

Jesus Feeds the Crowd – Matthew 14:13-21

– Grades 3-5



Older children are familiar with the procedures for sharing their things with others: divide what you have to produce equal portions. In today's Gospel, Jesus does something much more than this. He produces a feast of plenty from apparent scarcity. This is the kind of miracle God will work with our acts of generosity and compassion.

Materials Needed

- A small uncut loaf of bread
- Plastic knife
- Napkins

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. Show the group the loaf of bread. Ask the group for some ideas about how this loaf of bread might be shared with the entire group. Have the group decide upon the best way to share the bread with everyone.
2. Say: *You have all learned what it means to share what we have with others. This is very important. God wants us to share our time, talents, and possessions with others. But this is only the first aspect of the kind of sharing that Jesus taught us. Let's listen and reflect upon today's Gospel so that we might understand what God can do with our small acts of generosity.*
3. Invite a volunteer to read aloud the first part of today's Gospel, Matthew 14:13-17.
4. Say: *It was a very large crowd with Jesus that day. How many loaves and fish did the disciples report that they had? (five loaves, two fish) Could that number have been equally divided and shared with the crowd? If so, what would the portions have looked like? (Probably not; the portions would have been extraordinarily small.) Jesus seems to be making a very unreasonable request to his disciples. How do you think they felt? (Accept all reasonable answers.) Let's hear what happens next.*
5. Invite another volunteer to read aloud the second part of today's Gospel, Matthew 14:18-21.
6. Ask: *What did Jesus do with the bread and the fish? (He blessed it, broke it, and gave it to the disciples; the disciples distributed the food to the crowd.) Does this sound familiar? When else did Jesus bless food, break it, and give it to the disciples? (at the Last Supper) This reading is about sharing what we have with others, and it is also about the Eucharist. How many people were fed? (more than 5,000) The Gospel tells us that they all ate and were satisfied and there were leftovers—12 baskets full!*
7. Say: *Jesus did more than divide what the disciples had to share; he multiplied their small offering of food. God blesses our acts of generosity and makes what seems scarce to be plentiful. This is indeed a miracle.*
8. Conclude in prayer together, asking God to bless and multiply our small acts of generosity. Pray together the Prayer of Saint Francis or today's Psalm - Psalm 145.