

# 12

## Jesus Feeds Five Thousand People

*Matthew 14:15–21; Mark 6:30–44; Luke 9:12–17;  
John 6:1–15*

*Walk slowly to the shelf and get the materials for **Jesus Feeds Five Thousand People**. Place the tray beside you. Take the lime green underlay and smooth it out in front of you. Then present Jesus, and place him about four inches from the edge closest to you, at the center, and say:*

Jesus' disciples were coming home.

*Present Judas and Simon and place them at Jesus' right. Present Philip and Bartholomew and place them at Jesus' left. (You are arranging the disciples around Jesus so they are in a position similar to the one where they were after Jesus sent them out in session 6, "Jesus Calls the Twelve Disciples." Please see the diagram.)*

They had been in the villages, . . .

*Present Thaddaeus and James and place them beside the disciples at the right.*

healing the sick,

*Present Levi and Thomas and place them beside the disciples at the left.*

casting out unclean spirits,

*Present Andrew and John and place them beside the disciples at the right.*

and teaching the way of the kingdom of God.

*Present Peter and James and place them beside the disciples at the left.*

They were very tired, so Jesus said, "Let's go to a quiet place and rest."

*Move Jesus forward so he is even with the first disciples.*

Now many saw them going, and ran after them.

*Move your hands and arms in an encircling motion toward the center of the underlay. The idea is to help the children feel they are a part of the crowd. Sit back and pause.*

When Jesus saw the crowd, they seemed like sheep without a shepherd. So instead of asking them to leave, Jesus healed them and taught them the way of the kingdom of God.

When evening came, the disciples said to Jesus, "It's getting late. Send the crowd away so they can go to the villages and buy food." But Jesus answered, "You feed them."

*Pause.*

But they did not have enough food for such a huge crowd.

"What do you have?" Jesus asked.

"We have five loaves of bread and two fish."

*Place a flat basket of five loaves and two fish in front of Jesus and say:*

Then Jesus *took* the bread, . . .

*Hold up one of the loaves in both hands.*

and *blessed* it, . . .

*Place your hand in blessing over the bread.*

and *broke* it, . . .

*Break the bread. Place it back on the basket. Break the other loaves in half. Then say:*

and *gave* it to his disciples, . . .

*Take the basket with the twelve tiny baskets and place it in front of you. Hold a tiny basket in front of Jesus and place a piece of the broken bread in the basket. Place it in front of Judas, the disciple closest to Jesus' right. Take another tiny basket, put another piece of bread in it, and place it in front of Philip, the disciple closest to Jesus' left. Take another basket, place bread in it, and give it to the next disciple to the right. Continue giving, back and forth, until all the bread is given. Then put a fish in a tiny basket and place the basket in front of John, the remaining disciple to Jesus' far right and repeat for James. Then say:*

and the disciples gave this to the crowd.

*Move Judas and the basket to the "people" to the right. Then move Philip and*

*the basket closest to the "people" to the left. Move Simon next and then Bartholomew. Continue moving opposite disciples so that the first ten disciples almost form a circle. Then move John and James with the fish forward, completing the circle. (Moving the figures toward the children, forming a circle, allows the children to feel that they are part of the crowd being fed.)*

The people ate until they were full, and there was bread left over. More than five thousand people had eaten.

The people said, "This certainly is the Christ." And they wanted to make Jesus their king. But Jesus slipped away.

*Place Jesus back on the tray. Pause. Then return Jesus to the underlay for the wondering.*

**Responding to God's Word:  
Wondering Together**

I wonder how the disciples are feeling about what just happened?

I wonder how the crowd feels?

I wonder why the crowd thinks Jesus is the Christ?

I wonder why the people want to make Jesus their king?

I wonder what kind of king Jesus would be?

I wonder why Jesus slipped away?

*Return to the Worship Center Order and continue. The scripture reading is Mark 6:30–31, 41–44, and John 6:14–15.*

**MATERIALS**

1. Wooden tray
2. Three baskets: one for Jesus and twelve disciples; one for twelve tiny baskets; one for bread and fish
3. Lime green felt underlay: 34" by 36" with rounded corners
4. Wooden figures: \* **Standing**—Jesus and the twelve disciples
5. Round, flat basket or tray on which to lay the bread and fish in front of Jesus, about 3" in diameter
6. Twelve tiny, woven, oval-shaped baskets to hold the bread and fish: about 1½" long, by 1" wide, by ¾" high (They can be found in craft shops. They come with handles, which should be removed.)

- 7. Five loaves of bread made of Play-Doh or nontoxic mounting putty
- 8. Two fish made of Play-Doh

