

# I AM the Bread of Life (John 6:35) Lesson

## Lesson Two: The Bread of Life.

**Main idea:** Jesus fills up our physical and spiritual needs.

### Teacher preparation:

- Read Scripture references, John 6:1-59, Proverbs 30:8, and Exodus 16:1-18
- Gather: Bible, dry erase markers or chart paper and markers, blocks for relay, baking soda, cornstarch, craft magnets
- Make blocks for the game using old Jenga blocks, cut up sponges, or plastic cups. For each team, you will need two blocks labeled “bread,” and one block each labeled: “mayonnaise, mustard, lettuce, ham, turkey, cheese, tomatoes, pickles.” You may want to make an extra set or two, to ensure there are enough pieces for everyone.
- Prepare the air dry clay for the craft.
- Cut out the three statements located at the end of the lesson for students to read.
- Take time to meditate on this week’s Scripture and think about your own life. What do you spend more time focusing on, the bread that fills your belly, or the bread that forever fills your heart? What steps do you need to take to help you desire and keep your focus on the Bread of Life?

### Scripture references:

- John 8:58
- John 6:1-40

**Game:** Sandwich relay.

Break the class up into teams of five or so. Place the sandwich blocks across the room, all mixed up in a pile. Explain to the class that they will be racing the other teams in a relay to see who can build their sandwich first. All of the sandwiches must be built in the same order: a bread block first, and then mayonnaise, mustard, lettuce, ham, turkey, cheese, tomatoes, pickles and then one more bread block on top. The first thing you need for a sandwich is a slice of bread. (Write “bread” on the board, near the bottom.) The first student to run in the relay will have to find a block labeled “bread” and bring it back to

their group. They will place it on the ground or table at the end of their group's line and then next person will run. The second runner in each group needs to get a block labeled "mayonnaise" and run back to stack it on top of the "bread" block. (Write "mayonnaise" on the board, above "bread.") Students will continue to run in the relay, retrieving the correct ingredient for the sandwich and stacking it on top of the others. Students must get the blocks in the order written on the board. (Write all the ingredients on the board, stacked in a column from the bottom up, so it looks like their blocks will, all stacked up.) Sandwiches may not be rearranged once the blocks are brought over. If a student realizes that they have grabbed the wrong block, they must run it back and retrieve the correct block. The first group to correctly build their sandwich must all say together, "yum, yum!" while rubbing their bellies, to show that they have finished. Then they sit and wait for the other groups to finish, until every group has built a sandwich out of blocks and said "yum, yum!" as a group. Instead of running in the relay, as a variation, try having students crabwalk, bunny hop, walk backwards or tip toe to get the pieces. This adds an extra level of concentration and difficulty, as kids will want to run helter-skelter to be the fastest team.

### **Message:**

Open in prayer, then say,

Last week we started a new series to help us get to know Jesus better. We learned that in the gospel of John in the Bible, John – the guy who wrote the book of John – records seven different times Jesus calls himself "I AM," and then describes himself in a special way. Do you remember from last week what is so special about Jess saying "I am?" (Allow a few responses.) When Jesus said, "before Abraham was even born, I am" in John 8:58, he was saying he is God. All the people listening to Jesus would have understood that Jesus was saying he is God, because they would have remembered the story in Exodus, where Moses meets God in the burning bush and God says his name is "I am." God means that he is self-sufficient. He doesn't need anyone's help to be the perfect God. Neither does Jesus. Since Jesus is God in a human body, he doesn't need anyone's help to be the perfect God.

We know that Jesus is God and that he loves us so much that he died for our sins. But what else do we know about him? (Allow children to respond without commenting on their statements. Let them voice their ideas, whether right or wrong, unless the Spirit leads you to correct wrong doctrine. This is a good

time to take the “spiritual pulse” of you class and gauge their understanding of who Jesus is.)

