



Near and Now

When I am Called in the Ordinary – Loaves and fishes boy
By Amanda McVann

Warm-up Question

*When has God provided for you in abundant and unexpected ways?
By meeting a financial need through an anonymous donation?
A needed conversation with a friend at the right time?*



Photo by Dawn McDonald on [Unsplash](#)

Discussion Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish

Read [John 6:1-14](#)

Bible Story Reflection

As Jesus stepped further into his ministry, his miraculous healings and abundant compassion drew crowds of dozens – and even hundreds – of people who were desperate to be healed, seen, and set free. On one such occasion, as he remained in Galilee rather than travel to Jerusalem to prepare for the Passover season, a large crowd of over five thousand people followed him with nothing to eat.

The situation was precarious not only due to the possibility of seeming inhospitable towards such a large crowd but also due to the fear of an uprising. When the disciple Andrew notices a boy carrying a handful of loaves of bread and some fish, he worries that if the crowd isn't properly fed that they might even turn against Jesus – or worse: become violent. For if there's anything that makes Jesus' ministry as relatable to us today is that hungry people are not pleasant to be around.

However, Jesus doesn't panic or worry about the scarcity of physical resources but places his trust in God's spiritual provision. For he remembers that it was on another mountain during a season of hunger where God intervened and provided for the Jewish people with an abundance that would sustain and satisfy them. So, as Jesus lifted up and blessed the food to God, it multiplied until there were twelve baskets of leftovers.

Jesus' sign before the people was not merely to satisfy their physical hunger but to truly nourish their spiritual hunger as well. He has been journeying alongside these people and listening to their stories; he knew they needed more than bread to heal the hollow ache within themselves. Likewise, God knows and sees our greatest pains and promises to always restore the barren, hungry places of our hearts.

Discussion Questions

1. How would the crowd have reacted if they didn't have food? How would you?
2. What do you think the people's response was after receiving the food?
3. Why didn't Jesus and the disciples prepare in advance for such a large crowd? Could they have?
4. Why was Jesus testing Philip by asking how much they had to provide for everyone?
5. When have circumstances seemed impossible to overcome or resolve?
6. When in your life have you been surprised by the generosity of others?
7. How has God provided for the hungry parts of your spiritual life?
8. How does a life that is satisfied in God look like to you?

Activity Suggestions

Describe a time when you received something that you needed in an unexpected way. What was your need? How was it met in your life? Who or what met your needs at that time? How did you respond?

Think of ways that you can meet the physical needs of someone within your neighborhood. Gather with others to organize and plan an event to provide for a specific group of people within your local community in a specific way. *A few examples: food or clothing drive for the unhoused; quilts for those in senior housing; creating a ride program for homebound church members.*

Think of someone that you know who you could bless this week through an act of generosity. *A few examples: setting aside time to pray together with them, providing a meal for them, or paying for their gas.*

Prayer Concerns

To those who hunger: for their spiritual, physical, and emotional needs to be restored, healed, and satisfied.

Closing Prayer

Use what I have, O God, to multiply your justice, mercy, and love. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

