

## 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](#))!

## Object Lesson: Count the People

Greet the kids warmly and welcome them to church.

**Welcome! We're going to talk today about how Jesus helped a lot of people who were hungry. What's the most people you've ever seen all together?** Allow the kids to respond. Offer ideas such as a concert, church service, parade, or festival.

Show the kids the people figurines and count 10 people with them. Ask the kids what they think the people would like to eat. Let the kids take turns giving the toy food to the toy people figures.

**We're going to hear a story today about a time when Jesus fed 5,000 people with two fish and five loaves of bread. How many people do you think live in our town? Do you think it's more than 5,000 people?** Allow the kids to respond. **There were a lot of people there with Jesus!**

Let the kids play with the people figures and play food. Let them pretend to make different meals for the people.

## Activity: Sharing Food

Ahead of time, print the [Sharing Food Sheet](#) and cut apart the pictures. Set out some toy food and spread out the food pictures on the ground.

**In God's big story today, we'll see how Jesus helped people who were hungry. Jesus showed *compassion*—that means kindness. Someone shared food and Jesus used it to do something great! Let's practice showing compassion to one another by sharing food.** Invite the kids to choose toy food and food pictures. Then invite them to share it with someone else. When they give the food to someone else, they can say, "Jesus shows compassion."

**You did a great job sharing and showing compassion by sharing food. Today we'll see how Jesus showed compassion to a big group of people.**

**Our Wonder Truth today is: JESUS SHOWS COMPASSION.**

Encourage the kids to do the following motions while you repeat the Wonder Truth. Older toddlers can say the words with you as they do the motions.

**JESUS**—*Point up.*

**SHOWS**—*Hold arms extended out in front of you.*

**COMPASSION**—*Hug yourself.*



## Prayer and Blessing

Put your hands on your heart when you hear me say, “**compassion.**” Model and practice the action.

**God, thank You for showing compassion (hands on heart) for us. You are so good to us. Help us remember to be thankful and remember to show compassion (hands on 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:** Jesus saw the needs of the people, and He showed them compassion. May you always remember that God knows what you need, and He will show you compassion too. May God help us to show the love and compassion of Jesus to others!

## Bread and Fish Toss

Set out a basket and crumpled sheets of brown and gray paper. Tell the kids to pretend the brown sheets of paper are bread and the gray paper is fish.

**In God’s big story today, we learned about how Jesus did something amazing by feeding a really big group of people with five loaves of bread and two fish! Jesus showed compassion for the people! We’re going to toss pretend fish and bread into a basket to help us remember the story.**

Let the kids toss the crumpled papers into the basket. For more fun, let them toss real bread rolls into a basket. (Be aware of food allergies. Toddlers may be tempted to taste the bread before tossing it!)