**GROWING TOGETHER:** FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Session 2 of 4

# Jesus feeds 4,000

### MEETING AIM

To be amazed at Jesus’ compassion for hungry people and his power to feed a large crowd.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 15:32-39

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your particular situation.

The context for the previous session’s story was the feeding of the 5,000. The background here again is crowds following Jesus, bringing friends and relatives with a variety of physical disabilities. He heals them. The crowd are already amazed. There are several differences between the two crowd stories, most notably the 5,000 crowd was Jewish, while this crowd was probably Gentile from the cities on the east side of Lake Galilee.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Welcome the children and share some simple refreshments and ask the children to share about the week they have had. Talk about being hungry: how hungry are children if they arrive at school for the breakfast club? How hungry are they on a school day for their lunch? Suppose they didn’t eat anything for a whole day?

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** *Where’s Wally?* books

Give out some *Where’s Wally?* books and encourage the children to search through the crowds to find Wally. What else can they find in the crowds? How many people do they think are in the crowds? Can they imagine what a crowd of 100 people looks like? 1,000? 10,000?

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** playdough (bought or homemade – there are many recipes online); Bibles

Lots of people with disabilities had been brought to Jesus, people who were not Jews like Jesus was, but Gentiles – blind, lame, unable to speak. Jesus healed them. The crowds were amazed, particularly because Jesus was a Jew.

Read the story (Matthew 15:32-39) pausing to shape with playdough someone who is hungry (v32), a disciple’s face of shock when asked to provide food for the crowd (v33), seven loaves of bread and some fish (vv34-36) and a smiling, satisfied face (v37). Remind the children that Bible says there were 4,000 “men” in the crowd – ask how many people there might have been if they included all the women and children too.

At the end of the story, compare the different models and chat about why the children chose to make them.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Spilt into two groups, a group of disciples, a group is the crowd. Give each group at least one Bible. How many words can they think of to describe how their feelings change over the course of the story – seeing Jesus healing people, then the people being hungry, fed and the disciples collecting the leftovers? Compare notes between the two groups.

* What is so amazing about Jesus?
* Why did it matter to Jesus that he went out of his way to heal, care for and feed people who are not Jewish – that is, not people like him? What does that say about Jesus?

### CREATIVE RESPONSE – 10 mins

**You will need:** bread rolls or sliced bread if making sandwiches if necessary; spreads; tuna (remember to have gluten-free, dairy-free and vegetarian options if needed); knives and plates; some kind of food wrap

Encourage the children to make some sandwiches. They should make two – one to eat themselves and one to share with someone who is not in the group. Wrap the spare sandwich up ready to give away. Chat together about who you might give your space sandwich to and why.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** sandwiches from ‘Creative response’

Each child should eat their own sandwich or bread roll. Pause for a moment, holding the sandwiches, then thank God for feeding us. Think about practising the art of waiting. Pray for one specific part of the world where hungry people are desperate for food. Visit the [Tearfund website](https://www.tearfund.org/) for more information. Also, pray for the person who will receive the spare sandwich or roll.

Your session may be near or on Refugee Day (20 June). This is a day to pray for those in need fleeing from their homeland, especially if they are fleeing because of crop failure, drought and failing economy leading to hunger, such as in Afghanistan. Visit [UNHCR](https://www.unhcr.org/world-refugee-day.html) to learn more and find some ideas to mark the day with your group.

**RO WILLOUGHBY**

ministers with people of all ages at St Chad’s Woodseats.