jesus as King. This particular miracle takes place just after the death of John the Baptist and before Jesus walks on water.

**CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY**

The feeding of the 5,000 is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels! In this story, Jesus showed compassion to the crowd. Similarly, God didn't want us stuck in our sin, so He sent His Son, Jesus, to live, die, and rise again so our sins could be forgiven. Our God is compassionate ([Exodus 34:6](#))!

**Curiosity**

## Play Stations

Greet the kids warmly and briefly explain the play stations to them. Invite them to play at any of the stations.

**Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help you get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas about what we'll be learning today?**

### Play Station: Making Dinner

**Set up:** Set out toy food. You may add play grocery carts or bags to one side of the play station and cooking utensils at the other side. You can also set out play plates and serving utensils.

**Play:** Invite the kids to pretend they're buying food at the grocery store to make dinner. After buying their food, kids can pretend to make dinner. Ask kids what they are cooking and let them share their favorite meal.

### Play Station: Counting People

**Set up:** Set out toy people figurines or stuffed animals. Instead of people, you can set out a large quantity of craft sticks or pom-poms.

**Play:** Invite the kids play with the toy people. Encourage them to count how many people are there. After kids have played and counted, they can position the toy people so they're ready to listen to Jesus. They can also count the craft sticks or pom-poms. For older kids, let them sort the objects into piles of five.

### Play Station: Jesus Feeds the 5,000 Coloring Sheet

**Set up:** Ahead of time, print one copy per kid of the [coloring sheet](#). Set out the coloring sheets and coloring utensils.

**Play:** Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of their favorite food.

## Circle Time: Jump in the Middle

Have kids stand up and form a circle

**We heard today about how Jesus had compassion for people who needed help. We're going to play a game that will show us how everyone needs help sometimes. I'll ask a question and if your answer is "Yes," jump into the middle of the circle.**

Give kids an example before you begin, such as "Are you wearing a white shirt? If so, jump in the middle." After each question, choose someone to answer one of the discussion questions from the list below. You can use the examples below or come up with your own questions:

- **Do you need help being nice to your brother or sister?**
- **Do you need help tying your shoes?**
- **Do you need help listening to a grown-up at home?**
- **Do you need help picking up your toys?**
- **Do you need help getting to school or church?**
- **Do you need help getting food?**
- **Do you need help when you get hurt or sick?**
- **Do you need help when you're scared?**
- **Do you need help when you disobey God?**

**Leader Tip:** Each group has its own personality, and this activity can be altered to fit your group's needs. For example, use this activity to direct talkative kids during discussion time by telling them only kids in the middle can answer the next discussion question.

**We all need help sometimes. The people in our story from the Bible today needed help from Jesus. They were sick and needed to be healed. And they were hungry and needed food. Let's discuss and answer some questions together.**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **How many people were in the crowd who followed Jesus?** (*Over 5,000 people*)
- **Why were the disciples worried in this story?** (*It was dinnertime, and they didn't have enough food.*)
- **What did Jesus use to feed the crowd?** (*five loaves of bread and two fish*)
- **Why do you think Jesus gave everyone food?**
- **What's a problem you have that you want to ask Jesus to help with?**
- **What food would you want Jesus to give you if you were hungry and needed food?**
- **Why do you think Jesus has compassion for people?**
- **How has Jesus shown compassion to you?**
- **How can you show compassion to others this week?**

**We all need help sometimes, and we can ask Jesus to help us. Jesus shows us compassion and cares for us because He loves us so much! Let's talk to God now in prayer and thank Him for sending us Jesus.**

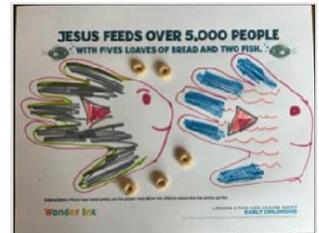
Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That's OK! Encourage them to pray silently and thank God for hearing us and caring about us. God hears all our prayers!

