

Activities for Juniors.

- **You can learn about one of the miracles that Jesus did.**

Today we will read about one of the well-known miracles that Jesus did during the time he was preaching to large crowds. It is often known as “the feeding of the five thousand”. Have you heard the story before?

As we have learned previously, Jesus has been preaching to crowds of people for a while. More people are hearing about him and want to see him for themselves. In a way, he is becoming the same as a modern celebrity.

At the start of this story Jesus has just heard some very sad news. His cousin, who was in prison, has been killed by the king, Herod. Jesus wants to find a quiet place away from the crowds to think about what has happened. However, the crowds of people want to see him so they follow him. More and more people come until there is a huge crowd.

Jesus feels sorry for them and so he returns and begins to speak to them. He also performs miracles and heals the sick people they have brought to him.

As the day starts to end the disciples are concerned about what the crowd will do next. People have been listening to Jesus all day. They must be hungry. They ask Jesus if they should send the people away so they can buy food from the surrounding villages. But Jesus has another idea and performs a miracle and everyone has plenty to eat.

You can read the story for yourself to discover how Jesus feeds so many people.

- **You can read the story as it is told in Matthew.**

As soon as Jesus heard the sad news, he went off by himself in a boat to a remote area to be alone. But the crowds saw where he was headed and followed by land from many villages.

When Jesus returned out of the wilderness, a vast crowd was waiting for him. He took pity on them and healed the sick people that had been brought to him.

That evening the disciples came to him and said, “It is already past time for supper, and there is nothing to eat here in the desert; send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy some food.”

But Jesus replied, “That isn’t necessary—you feed them!”

“What!” they exclaimed. “We have exactly five small loaves of bread and two fish!”

“Bring them here,” he said.

Then Jesus told the people to sit down on the grass; and he took the five loaves and two fish, looked up into the sky, and asked God’s blessing on the meal, then broke the loaves apart and gave them to the disciples to offer to the people. And everyone ate until they were full! And when the scraps were picked up afterwards, there were twelve basketfuls left over! (About five thousand men were in the crowd that day, besides all the women and children.)

- **You can think about the reading**

At the start of this story we read that Jesus is now finding it difficult to get away from all the crowds that want to see him. People must be talking about him to their friends and neighbours and news of Jesus has spread around a wide area. More and more men, women and children come to see Jesus and listen to his preaching. They have heard that he can heal sick people so they bring their sick friends and relations with them in the hope that Jesus will help them.

Although Jesus has tried to escape the crowds he only stays away for a while. When he returns he begins to preach again and heal the sick people, showing how he cares for them.

Then the disciples start to worry about what the crowd will do as the night is starting to fall. If the people are hungry and have nothing to eat perhaps they will become angry? Do you get grumpy when you are very hungry? This is not unusual and very often the grumpiness goes away when you are able to eat something.

