



# Bread of life



**MEETING AIM**

To encourage children to explore the ways in which Jesus satisfies our deepest needs.



**BIBLE PASSAGE**

John 6:1-15; 22-59



**BACKGROUND**

Our world is full of instant things; the 'get it now' culture is deep-rooted. Jesus promises to fulfil our deepest needs and longings, and is the only one who can truly satisfy. Giving our children the opportunity to explore this will provide them with a countercultural theology and a foundation for the rest of their lives.

**+ CIRCLE TIME**



As the children arrive, ask them to join you and sit in a circle. Chat together about what the children's favourite meals are; of all time and from this week. Then go on to find out everyone's least favourite food.

**+ BREAD TASTING**



**You will need: different types of bread from around the world (check for allergies and provide alternatives if necessary)**

Set out the bread in different areas of the room with a small amount of information for each one. Ask the children to taste-test the bread.

Ask a child or group of children to choose their favourite and then 'pitch' it to the rest of the group. Take a vote for the best type of bread based on the taste and the pitch.

**+ BIBLE STORY**



**You will need: 350g flour; 2 tsp baking powder; 1 tsp salt; 1 tbsp oil; 170ml water; mixing bowls, wooden spoons; paper plates; various pizza toppings; clean-up and cover-up facilities**

While you tell the story, your group will be making pizza! Arrange the children into pairs and give them a space at a

table with all the necessary equipment. It will help if you give them pre-measured ingredients. Check for allergies and provide alternatives if necessary.

Before moving to the table, chat with the children about bread. What is bread for? Encourage answers and exploration of what we use bread for: eating, satisfying hunger, sandwiches and toast. Welcome all answers. Then tell the following story, and make sure there are enough adults to help with the cooking as you speak.

In Bible times, bread was used as a basic element for all meals. It wasn't just an extra, like us having a piece of toast as a snack.

Imagine being really, really hungry. So hungry that you'd eat anything! Without bread, you'd probably go really hungry.

Let's look at a story in the book of John, where Jesus uses and talks about bread.

*Move to the cookery table.*

Jesus was surrounded by a huge crowd of very hungry people: 5,000 men, plus women and children. They'd been listening to him teach and now they were hungry. There weren't any shops nearby and his followers began to panic, wondering where they'd find food for all these people.

*Mix all the dry ingredients together in the bowl.*

Just then, a little boy from the crowd approached and gave them his lunch. It wasn't much: just five loaves of bread and two fish. How was that going to help?

*Add the oil and water, and stir with the spoon until it forms a ball.*

But Jesus knew it would be enough. He told his followers to ask the crowd to sit down. He thanked God for the lunch and then began to break it into pieces, passing it to his followers to hand out to the people.

*Tip the ball out of the bowl and knead on a floured surface.*

To the absolute amazement of his followers, there was more than enough food to go around. In fact, there were twelve baskets of leftovers! The bread just kept going and going! They couldn't quite believe it. This bread satisfied the hunger of every single person there. And that was a lot of people. They went home with their tummies full and their hearts in awe of this man, Jesus.

*Roll into two balls and flatten out with hands.*

The very next day, Jesus was talking to the people again. They asked him about Moses in the Old Testament, and reminded Jesus that God gave the Israelites bread to eat from heaven, called

manna. Jesus confused them with his next words.

*Add toppings.*

Jesus told the people that *he* is the bread that gives life. He said that anyone who comes to him will never be hungry or even thirsty; just like the crowds the day before, who went away with full stomachs. The Israelites who ate the manna in the desert still died one day, but those who believe in Jesus as the bread of life will never die.

*Put onto named paper plates to take home and cook*

**+ CHATTING TOGETHER**



Split into smaller groups and give out these questions for each group to ponder:

- What does this story make you think about?
- What are we 'hungry' for (you may want to explain what Jesus meant when he was using hunger metaphors)?
- What kinds of things do we satisfy our 'hunger' with?
- How can we let Jesus be like bread for us?

**+ CREATIVE RESPONSE**



**You will need: a postcard for each child with a speech-bubble on both sides; pens**

Write a postcard to take home with the pizza. Ask the children to imagine Jesus is giving the pizza to someone else and is writing them a postcard. What would he write about himself? What does he want them to know about him? Write this in one of the speech bubbles on the postcard.

**+ PRAYER**



**You will need: postcards from 'Creative response'; pens; reflective music and the means to play it (optional)**

Invite the children to turn the postcard over and write on the other side what they would like to say to Jesus right now. Create a calming environment, perhaps with soft music, so they are able to focus. Provide an opportunity for those who wish to share with the group.

**HELEN HODGSON**

leads the children's and youth work at Grace Church, Bromsgrove and is a freelance writer.