

date: **4/30/17****Bible Passage: Matthew 14:13–21; John 6:1–15**
(Feeding of the 5,000)

Jesus Is Compassionate

REMEMBER VERSE

The **LORD** is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.
Psalm 145:8

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

I was driving home from work in a very sour mood. I found my tiny car stuck behind a huge truck that blocked my view of the road. The driver seemed oblivious to the blaring music oozing from his doors and windows. In my grouchy frame of mind, I imagined the driver to be conceited and rude.

Both the truck and I stopped at a red light to turn left onto the freeway. There, in the triangle of dirt between the road and the freeway on-ramp, a woman stood by her rusty, beat-up car. The woman's clothes were torn, and her hair was matted and messy. She looked scared and helpless. I turned up my music and waited for the light to change.

To my surprise, the man driving the big truck turned onto the dirt and quickly got out of his car to help the woman. I drove onto the freeway ... with a lump in my throat. The person I had silently criticized had pulled over to help and serve the woman in need while I had sat simmering in my bad mood.

The scenario affected me deeply. It caused me to repent of the selfishness in my own heart. It reminded me that Jesus would have had compassion on that woman; He would have pulled over, like the man in the truck. Also in that moment, God also had compassion on me. He used the compassion of a stranger to show me a glimpse of His love for people.

Tori Funkhouser
ROCKHARBOR Church

Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, “Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.” Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself. John 6:14–15

Jesus’ miracle of feeding more than five thousand men, women, and children was a sign to the Jewish people that the Messiah had come. The miracle might have reminded them of God feeding His people through Moses and Elijah (in the wilderness and during famine) in Exodus 16 and 2 Kings 4. Because of this connection, they may have been thinking about the prophetic promise in Deuteronomy 18:18, which reads, “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him.” Jesus is the Word incarnate, but the people weren’t ready to receive Him (John 1:10–11).

Those who acknowledged Jesus was the Messiah also thought He would be a political figure. Because of this, they instantly wanted to make Jesus their king. Though they seemed to understand who Jesus was—the Messiah—the people did not fully understand what that meant. So Jesus had no choice but to retreat from them while they sought to “make him king by force” (John 6:15). Even so, Jesus continued to teach them about Himself, God’s kingdom, and His purpose on earth. He continued to have compassion on these people who were “like sheep without a shepherd” (Mark 6:34).

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word

In the original Greek language, one word for compassion is *splagchnizomai*. It comes from the word for the vital inner organs—the stomach, heart, lungs, spleen, liver, and kidneys. Just like today we might say, “I love you with all of my heart,” Greeks then might have said, “I love you with all of my spleen.” They pictured the center of their emotions somewhere in their inner organs. So, compassion, in the Greek, was something that sprung from a person’s innermost being.

When Jesus saw a need, He didn’t just sympathize—He acted. Jesus shows us that compassion is more than a feeling. It is meant to be a catalyst to action.

How many times have we felt compassion and not followed God’s call to act on it? This week, pray that God will give you the strength to respond the next time He prompts you to have compassion. In fact, keep track over the next week how many times you feel the tug of the Holy Spirit to demonstrate His love and mercy—whether that be through giving a homeless person on the side of the road a few dollars or making friends with the newcomer to a group you may be in.

Pray also the children would hear God calling them to follow Jesus’ example to live a life full of compassion. Challenge them to respond to the Holy Spirit’s prompts. Model for them that compassion isn’t just a feeling; it’s also an action.

SMALL GROUP
SECTION**EXPLORE//** 10 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day's portion of The Big God Story.

With these EXPLORE activities, get children thinking about how Jesus miraculously fed more than five thousand people.

Option 1: Dividing the Food (for younger kids)

SUPPLIES

- Play dough or modeling clay (blue and yellow) 
- Optional: disposable tablecloth, fish-shaped and bread-shaped cookie cutters, paper towels or hand wipes

SET UP

Shape the blue play dough or clay into a fish, and shape the yellow play dough or clay into a loaf of bread. Optional: Cover the table with the disposable tablecloth.

RELATE

Jesus traveled around teaching people about the kingdom of God and what it means to love and obey God. Many, many people wanted to hear what Jesus had to say.

