

Bread of life — Christian ed at home

Adapted from an article by JOELLE BRUMMIT-YALE in the
Presbyterian Outlook



Scripture: John 6:24-35

Materials: n/a

Children are very trusting. We know that when babies form secure attachments to their caregivers, they trust that their basic needs will be met. This unconditional trust continues into childhood. It's not until we grow older that we begin to doubt our security. We worry we won't have enough money, energy or time to accomplish all that we want to do. Jesus reminds us, though, that he is the "bread of life." Through him, we will always have all we need. In this lesson, your children will explore the idea that trust and faith in Jesus can sustain us.

Introduce

Begin the time with your children by eating a snack together.

- Pick a food that is simple but nourishing: a piece of fruit or vegetable or something you prepare from just a few ingredients.

- As your children eat, discuss the benefits of eating this food. How does it help their bodies? What makes it nourishing?
- Note that this particular food is simple, yet it gives your children what they need to live. It gives them energy and helps them grow.
- Ask them to hold on to these ideas as you read aloud this week's Scripture.

Prepare

Prepare to read aloud John 6:24-35.

- Set the context for your children. Explain that before the story they are about to hear, Jesus performed a miracle. He fed a crowd of 5,000 people who gathered to hear him teach with only a few loaves of bread and fish.
- The next day the people realize Jesus has gone from their town.
- They are confused because they didn't see him get in the boat with his disciples. They hear he is in the town of Capernaum, so they travel there to ask him questions.

Read

Read aloud John 6:24-35.

- After reading, ask your children what the crowd came to ask Jesus about.
- Note that they originally wanted to know how Jesus traveled to Capernaum when they didn't see him go by boat with his disciples.
- Jesus uses this opportunity to talk to them about something more important. He says that they followed him to find out where to get more food, but they should think about how to do God's work on earth and believe in the one who God has sent to be with them.
- They continue to be confused, asking how they will know who this person God has sent is. They wonder if God will send a signal as God did when sending manna to the Israelites wandering in the wilderness.
- Jesus replies that God has sent them a sign. He has sent them Jesus, "the bread of life."

Wonder

Encourage your children to wonder about what Jesus means when he says he is the "bread of life."

- Remind them of your earlier discussion about the value of eating your simple snack.

- Ask them how believing in Jesus can help us grow. Note that our bodies are not the only parts of us that grow. Our knowledge grows, our relationships with other people grow and our faith grows.
- How can knowing about and believing in Jesus help these parts of our lives grow?
- Younger children may have difficulty making the cognitive leap from the concrete idea of food helping our bodies grow to the abstract concept of growing faith and knowledge. Simply let them play around with the idea for a while without worrying about whether they'll make a full connection.

Do

To help your children continue to develop this idea, bake some bread with them.

- Use a favorite bread recipe or choose from one of these. Be sure you choose a recipe that has a leavening agent in it. You'll want the bread to change as you prepare it.

Suggested recipes:

- For quick biscuits: <https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchen/buttermilk-biscuits-5484249>
- If you have a bit more time, try: <https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/alton-brown/very-basic-bread-recipe-1916079>
- Allergy-friendly bread recipe (gluten-free, dairy-free, grain-free): <http://www.grainmillwagon.com/easy-allergy-friendly-sandwich-bread-recipe-gluten-egg-and-dairy-free/>



After baking the bread with your children, talk about how the ingredients changed as you made the recipe.

- What did they look like when you started? How did they change when you mixed them? How did they change as the bread rose? How did the dough change when it was baked?
- Note that believing in and learning about Jesus changes us also.

Share

Share the bread together.

- As you eat, recount stories about Jesus with your children.
- Ask them to share their favorite Bible stories and tell them the stories you hold most dear.
- Recall times that each of you did God's work on earth by doing what Jesus did during his ministry.
- Remind your children that these are the ways that Jesus is "the bread of life." Jesus feeds us through our faith. We can be reminded of this each time we eat bread, whether we do so in a worship service during the Lord's Supper or when we eat it at home.



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