

THE GOSPEL OF

JOHN

STUDENT LESSON

FEEDING
THE 5000

Open it

1. **What is something so hard that you didn't think you could do but you did it anyway?**

Daily Devotions

Day 1 — Today's Theme: Explore It

Start with a prayer asking God to quiet your mind and open your eyes to read His truth in the Bible today.

Read John 6:1–15.

This miracle is the *only one* that appears in all four gospels (Matthew 14:13–21, Mark 6:26–44, Luke 9:10–17; and John), so you might check in those books for a little more info.

To become familiar with the passage we will go through a Bible study method that seems to be a favorite in some other small groups. It's called The Newspaper Method by the writer at *LeaderTreks* (so feel free to use your best newspaper reporter questions!). This makes it easier to understand and become familiar with a passage. Let's get started.

2. **If you've read or heard the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand a few times, take about a minute and jot down everything you already know about it).**

You probably remember a few good points. Read the passage again and see if you can find the answers to the following questions.

3. **WHO? Make a list of all the key roles in the passage.**

WHAT? What is the purpose of each role? (What does each person do in the passage?) Read Mark 6:33 for extra help about the crowd and how they got there.

4. WHERE? Where is the action taking place and how is it significant to the passage? Read John 6:1, 3,10; Mark 6:30–34.

5. WHEN? Is there any critical timing? What about the past and future? You may need to look at the passage right before or after to help with this answer.

It may be helpful to read one of the other accounts of Jesus Feeding the 5,000 to gather a smidge more info. Read John 6:4, Matthew 14:6–13, Mark 6:30–32, Luke 9:10–12.

What did you find out? Here's what I gathered in my initial observations from the passage in John: the main characters were Jesus, the disciples (specifically Philip and Andrew were mentioned), a large crowd, and a little boy. Jesus had taken His disciples to a solitary place for a chance to be quiet and rest. Jesus had just learned of His cousin's death, who was John the Baptist, and the apostles had just returned from being sent out by Jesus to teach and perform miracles. They were exhausted plus they wanted to tell Him all that they had done. The crowds were massive and wouldn't leave them alone because of the signs and healings Jesus was doing. The little boy had happened along with the crowd and Andrew found him. It seems the little boy offered his lunch to them. (I wonder if he was a shepherd boy and his mom had packed his lunch the night before, so he'd have something in the fields.) Jesus thanks God and multiplies the bread and fish to feed EVERYONE and have leftovers. Anyway, be ready to share in your small group some of the highlights that were interesting to you.

PONDER THIS: Consider if Jesus, since he was God, really needed rest and solitude. Why did Jesus emphasize this need of rest and solitude for himself? For the disciples?

End with prayer. Thank God for His example of Jesus encouraging rest and solitude. When and where are you able to have solitude at any point in your day to rest from the crazy or overwhelming things in life?

Day 2 — Jesus' Need: Rest and Solitude

When Jesus started His earthly ministry he encountered people ALL. THE. TIME. It was actually His job. He encountered groups on the street; taught crowds on hillsides, in the temple, by the water; and healed others from blindness, leprosy, lameness, and on and on. Because of the many needs He was meeting, people wanted to follow Him everywhere. They almost hunted for Him. So He was always with people. Yet sometimes He needed a moment away. Even the most extroverted extrovert needs time to be alone, especially when circumstances in life become overwhelming. This had just happened to Jesus. Jesus had just learned some news that caused Him to need that time in solitude.

In John 6:1–4, you read yesterday that Jesus had intentionally set out to be alone.

Look up Matthew 14:13.

6. **Why did Jesus suddenly need to be alone? Why would this news have caused him such deep sorrow and urgent departure from His regular schedule?**

7. **What do you know about what the Bible says about God resting? Write down any verses you can think of. (HINT: the first time this is mentioned is in Genesis 2:2–3. If you can think of any others where the Bible mentions resting, write those down too.)**

Why do you think God rested on the seventh day?

8. **What is your schedule like during the week? Where and WHEN can you go to give yourself a place to be alone?**

Spend time praying to give your mind a moment to rest and be quiet. Thank God for one thing and ask Him for help with one thing.