Today we are going to learn about one “I am” statement of Jesus. I will read a story from John 6. Listen closely for when Jesus says “I am.” I want you to tell me what phrase, what picture, Jesus uses to describe himself. Before I read, let me sum up what was going on right before Jesus made his “I am” statement to a group of people. You may be familiar with this story. By this point in his life, Jesus is a popular guy. Everyone knows about him, and he is starting to gain a lot of followers, but people still don’t really get who he is. Many people followed Jesus because of all the miracles he did. One day, Jesus sits at the top of a hill near the sea of Galilee. Looking around, Jesus saw that there were at least 5,000 men following him, not to mention women and kids. Jesus knew that they must be getting hungry, so he asked his disciple Philip where they were going to buy food for everyone. Can you imagine trying to feed all those people? That wouldn’t be cheap. I don’t know what Thanksgiving is like at your house, but at my house, things can get pretty crazy. Family from all over comes to visit. The house is full of people, and we spend all day preparing and then eating all that yummy Thanksgiving food. My crowded holidays are nothing compared to what Jesus was facing now. There were tons of people, and they didn’t exactly pack their own lunch. They would all have to rely on Jesus to feed them, or they would go hungry. Philip had no idea how to feed all those people without any food, but Andrew, another disciple, said that there was a little boy in the crowd who had brought a lunch of five little loaves of bread and two fish. It was the perfect lunch for a growing boy.

Does anyone remember what happens next? (If possible, have the students finish the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000, as follows.) Jesus had everyone sit down, then Jesus thanked God for the food and passed it around to everyone in the crowd. Everyone had enough to eat, and they even had leftovers! After everyone was full, they picked up twelve baskets of scrap food! It was a miracle. Jesus fed over 5,000 people with a little boy’s lunch. Quite a bit of hubbub followed this scene. The crowd wanted to crown Jesus as king! Jesus slipped away and crossed over to the other side of the lake. The next day, the crowd followed him and asked why he had left. Jesus had a very interesting conversation with them after that.

We’re going to do a little reader’s theater here. I am going to pass out slips of paper to three of you. Each card has a number on it and a quote. Each quote

is something that the crowd said in response to Jesus. (Write the numbers 1 – 3 on the board.) When I point to the number that is on the card you are holding, I want you to read that response the crowd had for Jesus. I will read the part of Jesus from the Bible. Listen closely so you don't miss his "I am" statement!

<sup>26</sup> Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs. <sup>27</sup> But don't be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man can give you. For God the Father has given me the seal of his approval." (Point to the number one on the board to prompt the first reader to read the verse 28.)

<sup>28</sup> They replied, "We want to perform God's works, too. What should we do?"

<sup>29</sup> Jesus told them, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent." (Point to number two on the board to prompt the second reader to read verses 30-31.)

<sup>30</sup> They answered, "Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do? <sup>31</sup> After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, 'Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

<sup>32</sup> Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, Moses didn't give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. <sup>33</sup> The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." (Point to the number three on the board to prompt the last reader to read verse 34.)

<sup>34</sup> "Sir," they said, "give us that bread every day."

<sup>35</sup> Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. <sup>36</sup> But you haven't believed in me even though you have seen me. <sup>37</sup> However, those the Father has given me will come to me, and I will never reject them. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. <sup>40</sup> For it is my

Father's will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day."

Great reading, everyone! Now, raise your hand if you caught the "I am" statement Jesus made in this passage. (Allow a student to respond.) That's right, Jesus said "I am the bread of life." I love this story. Jesus loves to help people learn not by lecturing them, but giving them stories, mental pictures they can hold onto to help them remember an important lesson better. In this passage of the Bible, though, the crowd just isn't getting it. In verse 33, Jesus said, "The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." The crowd had been complaining, saying God performed miracles for Moses and the Israelites in the desert, when God sent manna from heaven for them to eat.