## Craft: Five Loaves and Two Fish

**We're going to make a picture by covering our paper with two fish and five loaves of bread. Whenever you look at your picture, you can remember how Jesus showed compassion to the crowd, and you can know that He has compassion for you!**

Give each kid a Fish and Loaves Sheet and set out stamp pads, glue, and five crackers. Set out wet wipes nearby to clean kids' hands.

Put each kid's hand on a stamp pad so it's covered in ink. Have them place their hands on their papers so their fingers are pointing to the left, which will become a fish shape on their pages. You can also trace their hands with markers instead of using ink. The palm of their hands will make the fish face. Then draw eyes and smiley faces on the fish faces. Repeat this process so there are two fish on each child's page. Then let the kids glue five crackers next to the fish to represent the five loaves of bread.



**Take your pictures home to help you remember how Jesus showed compassion for the crowd and how He shows compassion to us. He loves you so much, and He helps us when we need help.**

## Active Game: Collecting Fish

**In today's story, Jesus made so many fish and bread that He was able to feed over 5,000 people, and there were 12 buckets of leftovers when they were all done eating! Let's play a game where we'll collect the leftovers in buckets.**

Divide kids into teams of 3–5 kids. Each team will form a line. At the end of each team's line, set out a small pail filled with balls or toy fish. Place buckets at the end of each line, as well. At the front of the line will be one large empty bucket or bin.

The kids will work together as a team. When you say, "Go," the last kid in the line will begin filling an empty pail with plastic balls or toy fish from the large bucket. She will then pass the pail to the kid in front of her. Kids will continue passing the pail forward until the first kid in line receives the pail and dumps the balls or fish into the big bucket at the front. The last kid will then begin filling the next pail with more balls from the bucket and will pass this pail to the next kid. Kids will continue to pass pails and fill the larger bucket until all balls or fish from the large bucket at the end of their line have been moved to the large bucket at the front of their line.

**Today we learned about when Jesus showed compassion by helping people. We worked together and helped one another move our buckets of fish to the front of the line. Jesus showed us compassion, and we can show others compassion too!**

## Identity

### Responding in Worship: Numbers Prayer Walk

For this activity, gather your kids behind you as if you were going to play Follow the Leader. You'll walk to each of the four corners of your room together. At each corner, you'll stop and pray quietly. Consider quietly playing songs from the [Now That's a Miracle! Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#) as you walk around the room. Follow the prompts below to guide your prayer walk.

**Leader Tip:** For kids who need more direction, ask them to share the answers to their questions out loud. Then pray out loud for them. As kids become more familiar with prayer walking, you can allow them to pray on their own.

**We're going to walk together and pray as we think about how Jesus shows compassion. When we get to each corner of the room, we'll stop together and pray.**

- 1. What is one thing you can do to help someone else? Ask God to help you to do what He is asking you to do.** Pause to allow the kids to pray and think.
- 2. Who are two people you can help or show compassion to, like God has shown you? Ask God to help you show these people His love.** Pause to allow the kids to pray and think.
- 3. What is one way God has shown compassion for you or helped you? Thank God for what He has done for you.** Pause to allow the kids to pray and think.
- 4. What is one reason God is great? Tell God a reason He is great.** Pause to allow the kids to pray and think.

After you've completed your prayer walk together, you may ask kids if they would like to share any of their prayer requests to pray together.

### Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them, thanking God for His compassion for us.

You may want to give each kid one of the paper hearts used during God's Big Story time. **Hold up your paper heart (or put your hands on your heart) when you hear me say, "compassion."**

**God, thank You for showing compassion (hold up heart) for us. You are so good to us. Help us remember to be thankful and to show compassion (hold up heart) to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

**Blessing:** May we take comfort in Jesus, who shows compassion. May you love how Jesus loves, and may the compassion of Jesus overflow through your actions!