

## Ready-to-use all-age service

## Bread of life



## MEETING AIM

To discover that Jesus satisfies more than just our hunger.



## BIBLE PASSAGE

John 6:1-15, 22-59



## KEY VERSE

"Then Jesus declared: 'I am the bread of life.'" John 6:35a.

## + PRAYER AND WORSHIP ACTIVITY

## Option 1



**You will need: breads, pastries or other breakfast items**

Provide toast, selected breads or pastries as people join you for worship. Have them set out beautifully on a table with some well-positioned cards reading 'Savour', 'Taste and see', 'Soul food', 'Hungry?', 'Be satisfied!', 'Enjoy' and 'I am the bread of life'. Invite people to eat, reflecting on the words and phrases as they do so.

## Option 2



Ask people to turn to the person next to them and tell them what their favourite food is. Ask them to come up with a creative adjective for that food, for example 'luscious' ice cream or 'taste-bud-tingling' chilli. Invite them to turn those phrases into simple prayers: "Thank you, God, for luscious ice cream covered in sprinkles..." You might also like to follow on with a prayer for those who don't have what we do.

## + STORY



**You will need: a simple picture of a bread roll and a small fish for each person, plus a few extra; a basket; a tea towel or cloth napkin**

Before the service, put the paper bread and fish in the basket (have more than one if your congregation is large) and cover it with the tea towel. Give five loaves and two fish to a volunteer (preferably a child). Tell the following story.

We are going to imagine today's story together. Imagine that you are living at the time of Jesus. You have heard all about him. He's been doing incredible

things and teaching in a way that people have never heard before. Everyone wants to hear him speak, so you go along with the crowd to the hills just outside town where he is going to be that day. It is an amazing day. The sun is shining, everyone is in a great mood and what Jesus says, well... it is like nothing you've ever heard before. You feel like your life might never be the same again. Thousands of people are there that day. You hear later that there were about 5,000 men before you even started counting all the women and children.

Jesus is such an amazing storyteller that, before you know it, evening has come and you realise you are starving! You didn't think to bring your dinner with you, and neither did anyone else. You can see Jesus talking to the guys he goes around with. He is suggesting they give everyone some dinner.

"Great!" you think. You're not going to be hungry after all.

But then it becomes obvious that the guys don't have any food or anything to buy it with. One of them has pointed to someone in the crowd, you can't quite see who, but now Jesus is holding a small bundle of food. *Ask the volunteer to come out with their bread and fish, and put them in the basket on top of the tea towel.*

"Hmm," you think. "It's such a small picnic. It will only just about feed two people, not thousands."

But Jesus is holding it up. *Hold the basket up.* He gives thanks to God, and the food is passed out among all the people. *With a little sleight of hand here, you should be able to start to pass out bread and fish to everyone from under the towel in the basket. Make sure everyone ends up with a roll and a fish.*

Once everyone has their bread and fish, talk about the fact that the next day the crowd went to find Jesus again, probably because they were hoping for another free meal! Jesus could see why they had come, and he told them they needed to be careful that they didn't look for satisfaction in the wrong places. The food he had provided filled their tummies, but he wanted them to know that he was the true bread of life. What did he mean? Well, he could give them all the life they needed if they put their faith and trust in him.

## + REFLECTIVE RESPONSE TO THE STORY

## Option 1



**You will need: packets of bread mix; mixing bowls and water; somewhere to knead the bread**

Invite people to get into a group with a few others and mix up the packet contents according to the instructions, then take it in turns to knead the dough. As they do this, encourage them to talk about the ways we can be satisfied in Jesus.

## Option 2



Buy lots of different breads and make a bread man on a table somewhere central. You could get a circular loaf for the head, a big tiger loaf for the body and baguettes for the limbs. Try to make one of the loaves gluten-free. Make sure your bread man is big enough for everyone to break a bit off. Invite people to come and take a piece. As they eat it, they can reflect on how Jesus satisfies them. If your tradition allows, you could use this act as part of your Communion celebration.

## + GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Divide into mixed aged groups and discuss these questions together, making sure everyone has a chance to contribute:

- Which part of the story did you like most?
- Do you think food made from a miracle would taste better than regular snacks?
- Do you think the people understood what Jesus meant when he said he was the bread of life?
- If you had to put the idea of Jesus being the bread of life into your own words, what would you say?
- In what ways do you think Jesus can satisfy you?
- What one thing could you do this week to remember the story and what Jesus said about himself?

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