

A small offering

**Bible verses:**

John 6:1-15

More than 5,000 people fed

**Aim:**

To explore how a boy helped Jesus, to consider his faith and willingness, and to think about how we can reflect God's goodness

**Today's fruit:**

Goodness



In today's session Jesus took the small offering from a young boy and performed an amazing miracle.

Thousands of people came to listen to Jesus teach, but they stayed so long that they became hungry. Through the goodness of one boy's contribution, a huge crowd enjoyed a massive feast.

Goodness is demonstrated by the boy who shared his food and by what Jesus did with it.

Each child will need:

- A sheet from the *Five loaves and two fish* handout but A5 size – see Action It
- Pens/pencils, glue, scissors and a paper plate
- A small piece of paper, eg sticky note size
- *Explore It ideas* handout

You will need:

- Five loaves and two fish handout – see Start It
- To hide the loaves and fish in advance
- Flip chart and pens
- Fruit of the Spirit poster: *Goodness* – download from **Salvationist**



Start it

Play a team game of hunt the loaves and fish. Decide in advance how many teams you will divide the children into and make sure there are five loaves and two fish of one colour for each

team. The handout has five coloured sets plus a black-and-white version if you prefer to print on coloured paper.

Hide all the different-coloured loaves and fish around the room before the session. The aim is for each team to find their full set of loaves and fish.



Sing it

Say:

Our song for today gives us a sneak peek at our Bible story. Let's sing it together and learn more about a little boy filled with goodness.

Song

'5 Loaves and 2 Fish' (animated Bible songs) by DG Bible Songs (stop at 3:35)



Share it

Say:

The Bible story for today has already been introduced in our song, but let's dive into Scripture to find out more.

Read:

'After this, Jesus went across Lake Galilee (or, Lake Tiberias). Many people followed him because they saw the miracles he did to heal the sick. Jesus went up on a hill and there sat down with his followers. It was almost the time for the Jewish Passover Feast.

'Jesus looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him. He said to Philip, "Where can we buy bread for all these people to eat?" (Jesus asked Philip this question to test him. Jesus already knew what he planned to do.)

'Philip answered, "We would all have to work a month to buy enough bread for each person here to have only a little piece.'"

(John 6:1-7 ICB)

Ask:

- Why were the people following Jesus?
- What do you think it was like for Jesus and his disciples as they were constantly followed by crowds of people?
- The Bible says that Jesus was testing Philip when he asked where to buy bread. What do you think this means?

Say:

Philip pointed out that it would cost a huge amount of money to feed all the people.

Read:

‘Another follower there was Andrew. He was Simon Peter’s brother. Andrew said, “Here is a boy with five loaves of barley bread and two little fish. But that is not enough for so many people.”

‘Jesus said, “Tell the people to sit down.” This was a very grassy place. There were about 5,000 men who sat down there. Then Jesus took the loaves of bread. He thanked God for the bread and gave it to the people who were sitting there. He did the same with the fish. He gave them as much as they wanted.’

(John 6:8-11 *ICB*)

Ask:

- The boy had thought ahead and brought food to eat. Would you have understood if he had kept his food for himself? If so, why?
- What did the boy do instead? Would you have done the same? If not, why not?

Say:

Philip immediately pointed out how hard it would be for them to pay for bread for all the people. Andrew saw the possibility in the boy’s small offering and gave it to Jesus. Even though he knew it wouldn’t be enough to feed everyone, Andrew still handed it over to Jesus.

Ask:

Do you think you would have reacted like Philip or like Andrew? Explain your answer.

Read:

‘They all had enough to eat. When they had finished, Jesus said to his followers, “Gather the pieces of fish and bread that were not eaten. Don’t waste anything.” So they gathered up the pieces that were left. They filled 12 large baskets with the pieces that were left of the five barley loaves.

‘The people saw this miracle that Jesus did. They said, “He must truly be the Prophet who is coming into the world.”

‘Jesus knew that the people planned to come and take him by force and make him their king. So he left and went into the hills alone.’

(John 6:12-15 *ICB*)

Say:

The boy gave his small offering to Jesus, and it was multiplied to feed thousands of people. Jesus was able to take a small offering and do something amazing. I wonder what that could mean for us? The situation seemed impossible, but through Jesus, no one went hungry and there was food to spare.

Ask:

- What can it look like for us to share what we have with Jesus?
- In what ways does God still bless and multiply what we offer today?

Say:

The boy trusted that his picnic was going to help, with the same child-like faith that Jesus encourages us all to have. Our memory verse for this month reminds us to trust in God. Let's share it together.

Memory verse

**'Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.'**

(Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV)

Say:

It would have been easy for the young boy not to share his food; but when he did, Jesus was able to show God's goodness through that offering and bless thousands of people!



Action it

Display the fruit of the Spirit *Goodness* poster and describe how the boy was full of goodness when he shared his loaves and fish.

Ask:

- How do you think the boy felt when Jesus shared his food with all the people?
- In what way does God use what we have to offer when we share it with others?

Say:

As we saw in today's Bible story, it doesn't matter how small that offering is, Jesus can do amazing things with it.

Spend time discussing with the children what we can offer to Jesus as his followers. Write a list of the different talents, personality traits, qualities, time or finances we can offer to Jesus to create an ideas bank.

Use the same *Five loaves and two fish* handout but A5 size – either by reducing with the photocopier or, if printing, select the 'two pages per sheet' option.

Using the ideas bank, ask the group to write or draw one thing they can offer to Jesus on each item of food on the handout. When they have done this, they can cut them out and stick them on a paper plate.

Afterwards, ask them to share the contents of their plate with the other members of the group. They could also identify one item on their plate that they intend to offer to God over the coming week.

Say:

The boy showed goodness as he gifted his food to Jesus. As the Holy Spirit helps us, we can show God's goodness to others.



Pray it

Discuss with the children the kinds of prayers they say before they eat. There may be a prayer that their family says together. Share the following prayers as examples of saying grace before a meal.

'For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful.'

'For food, friends and family, we thank you, Lord.'

'Thank you, God, for food and family and friends.'

We remember those who have no food today, and those who have food but nobody to share it with.

As you have blessed us, help us be a blessing for others.

Amen.'

Discuss with the children possible ideas for their own prayers. You may want to write down some ideas for them to refer to. Give each child a small piece of paper to write their prayer on.

Share the prayers together to bring the session to a close. They could stick their prayer on the back of their paper plate to use as part of an Explore It activity at home.



Explore it

Remember to send home the *Explore It ideas* for children and families.



A small offering

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:
John 6:1-15



Aim:
To explore how a boy helped Jesus, to consider his faith and willingness, and to think about how we can reflect God's goodness



Today's fruit:
Goodness



Explore

The Bible is full of examples of God's goodness. Explore the following Bible verses.

What do they tell you about God's goodness?

Psalm 145:9 James 1:17 Nahum 1:7



Pray

In this week's session you wrote a special prayer to use at mealtimes. Show the people at home your paper plate prayer and share it with them before you eat together.



Song for the week

'5 Loaves and 2 Fish' (animated Bible songs) by DG Bible Songs



Memory verse

'Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own
understanding;
in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.'

(Psalm 3:5-6 NIV)