Day 3 — The Disciples' Need: Rest and to be “Fed”

Read John 6:3; Luke 9:10–11; Mark 6:30–32.

Before I was married and had children, I was in youth ministry for about ten years. I would go on youth retreats, mission trips, and camps multiple times a year. These events were exciting opportunities and exhausting as well. When I would return home, I always tried to take the next day off to rest. Sometimes it would even take me weeks to actually unpack my bag because I was so tired from the experience.

I love how Jesus knew His disciples needed to “unpack their bags” of all they had learned. They needed to talk, share, and then learn from what they had experienced. He wanted to be alone with them to hear what they were thinking and process it out loud with them as well as “feed” them some new information to help them process it. This was how He “fed them.” He was nurturing or “feeding” their souls.

In Day 2 we discussed the example Jesus gave of Himself needing rest and then thinking of *where* we can be alone to rest. It needs to happen. Even Jesus needed a place. In this part of the passage, we see that Jesus knew His disciples needed to rest with Him after working so hard. They also had a need to process all the things they were learning by talking about it.

Finally, He wanted to teach them a little bit at a time. He wants to do the same for you. Creating a PLACE and TIME is the first step. You did that yesterday. Next, is asking the questions and being fed.

PRAY: In what way do you need to “unpack your bags” from all that is going on? Prayer is how we talk to Jesus. “Unpack your mind” to him right now by praying and sharing with Him all that is on your mind.

9. Jesus also wants to feed or fill your mind. Read John 6:5–7 (for extra help read Luke 9:12–13; Mark 6:35–37). What did Jesus ask Philip to do?

10. What do YOU THINK John 6:6 means? Why do you think Jesus asked Philip this question?

11. What has Jesus called you to that you feel is WAY over your head?

Jesus gave instructions to Philip. He had a plan. Philip didn’t obey right away. He quickly responded that it was going to be way too hard to do what Jesus asked him to do.

12. Read Mark 6:38. What did Jesus ask them to do next?

13. What did they find available? Why do YOU THINK Jesus didn’t just tell them what was available?

Jesus said, “Go and see (what is available to work with).” This week we’re talking about resting and taking time with Jesus. He asks you to “go and see” what you have available. The disciples returned with a pretty meager offering. Jesus doesn’t need very much to get the work done. We find a place, a time and a little bit of info in our minds and Jesus can do something with that. End this time by praying to “see” the little bit you DO have and ask Jesus what to do with it.

Day 4 — The Crowd's Need: To Be Fed

Read John 5:31–40.

In Day 3, we learned that Jesus had a plan, but the various disciples were too overwhelmed to know what to do. Jesus gave a basic instruction to go and see what was available in the crowd. They returned with a pretty meager offering.

14. Read John 6:2; Mark 6:31, 33–34; Matthew 14:14. Why was there a crowd?

15. Read John 6:5. What was the immediate need of the crowd? Why do you think they couldn't meet this need themselves? (Hint: Read Mark 6:33 and Matthew 14:15.)

16. Compare John 6:8, 9 with Matthew 14:17–18; Mark 6:38; Luke 9:13. What's the SAME? What's the ONE difference? (I love this!)

17. What did Jesus do with the meager offering from that little boy?

God's math: 5 loaves + 2 fish x 5000 men + others = 1 satisfied crowd with a remainder of 12 basketfuls of broken pieces and fish leftover.

I love God's math! The little boy offered his little lunch and Jesus took what seemed like nothing significant to offer and FED an entire crowd of 5000 men until they were satisfied! This is a miracle. What do you have that you think seems pretty insignificant? Based on this TRUE story in the Bible, what are the possibilities if you offer that little bit to God? This week we've looked at this passage by asking some basic questions to observe WHO, WHAT, WHERE, and WHEN in the passage. Then we discussed some themes of resting, being fed and a few more details—WHY is this in here? HOW does it relate to me?

Take Home Application:

18. What now? What is one new thing you will take away from this passage and what are you going to do about it?

Pray about it. Pray for your small group. Pray that you have good discussion and learn more from what others share.

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