**JOURNEYING TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Session 2 of 4

# Jesus feeds 4,000

### MEETING AIM

To see that what Jesus has is for everyone.

### 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.

In today’s passage we explore the story of Jesus feeding 4,000 – the slightly less well-known cousin of the feeding 5,000 story we find in Matthew’s Gospel just a chapter earlier. Why does Matthew choose to record both stories? Don’t they just show the same thing about Jesus? Well, yes…and no. Many scholars think the numbers involved in each story are pretty significant. In the feeding of the 5,000, there are twelve baskets of leftovers. In the Bible, the number twelve often signifies the people of Israel. In the second story, there are seven baskets left over, and often seven is used biblically to signify the Gentiles – that is, those who weren’t part of the people of Israel. So perhaps Jesus is demonstrating in this act that what he has is for everyone. This is further borne out by the story of the Canaanite woman, which occurs just beforehand.

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### GETTING STARTED – 5 mins

Welcome the young people with refreshments. If you want to use a conversation starter, try: Describe your ideal picnic.

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** scrap paper or old newspapers and magazines; scissors

Divide the group into two teams and give each group a bundle of old paper and the same number of scissors. Challenge the teams to cut out as many identical fish and loaf of bread shapes in two minutes. Count up and declare a winner.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** smartphones

Read the passage together. Ask the group to imagine they were part of this miraculous moment. How would they record the moment for social media? Ask them to work with one or two others to create an imaginary social-media post to tell the world about this event. They can use whichever social stream they like – Instagram, TikTok etc. Is there a hashtag to go with their post? What about some suitable emojis? Obviously, they don’t need to actually post – just do a mock-up. Ask each small group to share their post with the rest of the group.

Get the pairs or small groups to show the rest of the group what they have created. What are the similarities and differences between the different posts? Why did the pairs or groups decide to focus on what they did?

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Chat about the story using some of these questions. These are intended to be a starter – let the young people guide the conversation (providing you don’t go off on too many tangents!):

* Why do you think Matthew records this story as well as the one about feeding 5,000 in chapter 14? (You can share some of the stuff about numbers from the background paragraph, if you like.)
* Do you think everyone would’ve realised this was a miracle? Why or why not?
* Does this story leave you with any questions?
* Thinking back to the social-media mock-ups, how easy would they find it to really post these? What reactions might people have?
* What does Jesus show about who he is in this story?

### CREATIVE RESPONSE – 10 mins

**You will need:** packets of bread mix; warm water; mixing bowls; flour; baking trays; oven

In small groups, encourage your young people to follow the instructions on the bread mix packets to make their own bread rolls. If you don’t have much time for kneading and proving, you could use an [easy soda bread recipe](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/simple-soda-bread) instead. And if you don’t have access to an oven, they can take their bread home to bake – make sure they take a photo of the instructions!

As you work, continue to chat about the story and the young people’s response to it.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** several different types of bread – remember to include gluten-free if necessary

Place your bread centrally with some hand sanitiser nearby. Ask the group to take a moment or two in quiet to consider what they need from Jesus today. Ask them also to think about people they know who might think Jesus is not for them. As they talk to Jesus about these things, they can come and tear pieces off any loaves they fancy to eat mindfully and make the prayer a sensory experience. (Make sure they use some hand sanitiser before they get stuck in!)

**JENNY CHEUNG**

is a mum to teenagers, church planter and choir-nut! She pioneers The Voice Project Scotland – a missional expression inviting young people and their families to find their voices and sing together with others.