

GENEROUS HEART KIDS

FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND

This session centres on Jesus' feeding of the five thousand through the gift of the little boy's lunch as depicted in John 6:1-15.

Based on Session Six of *The Generous Heart* Bible study.

See the *Feeding the Five Thousand Shopping List* for the resources required for this session.

Aim:

- To help the children understand the value of helping others in need, even when resources feel limited.



All-ages



Younger children



Older children

Look for these icons to help select the activities for your age group.

STARTERS

Select one of the following activities.



1. SET THE TABLE

Set up the room for a sharing 'feast' with table and chairs. Assign a simple task to each child, whether that's opening and binning any packaging, setting the tables with plates and cups or helping to place the snacks on to serving plates or bringing things from one side of the room to the other. **Check for allergies beforehand.**

Explain that everyone will get to enjoy the snacks later in the session, but first everyone will need to work together as a team to help set everything up. They will each be given a task when it's time to serve the food and will help with tidying at the end.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *How do you feel about being a helper and part of a team of helpers?*
- *What do you think makes a good team?*
- *What are you most looking forward to about the 'feast'?*



2. PENNY TOSS GAME

If you have time, ask the children to help you set up the containers on the floor on one side/end of the room; some can be close together and others more spread out. Mark out five lines across the floor using masking tape in front of the containers; make the first line right in front of the containers, the next line a few feet back, the next line further back etc. Do this until the final line is all the way across the room.

Give each child five pennies. The goal is to throw the pennies into the containers. You might need to show younger groups how to do this. For each penny they land in a container, they get two more pennies. If they do not make it into the container, they get nothing.

Have the children line up behind the first (closest) line and let everyone toss a penny into the containers nearest to them. Give the ones who get it into the containers two more pennies; the others will be down one penny.

For the next round, they will need to throw their penny from the next line, further away from the containers – and so forth, so the task becomes increasingly more difficult. Continue until they reach the furthest line of masking tape. At this point, have the children continue until there is just one winner left. The last child to still have any pennies wins.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Was that game harder than you thought it was going to be?**
- **Did it make it harder to win, since the only way to get more pennies was to give up the ones you already had?**

To win, you had to get more pennies. But to get more, you had to give up the ones you already had. In the same way, God gives us special skills and abilities (time, talents, treasure) which we can either choose to hold on to or use to get a greater reward.

MAINS

Read John 6:1-15.

Alternatively, let the children watch a video of the Bible story:



- ***The Story of Jesus Feeding 5,000*** by Minno – Bible Stories for Kids (1:33)



- ***Jesus Feeds the 5,000*** by Saddleback Kids (2:09)

All the people were able to be fed because of the little boy sharing his lunch. This young boy didn't have much to give, but he still stepped forward and was happy to offer and share what he did have because of his generosity and his love for Jesus and

for other people. As Jesus' friends and followers, we should try to share what we have – time, talents (skills and abilities) and treasures (finances) – with him so that people around us will also have enough.

Jesus asked his disciples to get all 5,000 people into groups before he prayed and thanked God for the five loaves and two fish, which were then shared out. This was a miracle because Jesus took what the little boy had for his lunch and multiplied it to feed all the people. In this way, all of us have something to offer to help others.

When faced with the impossible task of feeding 5,000 people with so little food, Jesus did not doubt or panic. Instead, he trusted in God's power to provide and worked with what was available. This shows the importance of having faith in God and believing that anything is possible with his help and power. A miracle is something extraordinary that happens that cannot be explained. We can believe that God will use what we have – a little or more – and he may even multiply it, leaving more than enough leftovers to help or to feed someone else.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **How would you feel about sharing your lunch with someone else?**
- **Can you think of the last time you shared something with others?**
- **How do you feel about sharing?**
- **How do you feel when someone shares with you?**

Select one of the following activities.

1. FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISH

This activity will help bring the Bible story to life for the children. The idea is to ask them to create their own 'packed lunch' just like the little boy.

Options include:

- Using play-dough / salt dough / plasticine, the children create five of their own mini 'bread rolls' and cut out two fish shapes using the cutters. These can be placed into brown paper bags or wrapped up in brown paper when finished.
- Give a slice of (real!) bread to each child and ask them tear this apart so that there are five pieces of bread; or alternatively they can break up the breadsticks. Ask them to take two fish crackers each. Place these into brown paper bags or on to sheets of baking paper, then tie up with string. **Check for allergies beforehand.**
- Draw a simple outline of a small bread loaf or roll and a fish shape; cut out to make templates for the children to trace around on their own sheets of coloured paper. Alternatively, you could use the **Bread and Fish Templates** sheet or you could ask them to create their own versions of the shape cut-

outs. Stick on to paper plates with glue. They can then decorate their plates using colouring pens/pencils.

- Create multiple bread-shaped and fish-shaped stamps by drawing outlines on corrugated cardboard and carefully cutting these out. Lay out paper plates with paint for the children to dip their stamps in before they press and print directly on to their own clean paper plate. This activity will get messy, so ensure surfaces and clothes are covered and there is access to a sink and soap for paint-covered hands.



2. MAKE IT GROW!

Carry out an explosive experiment to symbolise that when you give to God, he increases this gift spectacularly. It's essential to do a test run of this demonstration before the session to check you have the right amount and know what to expect.

Depending on the weather and whether you have access to safe outside space, it's preferable to do this activity outdoors. Using a wipeable table/surface (a tray could be an alternative), have the ingredients ready to combine into the container. Ask the children to gather around, but they must keep some distance away as things will quickly get messy.

Pour the ingredients in one at a time and watch the chemical reaction start to bubble up.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

- *How does this experiment relate to what we've heard about Jesus feeding the 5,000 with only five loaves and two fish?*

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SIDES

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(FOR BIGGER APPETITES)

Select one of the following activities.