One day, Jesus was teaching a long way from town, and a large crowd of people gathered to hear Him. By the time Jesus finished teaching, the crowd was hungry, so Jesus did a miracle. He took two fish and five loaves of bread and turned them into enough food to feed more than five thousand people!

Invite the children to take the play dough fish and bread and divide them up into enough pieces to "feed" each person in the class. If you have a large class, the pieces may get pretty small! Make sure your kids divide up the "food" so everyone gets some to play with. Then invite the children to form their own food items with the play dough.

Option 2: Filling the Basket (for older kids)

SUPPLIES

- Newspaper or brown construction paper (3–5 sheets per child)
- Large basket
- Masking or painter's tape
- Stopwatch or timer

SET UP

Use the tape to create a starting line on the floor, and place the basket on the floor about five to 10 feet away.

RELATE

Jesus traveled around teaching people about the kingdom of God and what it means to love and obey God. Many, many people wanted to hear what Jesus had to say.

One day, Jesus was teaching a long way from town, and a large crowd of people gathered to hear Him. By the time He was done teaching, the crowd was hungry, so Jesus performed a miracle and multiplied a small amount of food to feed more than five thousand people! After everyone had been fed, the disciples gathered the leftovers, and there were 12 baskets of bread left!

Invite the children to each take a sheet of paper and crumple it up to create a “bread roll.” Next, have the kids line up, single-file, at the starting line. Start the stopwatch or timer, and give the kids one minute to toss their rolls into the basket. If a child misses the basket, she can run to grab her roll and get back in line. A child who gets his roll into the basket can run back to the paper, crumple up another sheet, and get back in line to throw it into the basket. After one minute, count the rolls.

If time allows, play another round or two. Then take the basket of rolls into the large group room for storytelling. (The Storyteller will be using them.)

LARGE GROUP
SECTION**DISCOVER//** 30 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

Children participate in discovering God’s Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Traditions and Remember Verse**SUPPLIES**

- [Remember Verse image](#) (see Resources)
- [Remember Verse animation](#) (see Resources)
- Mementos for your church Traditions (rocks, marbles, gum balls, etc.)

RELATE

Give the children mementos (such as rocks, marbles, or blocks) for accomplishments such as memorizing the Remember Verse or bringing their Bibles. Have them put the objects into a clear container or add them to a structure, and celebrate when it’s complete.

This week’s Remember Verse focuses on a character trait of God that’s highlighted in today’s portion of The Big God Story.

The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. Psalm 145:8

Connect

Question

Would you rather have a sandwich or pizza for lunch?


The Big God Story

Bible Passage: Matthew 14:13–21; John 6:1–15

Storytelling Technique: Props and Images

Jesus Is Compassionate

SUPPLIES

- Optional: [Storytelling video](#) (see Resources)
- [Timeline image](#) (see Resources)
- [Timeline animation](#) (see Resources)
- [Images: Crowd, Loaves and Fish](#) (see Resources)
- Bibles
- Baskets of “rolls” made with crumpled paper (at least 24 rolls)
- Loaf of bread 
- Optional: newspaper or brown construction paper (at least 24 sheets), baskets (at least 3 to hold the rolls)

PREPARE AHEAD

If your small groups did Option 2 of EXPLORE, during which they threw “bread rolls” made from crumpled paper, have Small Group Leaders bring those baskets of rolls into the large group room for storytelling time. If they didn’t do this option, use a sheet of newspaper or brown construction paper to make each roll. Make sure you have at least 24 rolls to throw into the audience.

SET UP

Place the baskets of rolls onstage.

RELATE

As you enter, grab a crumpled paper “roll” and toss it out into the audience. Repeat a couple of times. Tell the children to be ready because you’ll be tossing out more rolls as you storytell. Then, lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

Do you remember when we talked about a man named John the Baptist—a man whom God called to prepare people’s hearts for Jesus? Well, today’s portion of The Big God Story starts just after the evil King Herod killed John the Baptist. This was such sad news for Jesus! In fact, Jesus was so sad that He decided to go far away from any town. But crowds of people found Him again.

Invite kids to open Bibles to Matthew 14:14 and follow along. **The Bible says, “When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick”** (v. 14). Invite the kids to circle up within their small groups and discuss the following question: How do you think the people found Jesus? After allowing a few moments for discussion, resume the storytelling.

