

FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

Mark 6:30-44

Prepare to Hear the Word

- This miracle appears in all four Gospels, clearly an important story.
- This miracle takes place following the death of Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist, Jesus wants to have some time to himself with just the apostles.
- Talk about the other 'feeding stories' in the Bible. eg Moses or Elijah.
- Introduce the significance of numbers in the Gospel stories:
 - 1000 = indefinitely large number, too large to be counted.
 - 12 = Maturity. Includes everything or everyone. Tribes of Israel, sons of Jacob. Apostles.
 - 7 = Perfect number, totality and wholeness – 7 days of creation – 7 Patriarchs, 7 Churches in Asia Minor.

You will need:

- Puppets - Jesus, 4 disciples, 6 crowd.
- Green circle with blue oval on top.
- Wooden Fishing Boat
- Five loaves and two fish.
- Long baskets, twelve if possible.
- Sea of Galilee backdrop.

When children are seated in a semi-circle ready to listen to the story, place the gold box/bag, containing the materials you will need, carefully beside you.

Place the green felt circle in front of you, place the blue oval in the centre with the boat at the edge. Place the backdrop in front of you at the edge of the green underlay. Jesus and the disciples are placed near the edge of the green underlay to your left. Say:

Following the death of John the Baptist, the apostles gathered together with Jesus and reported all that they had done and taught.

Move the boat then Jesus and the disciples to the other side of the lake as you say:
Jesus suggested that they go away to a quiet place to rest a while. People were coming and going in great numbers so they went off in a boat by themselves to a deserted place.

Place the crowd in front of the backdrop.

People saw them leaving and word spread. Crowds hurried to the place and arrived before them.

Bring Jesus to the front of the crowd and say:

When Jesus came ashore he saw the vast crowd and his heart was moved with pity for them. They were like sheep without a shepherd and he began to teach them many things.

Move two of the disciples to Jesus and say:

By now it was already late and the disciples urged Jesus to send the people away so that they may go and buy themselves something to eat.

Hold your hand over Jesus to indicate who is speaking and say:
Jesus replied, “Give them some food yourselves.”

Hold your hand over the disciples to indicate who is speaking and say:
“Are we to buy two hundred days’ wages worth of food and give it to them to eat?”

Hold your hand over Jesus to indicate who is speaking and say:
Jesus said, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.”

Hold your hand over the disciples to indicate who is speaking and say:
When they found out they said, “five loaves and two fish”

Move Jesus in front of the crowd again and indicate who is speaking.
Jesus gave orders to have everyone sit down on the green grass in groups. The people took their places in groups of hundreds and fifties.

Hold the loaves and fish in front of you for the students to see and say:
Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to the disciples to give to the people: he also divided the fish among them all

Place the baskets in front of the people and say:
When they had finished eating the disciples picked up twelve baskets of broken pieces.
Those who ate were five thousand men plus women and children.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Response: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.



I Wonder:

- I wonder if all the people in the crowd believed the Good News when they listened to Jesus?
- I wonder where else we hear these words of blessing and sharing?
- I wonder why this miracle story was so important that it is contained in all four Gospels?
- I wonder if the crowd who were listening to Jesus thought about the story of Moses feeding the people in the desert?
- I wonder what the 'miracle' was here?

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

Mark 6:30-44

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."

But he answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?"

"How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish."

Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

Prepare to Hear the Word:

Teachers

- The numbers used in this story are significant, 12, 7 (5 + 2), 5,000
- The setting is also important – the wilderness yet the people are invited to sit "on the green grass"
- Jesus 'feeds' the people with both his Word and with food..
- Miracle stories make up almost one third of Mark's Gospel.
- This is the only Galilean miracle narrated in all four gospels.
- The miracle story of the Feeding of the 5,000 reminds us of the feeding stories in the Old Testament as well as pointing toward the Eucharistic story of the Last Supper.

Harpers Bible Commentary, 1988.