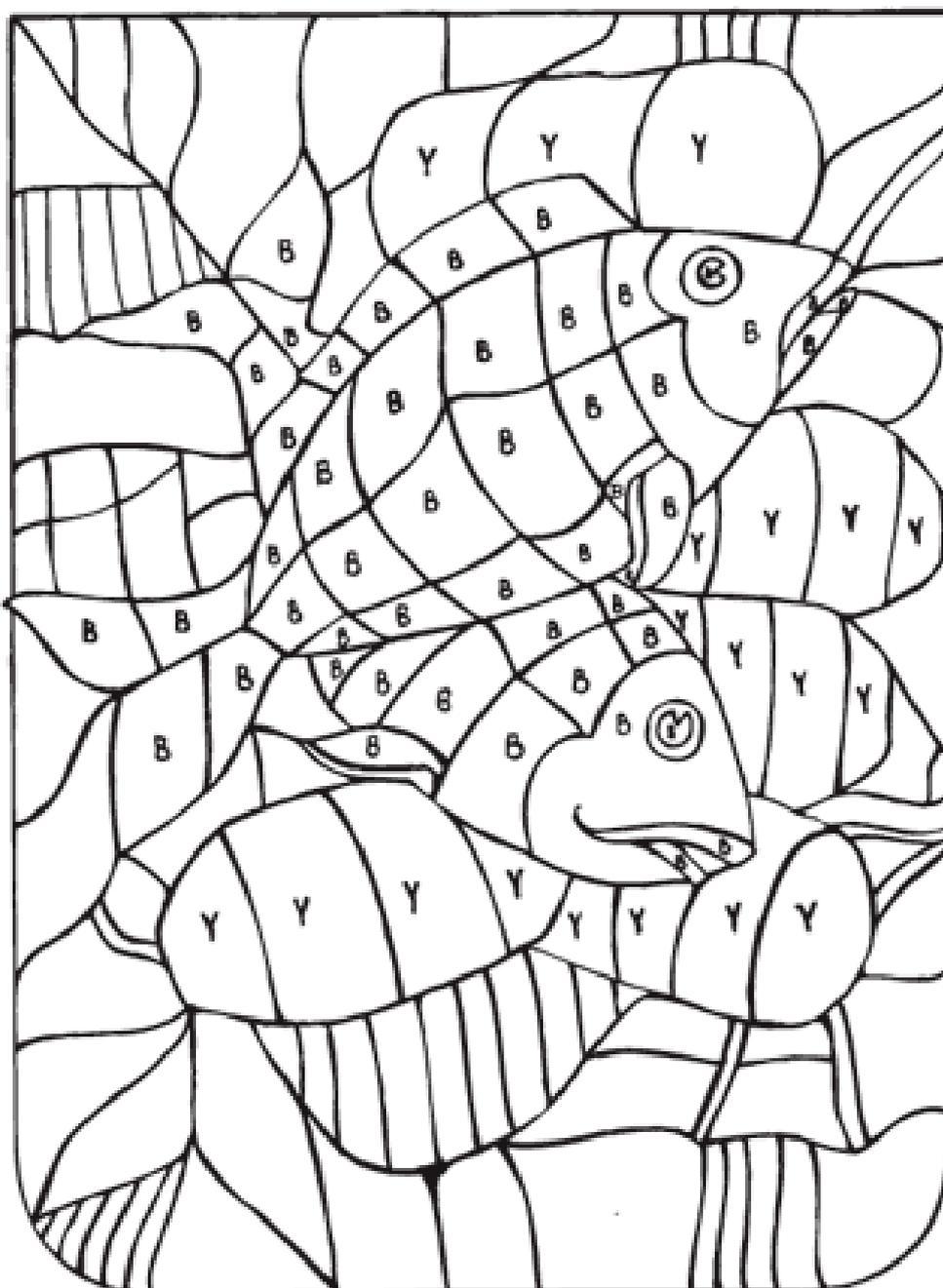
But Jesus uses the problem to demonstrate God’s love for all people. He uses a very simple meal, five small loaves (like large bread rolls), and two small fishes. Jesus blesses the food and then breaks the bread in his own special way. The disciples present the food to the people. At the end of the meal 12 baskets are filled with the “leftovers”. How could it be that there is so much left, when there was so little to share? This is a sign that God’s love is immense. There is enough for everyone with plenty to spare. Being part of the Kingdom of God means that you will always be surrounded by God’s love. The food is shared between everyone. This demonstrates how we should share the good news of God’s love with each other too.

In different cultures around the world there is a special tradition of hospitality. This is when you welcome visitors to your house. The visitors are always offered food and drink; they are given a bed if they need it and they can stay for as long as they want. The way we treat people who are strangers shows how much we care for others. God loves us and surrounds us with love. If we show hospitality to the strangers we meet, we are showing them the way that God loves us and cares for us. This is what God wants us to do; to show other people how God’s love surrounds everyone.

When you return to school you may find your classes a bit strange and you may find that you are grouped with different children you don't know. Try to be as welcoming (hospitable) as you can to the friends you will have missed as well as the new children you will meet. Remember how being hospitable makes people feel welcome and cared for. People that are hospitable usually find that they will feel good about being kind to strangers make lots of new friends.