What does *compassion* mean? Interact with responses. **Great thoughts. We might feel compassion when we see someone who is poor, left out, or hurting, and we feel sorry for him. But compassion is much more. Compassion is something that comes from deep inside of us—a feeling that is so overwhelming that we**

can't help but do something about it. In this situation, Jesus had a lot of compassion for the people. Although He wanted to be alone, He put His needs aside because He had compassion for the people who needed Him. Invite the kids to circle up and discuss this question: What are some ways Jesus showed compassion? So, He served them, He healed their sick, and He told them about God.

You might think that only a couple of people would follow Jesus out into the middle of nowhere. But the Bible says five thousand men came. If we add all of the women and the children too, that's way more than five thousand people! *Tech: Cue Crowd image.* So, even though Jesus was tired, He had compassion on the people, and He taught them, healed them, cared for them, and fed them. Toss several rolls into the audience.

The people were so fascinated by Jesus that they stayed until it got dark. They were in the middle of nowhere; there was no shelter, there were no bathrooms, and there was no food! The disciples came to Jesus and said (invite kids to open Bibles to Matthew 14:15 and follow along), "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food." Even though Jesus had journeyed out there to get away from the crowds, He didn't send anyone away! Jesus showed compassion on the crowd. Jesus saw what needed to be done. Invite the kids to circle up and discuss: What do you think the disciples thought when Jesus didn't want to send the people away? Toss more rolls into the audience.

Invite kids to look at Matthew 14:16. Jesus said to the disciples, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." Toss more rolls into the audience. The disciples didn't know what to do. One disciple said that buying enough food to feed everybody would cost a lot of money—he would have to work for half of a year "to buy enough bread for each [person] to have a bite!" (John 6:7). In fact, the disciples could only find one boy's five loaves of bread and two fish. *Tech: Cue Loaves and Fish image.* Toss more rolls into the audience.

Jesus knew what needed to be done. He told the disciples to bring Him the food, and He told all of the people to sit down on the grass. Then Jesus took the food, looked up to heaven, thanked God for it, and asked His disciples to pass the food out to the people. Hold up the loaf of bread. Even with the small amount of people we have here, this loaf of bread is nowhere near enough to feed all of us. Imagine only five loaves of bread for thousands of people! Toss more rolls into the audience.

Encourage children to turn to Matthew 14:20. The Bible says, "They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over" (v. 20). Wow, 12 baskets! Hold up a basket of rolls. That is so much extra food! In fact, they had even more food left over than the amount of food they started with! That's amazing! Jesus had taken a small amount of food and miraculously made it feed thousands of people.

Jesus had compassion that was more than just feeling sad for the people. He had compassion that made it impossible for Him not to serve the people. Jesus is God, and He is filled with God's Spirit. God's Spirit also gives us compassion for others. Share about a time when God moved you to have compassion on someone and how you got to serve that person.

SMALL GROUP

SECTION

RESPOND// 15 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond through creative activities and games.

Reflect: Jesus Is Compassionate

Encourage children to look up the following verses in their Bibles.

Questions for Younger Kids

- **Why did Jesus feed the people?** Matthew 14:14
- **How did Jesus have compassion on the people?** Matthew 14:14, 19–20
- **If you had been in the crowd, how would you have described what happened?** Matthew 14:20–21
- **How can we have compassion on people?**

Questions for Older Kids

- **Why did Jesus feed the people?** Matthew 14:14
- **If you had been in the crowd, how would you have described what happened?** Matthew 14:19–21
- **What does this tell you about Jesus?** Matthew 14:14
- **What is the difference between compassion and simply feeling bad about something?**
- **Have there been times you felt compassion but didn't act on it? What were the reasons for that?**
- **How can we act on our compassion for people?**

BLESS// 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)
- Bible

RELATE

Encourage the kids to hold their hands in front of them, palms up. Then open a Bible and read Psalm 145:8–9:

The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.

Invite the children to huddle together in a group and put their hands on one another's shoulders. Then pray over the group the following blessing:

May God awaken you to His Spirit of compassion, and may you trust God to provide for you each day.