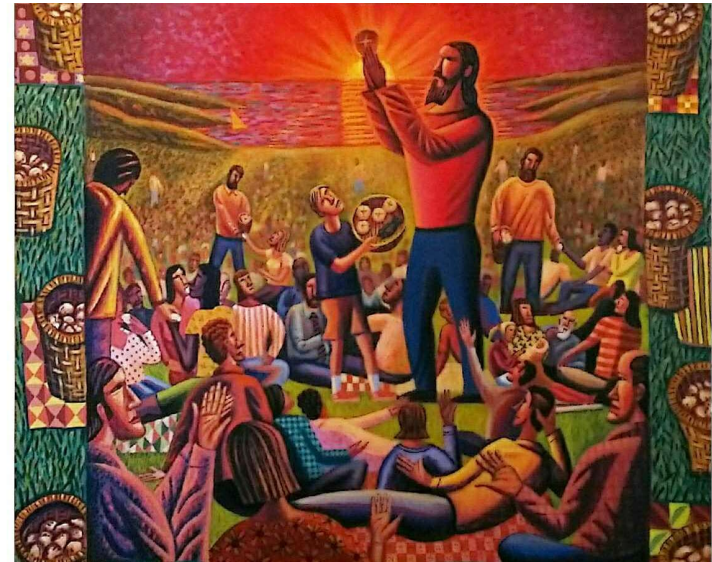


12. What connection does this miracle have to other teachings of Jesus (e.g. the Lord's Prayer or Jesus' claim, "I am the bread of life" in John 6:35)?
13. Between traditional and progressive Christians, the feeding of the multitudes is the place of much theological disagreement. Progressives see the feeding of the multitudes here as indistinguishable from the Last Supper, and thus argue that the "ethic of hospitality" that Jesus demonstrates here justifies the practice of welcoming everyone, regardless of belief or whether they are baptized, to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ at Communion. Traditional Christians see the two meals as connected but not identical. They point out that Jesus does not offer the crowd his "body and blood" here, but only bread and fish. And they point out that, according to Matthew, Jesus blesses the meal (eulogizes it), but does not give thanks for it (eucharistize it) as he does at the Last Supper. What do you think?
14. What does this miracle reveal about Jesus' identity?
15. What does this miracle teach us about the relationship between divine power and human participation, between what God does and what we do?
16. Jesus first has compassion, then heals, and then feeds the people. What does this sequence suggest about the nature of Christian ministry?
17. Why do you think this miracle has such a prominent place in the Gospels (it is the only miracle, besides the Resurrection, recorded in all four Gospels)?
18. What "five loaves and two fish" has God entrusted to you that may seem too small to make a difference?

Family Bible Study

8/2/2026



Matthew 14:13-21

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

¹³ Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. ¹⁵ Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves." ¹⁶ But Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." ¹⁷ They said to him, "We have only five loaves here and two fish." ¹⁸ And he said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰ And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. ²¹ And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Questions to Wonder with Kids

In today's reading from Matthew, Jesus takes an offering of some loaves of bread and a few fishes and miraculously feeds more than 5,000 of his followers by multiplying them, until everyone has enough to eat.

- What about this story surprises you?
- If you were to tell your friend about what happened with Jesus and the loaves and fishes, what would you say?
- I wonder where the five loaves and two fishes came from...
- Why do you suppose Jesus fed the crowd rather than send them away to feed themselves?
- What were the disciples doing through all this?
- How many people do you figure were there in the crowd that day? I wonder if they realized that they were part of a miracle...
- How many baskets of food were collected after they ate? Do you remember any other stories in the Bible where that number appears?
- Do you remember any other time you've heard about or seen bread in the Bible? How about in church, during worship?
- How does God provide us with our "daily bread" today?

Questions for Adults

1. *Context:* What is the "this" that Jesus heard in v13 (read the verses before)? Where has Jesus just been? Why do you think Jesus went out in a boat?
2. What were the crowds doing in the meantime (v13)?
3. What did Jesus do when he saw what they were doing (v14)?
4. What is the "crisis" that emerges?
5. In v13 and v15, the word "desolate" (or "deserted", "unpopulated", "wilderness") stands out, as it is used twice to describe the place that Jesus and his followers were in. What does this mean practically for the situation? Do you see any larger meaning in the description?
6. What is Jesus' initial response to the crisis? What does Jesus do? What does he say (v16)?
7. What is the disciples' response (v17)?
8. What role does Jesus take in the feeding of the five thousand? What role do the disciples take (v19)? What does this suggest about the relationship between Jesus and his disciples and between Jesus and the crowd?
9. What is the response of the crowd to the meal Jesus provided them?
10. Read the other Gospel accounts of Jesus feeding multitudes: Matthew 15:32-39; Mark 6:30-44 and 8:1-10; Luke 9:10-17, John 6:1-15. What aspects of this story are consistent? What details are different? (Keep in mind that scholars see the Feeding of the 5000 and the Feeding of the 4000 as two different events)
11. What significance do you see in the fact that the disciples collected twelve baskets of leftover bread (v20)? If you were to break down that sentence into parts, what significance—symbolically— would you give to the role of *the disciples*? The number of *baskets*? The fact that there was *leftover bread*? That it was *collected*, rather than thrown away?