

Hunger-Focused Children's Sermons

Children's Time 1 | Feeding the 5000

Scripture: John 6:1-13

The solution to hunger includes not only providing food but helping people get the tools they need to care for their own families.

Props: Bag with potato or other vegetable or fruit
Hammer
Book
Spade or other gardening tools
Package of vegetable seeds or small fruit/vegetable plant
Coins

What's your favorite food? Do you get hungry sometimes? What do you do when you're hungry and want something to eat? What do you think would happen if you didn't have any food at all to eat at your house?

Jesus told a story about a whole lot of people who got hungry. They were men and women and children who went to hear Jesus talk and they stayed and listened all day. In fact, they stayed so long that it began to get late and everyone was hungry. Jesus asked his disciples to feed everyone, but they didn't know how to do it. Then Andrew, one of the disciples, found a little boy who had 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish. This boy wanted to give his bread and fish to Jesus. Jesus took what the little boy offered and said a blessing on them. Then the disciples went through the crowd giving out the bread and fish and do you know what happened? Everybody had enough to eat with even some left over. Do you know how many people were fed? Over 5,000 people had something to eat because this little boy shared his food.

Today there are millions of people right here in the United States who don't always get enough to eat. What could followers of Jesus do about that? Look at the items in my bag. What do you see? Which ones of these could we use to feed someone? *(The most obvious response would be the potato.)*

Are there ways we could use the other things in the bag to help people get enough to eat?
(Some possible responses)

- *We could give people seeds or tools so they could grow their own garden.*
- *A book can represent helping people get a good education or learning new skills so they can get a better job and have the money they need to buy their food.*
- *A hammer can represent projects like Habitat for Humanity that help people improve their living conditions. A hammer could also represent learning a new skill to get a job and have enough to buy what is needed.*
- *Coins represent collecting money to donate to charities that feed and help in other ways hungry people.*

There are many ways to help people who don't get enough food to eat. We can help them have good food right away. We can collect money for a charity like the Society of St. Andrew that saves food that would otherwise be thrown away and uses it to feed hungry people. Everyone needs food to be healthy, to be able to learn and to be able to work. We can help people learn new skills so they can find jobs or get better ones. We can talk to our Senators and Representatives and find out what they are doing to help people take care of their families. Jesus said whenever we feed someone it is like we are feeding Jesus himself.

Prayer: Loving God, thank you for showing us that children's gifts are important to Jesus and that when we share, Jesus can do miracles. Amen.

Children's Time 2 | Gleaning

Scripture: Ruth 2:1-8

From earliest times, God has had a plan to see that all of God's people have enough good, healthy food to eat. You and I are part of God's plan to feed the hungry.

Props: 3 small brown bags
 3 different fruits or vegetables
 Bible
 sheet of paper with word "glean" printed on it
Preparation: Put one fruit or vegetable in each bag

This morning I need a volunteer. (Give one child a small brown bag containing one of the fruits inside.) What's in your bag? (Have the child pull out the fruit/vegetable and say what it is. Repeat this process with two other children and two different fruits/vegetables.) What do you do with the thing you found in your bag? Fruits and vegetables like these help our bodies grow strong and healthy when we eat them.

(In advance, invite an older child to read the Ruth passage from the bible about gleaning. Ask that child to read the passage now. When the reader has finished, ask the children what the story was about and what funny word they heard in the story: glean. Hold up the card on which you've printed the word, so that the children can see how the word looks.)

Glean sounds like "clean" or like "gleam," but it starts with a "G" and ends with an "N." It means to pick, dig, or gather fruits and vegetables that are left behind in the fields. In Ruth's time, thousands of years ago, the law said that farmers could only go through their field one time to harvest their crop. They also were not allowed to harvest anything at the edges or corners of the field. Everything that was left behind was for the people who did not have land to grow their food on. So widows, orphans, people who were ill or disabled, and people who were immigrants, who had come to Israel from other countries, were welcome to come into the field and glean—picking, digging, or gathering the leftover food for themselves and their families. This was God's plan for taking care of all God's people.

Today, the Society of St. Andrew sends volunteers into fields to glean. Some of our volunteers have plenty to eat and some have very little to eat. But they work together to get food that is left in the fields after harvest, and they take that good, nourishing food to food banks and shelters and soup kitchens, to any places that share good food with hungry people. Just as in Bible times, God's plan is that good food should not go to waste, but be used to feed all God's people.

How old do you think you have to be to glean in a field? (Accept responses) Guess what! You are old enough to glean! You can pick or dig or gather healthy food and share it with people who are hungry!

God has made enough good food for each of us to have enough, and God has made a plan for us to share that good food with one another, so that no one ever needs to go hungry.

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for loving me. Help me to share food with others so that all of your children will have enough to eat. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.