Does it sound like they are interested in the life-giving bread from heaven, or just in miracles? All the crowd really wanted was for Jesus to feed them, like he had the day before. They were not interested in hearing about the bread of life. They wanted their tummies to be filled, but Jesus wanted to fill their hearts. Bread is tasty stuff, isn't it? We have it at almost every meal, in some form. From our cereal, to our sandwich, to the bread crumbs on our fried chicken or the crust of our pizza. Bread is everywhere in our lives. It's hard to imagine not having it, since it is everywhere in our lives. The people Jesus was talking to could imagine it pretty well. They knew what it was like to go hungry, so when Jesus started talking about a bread that would always keep you full, the crowd perked up. But Jesus was offering something even better than food to fill empty stomachs.

When Jesus says he is the bread of life, he means that he wants to fill our empty hearts. Without Jesus, we would go hungry. We may have food in our bellies, but spiritually, we would have nothing without him. We could read our Bibles, pray, go to church, and serve others all we want, but all of that is pointless without Jesus. It's like pizza without the crust, spaghetti and meatballs without the spaghetti, biscuits and gravy without the biscuits! It's the bread that makes these foods so good. It is Jesus that makes going to church, praying, reading our Bibles, and serving others have any meaning. Jesus, the bread of life, fills us up for all eternity when we do one thing. He tells us what this one thing is in verse 29. The crowd asked what work God wanted them to do, and Jesus says, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent." Who is the one God has sent? Jesus, of course! When we believe that Jesus is God, come to earth to die in our place for our sins, he fills

us up with the bread of life. He gives meaning to everything we do and lets us live forever in heaven with him! I love my biscuits, muffins and banana bread, but nothing will ever satisfy me like the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ. Let's pray.

End in prayer.

### **Craft:**

Bread magnets. Just before class, make air dry clay by whisking 2 cups of baking soda, 1 cup corn starch and 1 ½ Cups cold water together in a saucepan. Cook over medium high heat, stirring constantly with a spoon. The mixture will start to bubble and start to stick together. Soon, it will look like mashed potatoes. At this point, transfer the clay to a bowl and cover with a damp towel to cool. Once cool, knead until it's smooth.

Pass out a couple of tablespoons of clay to each student. Have them shape their clay into a bread shape. (Either a slice of bread, a muffin, whatever recognizable bread shape they want. Be sure they are two dimensional) Have them shape and mold their bread model over a craft magnet, leaving one flat side exposed. Let the pieces air dry for at least two days, then they can be painted or colored with permanent markers. Encourage children to write "Jesus is the bread of life" on their pieces. Once the pieces dry, it may help to glue the magnet to the back using any sort of craft glue.

Readers' Theater passages:

1.

<sup>28</sup> They replied, "We want to perform God's works, too. What should we do?"

2.

<sup>30</sup> They answered, "Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do? <sup>31</sup> After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, 'Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

3.

<sup>34</sup>“Sir,” they said, “give us that bread every day.”





# The Living Bread

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." John 6:51 (NIV)

The puzzle is based on John 6:41-51



*"I am  
the living  
bread."*

E I H Q F G R W J D L O C H A  
V V T O H D I E T I I P U M J  
E V J J C E T O F E Q G A U N  
R Y Y I K H A B N D L O T O O  
L Z B O D U I V Z T O Q E O J  
A B E L I E V E E F R I T E Y  
S D V Z D Y C A F N Z U A S D  
T M F J T E G A O L K D T E S  
I M L E P O S X R L A A L H E  
N S I H E J F E F E N T Z K U  
G A V F S J V C R N N P R I R  
A D I Z T E Q B A T W J K S X  
R L N D R S Q M W O R L D U E  
P T G O M U H U W F A X P A V  
C O F L E S H W J P Z X T H N

FOREVER

ATE

WORLD

DIED

BREAD

LIFE

FLESH

DESERT

LIVING

JESUS

EVERLASTING

HEAVEN

TRUTH

BELIEVE

MANNA