- **You can do a code picture based on the story.**

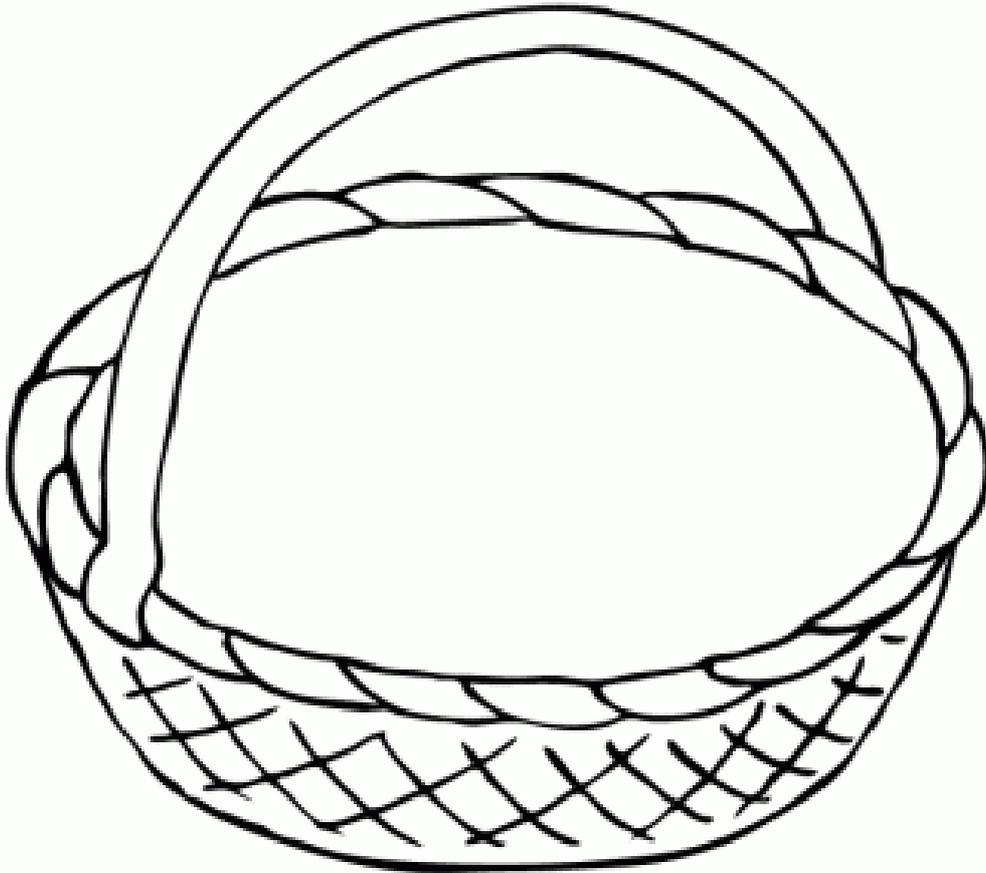
Colour the Y shapes yellow and the B shapes brown to reveal the picture. Then colour the leftover shapes any colours you choose.



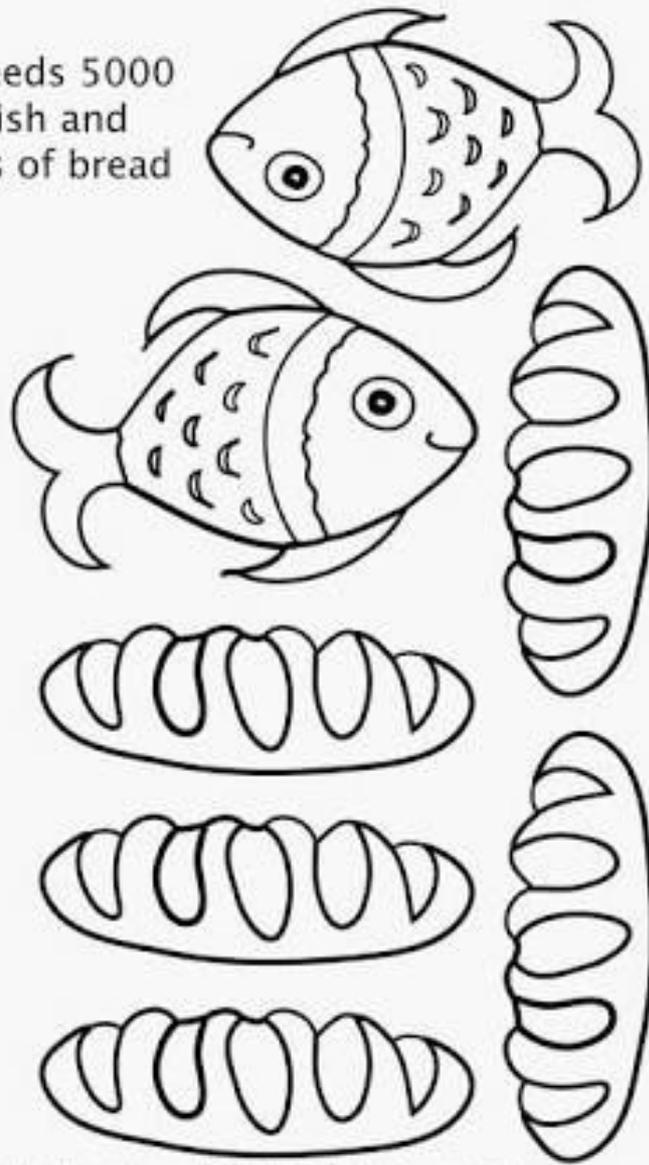
- **You can make your own basket of loaves and fishes.**

Colour the basket and the loaves and the fish (on the next page), then cut out each of them. **Be very careful using scissors. Ask an adult to help you.**

Stick the loaves and fishes into the middle of the basket. A glue stick will be ideal for this. Now your hospitality lunch to feed a crowd is ready.



Jesus Feeds 5000
with 2 fish and
5 loaves of bread



Here is another picture you can colour about the story. What has happened to the five loaves and two fish now?



How many loaves and fish can you count in the picture?

You will find the answer on a previous page.... No peeking until you have counted...!