1. HEY BIG SPENDER

On each sticky note, write one of the following living costs and stick these signs up around the room:

- Food shopping - £30
- Electricity bill - £5
- Telephone bill - £5
- Rent payment - £125
- Petrol for the car - £25
- Trip to the cinema - £10
- Collection in church - £5
- Comic/magazine - £2
- Favourite snacks after school - £5
- Takeaway meal / eating out - £10
- Save pocket money - £3

Divide into teams of four or five and give each team paper and pens. Tell each group that they have a total of £200 for one week to spend on whatever they choose from the living costs stuck around the room. Ask them to make a list of what they would spend their budgeted amount of money on and remind them to make sure they add up the costs. Give them about ten minutes to think this through, then ask each group to share how they have decided to spend their money.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *How easy/hard did you find this activity?*
- *Are you happy with your final lists – why / why not?*
- *Were there any worries or disagreements?*
- *What do you think the real priorities are that you need to be spending the money on?*
- *Do you know how the money given to the church on Sunday is used? (Give examples.)*

The little boy would not have known that his lunch was going to be used by Jesus to feed thousands of people. What could this teach us about our giving to the church or to Jesus?



2. FAMILY OF FIVE ACTIVITY

This activity is similar to the previous 'Hey Big Spender' activity, but helps the children see things from a different perspective and to think of families and children living in poverty here in the UK and in countries around the world.

Before doing this activity, you may want to look up and share the latest statistics of children living in poverty or those who are homeless both here in the UK and internationally.

Here are some sources:

- Cpag.org.uk
- Actionforchildren.org.uk
- Unicef.org

Print out and cut out coloured copies of the **Family of Five** sheet in advance and separate all the sections of the pie chart. Distribute these between small groups of four/five children, one pie chart per group.

Explain that they are budgeting for a family of five – two adults and three children. Ask the groups to create their pies using the different cut-outs.

It's important to help the children recognise and make sense of the causes of poverty and understand that poverty is much more than a lack of material things. This exercise should help the children think more about the challenges faced by those living in material poverty.

Remembering that there are families and children living in poverty can make us feel all kinds of emotions. We may feel sad and hopeless, and that this problem is too big for us to do anything about. We may have questions such as: 'How can someone like me help out all of these people who don't have much?' Perhaps this is something the boy with the five loaves and two fishes may have felt. We might feel compassion and be determined to do something to help.

Poverty is not our individual responsibility to fix, so we shouldn't feel guilty or pressured into giving or sharing anything that we are not comfortable with at all. Generosity can take years and years to learn and practise, but that's when God can gladly help us.

One way to think of this is to imagine ourselves as tiny raindrops of water falling into the massive ocean. One raindrop or one small act of kindness or generosity does not seem as though it can do much; but when it hits the ocean, it will cause little ripples across the surface of the water and can still make a change to someone's life in small or big ways. God will see how you have responded and will reward your generosity no matter what.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Was there** anything that stood out to you during this activity?
- **How can we think** of small ways to help those who have less than us, here in our local community? (Have some examples ready including existing SA activities, eg giving used clothes to charity shop, donating to a food bank.)
- **How can we think** of small ways to help those who have less than us in poorer nations around the world? (Have some examples ready.)
- **How are you** feeling after this activity?
- **If you have** any questions or thoughts about what we've shared today, who can you trust and speak to about them?

DESSERTS



GENEROUS HEART KIDS' 'FEAST'

Please be aware of allergies.

Explain that it's now time to eat the food/snacks set out at the start of the session. Give each child an activity sheet and encourage them to start drawing or colouring in the sheets while they eat. You may want to ask parents to join in. You could ask older children to help pass things along or offer to pour out drinks or serve out nibbles to everyone.

While you are all feasting, stop at each table/group and ask the children the following questions, or have them share and discuss between themselves in pairs or threes.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is one key lesson or takeaway that you have learnt today?
- What are you thankful for today?
- How can you tell others about the importance of being kind and generous?
- How can you be generous at home?

Ensure there is enough time for the children to enjoy the meal and reflect. If there are any leftovers, encourage them to take these home to share with others.

Ask everyone to help clean up the table and space, and offer praise and thanks to the children for helping. For younger children, be specific in noticing how they help, eg 'Thank you for putting your paper plate in the recycling bin so carefully, [name of child].' This will build their confidence.

WHAT NOW?

Conclude the session by reading out 2 Corinthians 9:7.

'Each one should **give**, then, what he has decided in his **heart** to **give**. He should **not give** if it makes him **sad**. And he should **not give** if he thinks he is **forced to give**. **God loves** the **person** who **gives happily**.'

You can teach the younger children to memorise by slowly repeating sections of this verse using the actions that link with the words in bold.

ACTIONS

- **Give(s)**: hold both palms up in front of you
- **Heart**: put your hands on your heart
- **Not give**: shake your head and index/forefinger side to side
- **Sad**: frown and point to either side of your mouth with index finger
- **Forced to give**: hold left palm facing up, right hand grips onto left wrist and gently pulls away
- **God**: point index fingers to the ceiling
- **Loves**: both arms make an 'x' and held against chest, hands flat
- **Person**: thumbs up and point thumbs towards chest
- **Happily**: thumbs up and upright, big cheesy smile

Have the children practise saying this verse a couple of times themselves before praying together. You can suggest that the older children write this verse down and to try and remember this whenever they give.

PRAYER

Thank you, Lord, that you can do a lot with a little, and you can multiply what we happily give to you.

Jesus, we give you our lives, our time, and all we have.

Help us to grow up to be generous and cheerful givers.

Amen.

TAKEAWAY



- **Kids Activity** sheet



- **Using Our Gifts Gift Voucher** sheet (children may want two sheets)