

Bible Heroes

The Boy
with a Picnic

Teachers
Story notes



Essential Teachers notes:

The feeding of the 5000 is probably one of the most iconic miracles Jesus became known for, it's not surprising that after the meal he fled for fear they would try to make him king by force. 5000 people shared witness to what happened, and it happened more than once with the story of the feeding of 4000. It's a beautiful story about the power of being willing to try, and for one boy with his picnic lunch it would probably have been life changing.

Main Passage : John 6

Additional passages : Matthew 14 Mark 6, Luke 9.

Have you ever felt really small? not short, or thin, or young, but small.

Perhaps you've been in a really big building and suddenly you've felt very tiny, or a really big wood and suddenly you seem very little. Today's story is about a boy who is in a really really big crowd of people, and he must have felt very small, but God was going to teach him about how much small things matter.

There was a new rabbi everyone was talking about. His name was Jesus and he came from Nazareth. Stories started going around about the things he did and said. People were claiming he had healed them, people who hadn't been able to walk could now walk, people with illnesses were now well, people who had never talked were singing... everybody was talking about this Jesus. And he was near...

Jesus had been seen getting into a boat to cross the sea of Galilee, but if they were quick the people could go around the edge and meet him at the mountain. Once they got onto higher ground they could look back and see young men running ahead, children and families moving together, streaming out of every village, a huge river of people were gathering. Eager to reach where Jesus would land, to see him to perform more miracles, to see what everyone was talking about.

Jesus and his disciples moved a little further up the mountain so everyone could see, but right away there was a problem. All these people journeying towards Jesus were going to need food, especially after walking so far round the water. Jesus asked his disciples and they looked worried, it would take a years wages to buy enough food for everyone to have just a tiny snack.

Nearby a small boy heard the disciples talking about food. In a bag on his shoulder was his picnic lunch, it was 5 little bread loaves made of barley, each small enough to fit in his hand, and 2 small fish. Perhaps the disciples were hungry he thought, and even though it was only a tiny amount of food he decided he would share.

He went over to one of the disciples, Andrew, and tapped him on the arm. "you can share my food" he said. Andrew looked at the boy and his little lunch, then at the huge crowd, then he thanked the boy and took the bag. The boy was a little confused, he'd expected Andrew to take a bit of bread and a fish, not everything, but perhaps Andrew needed it. Then he watched as Andrew took the food to Jesus. Wow. His food was for Jesus?

But Jesus didn't eat the food. He looked at it and smiled. Jesus gave some instructions to his disciples and suddenly everyone was moving. People were being told to sit down on the grass in big groups. The small boy stood and watched the disciples run around until the crowd become calm and ordered. And what a crowd, it was huge, thousands of people looking towards where Jesus stood near the boy. Suddenly the boy's lunch felt very very very tiny.

Jesus picked up a little loaf from the boys bag and held it up to heaven. In a loud voice he blessed the bread, and the fish and started to hand them out to the disciples. The first disciple took 3 of the bread loaves and one of the fish and took it to the nearest group with a puzzled look on his face. The next disciple did the same, and so did the next, and the next.

The small boy moved towards Jesus looking confused, Jesus had given out more food than was in the bag? Jesus looked up and grinned, then threw the boy a barley loaf through the air. He caught it with both hands, it was bigger than the loaves he had packed for his picnic because he needed 2 hands to hold it. While he started eating the soft bread Jesus carried on handing out food to his disciples. Before long the disciples were looking for anyone who wanted any more and collecting any that was left. 12 huge baskets were full with crumbs and fish that didn't get eaten. Jesus walked over to the small boy and handed him his bag "thank you for sharing" he said with a grin... and then he was gone. Some of the crowd looked for him, people shouted about making him king, but he'd disappeared.

Today's hero is the boy with a picnic because he shows us the gift of Sharing