

# "That You May Believe"

## Gospel of John

### Week 14

**Main Idea** – Israel wasn't **saved** by **bread**. Jesus, the **bread** of life, **saves**.

The goal of this week's lesson is show the children that even though Israel was graciously sustained on bread from God in the wilderness, they all eventually died! It is true that the manna was a gift from God, but because of their sinful hearts, seen in their constant complaining against God, physical bread was not enough to save them from death. They were in need of better bread. This week's lesson culminates in the Person of the Lord Jesus, who is the bread of life, the living bread come down from heaven to save! Jesus points out that their ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness and died, but that anyone who eats the bread from heaven will never die.

## Sunday School — Exodus 16

### Preparation

Materials:

- "Save Me!" Images
- Two levels of word searches to emphasize the main point
- Manna From Heaven Coloring Page

Set-up:

- Print out materials.

### Bible Verse (5-10 minutes)

John 3:36 (ESV) – "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."

Memorization — Have the students repeat the Bible verse with hand motions 2-3 times.

Song — Have the students sing "I Believe" (Seeds Family Worship, ESV) at least once.

NOTE — Start the Bible Verse section at the beginning without waiting for students who may arrive late. This will preserve the allotted times for other sections.

# Lesson (20-25 minutes)

Main Idea – Israel wasn't **saved** by **bread**.

Pray

## Introduction (5 minutes)

Opening activity — Save me! In this game, you will attempt to match the picture of something that needs saving with the picture of something that can save it!

Thirsty Man	Water	Ship in the dark	Lighthouse
Hungry Man	Hamburger	Man falling	Parachute
Cat in tree	Fireman	Person drowning	Lifeguard

Today, we are going to look at a time in Israel's history when they needed God's help to save them.

## Body (15 minutes)

Main Point — Israel wasn't saved by bread.

Can someone in the room give me a short summary of Israel's history up to their deliverance from slavery? God made a promise to Abraham, kept that promise with Isaac and Jacob, multiplied them in Egypt, delivered them from slavery to Egypt. That is where we are today, they've just been delivered, and God is preparing them to enter the land He promised to Abraham.

The Problem — Read Exodus 16:1-3

**What was Israel's problem?** They were hungry in the wilderness. They were afraid that they were going to die. So they complained against God and His servants, Moses and Aaron. "It would have been better to die comfortably in slavery, where we were well fed, than it would be to die uncomfortably as a free people in the wilderness, where we have no food!"

**How do you think that made God feel?** It made God angry for a few reasons. First, Israel does not appreciate that God delivered them from slavery because all they can think about are their stomachs! Second, Israel does not trust that God can provide for them in the wilderness — even after He displayed His mighty power in delivering them from slavery!

Let's go to our next point and see how God responded to their grumbling.

The Provision — Read Exodus 16:4-6

**So how did respond to their complaining?** He showed them grace by giving them bread! Their complaints were a sin against God, and He would have been justified to kill them on the spot. But for the sake of His promise to Abraham, God preserves their life in the wilderness by providing the exact amount of bread each person needed to survive — no more and no less.

**Why did God provide Israel with just enough food for each day (and for two days before the Sabbath)?** God wanted to test Israel to see if they would follow His instructions. Would they choose

to obey God and follow His instructions? Or would they choose to disobey God and neglect His instructions? Let's go to our next point.

The Problem (we've got another problem) — Read Exodus 16:19-27

**According to the passage, what instructions did the Israelites disobey?** First, they disobeyed God by keeping their daily food until the next day, and the food rotted and smelled terrible. Second, they disobeyed God by going to look for food on the Sabbath (seventh day) instead of gathering enough the day before so they could rest.

How do you think this made God feel? Angry. Listen to what God says after these two acts of disobedience — “The LORD asked Moses, “How long will these people refuse to obey my commands and instructions.” (Exodus 16:28, NLT)

Here we see what the true problem is. Israel was not going to be saved by bread. Even though God graciously sustained their physical life by giving them bread for their bodies, the problem was with their heart. Israel's hearts were hard towards God because of sin.

The Bible says that sin causes a person to be spiritually dead. They may have physical life on earth, but while their heart is dead in sin they will live in constant rebellion toward God and His commands/instructions. Israel could not obey. How would God respond to such rebellion? Let's go to our last point.

The Provision (we've got another provision!) — Read Exodus 16:35

Even though Israel was rebellious toward God, God faithfully sustained Israel's physical life by giving them bread for 40 years until they reached the promised land. But by that point, something amazing had happened — every Israelite from the generation that doubted God's ability to bring them safely into the promised land died in the wilderness! They needed a better provision than mere physical bread.

### **Conclusion (5 minutes)**

Israel wasn't saved by bread. If God wanted His people to be saved from physical AND spiritual death, they needed more than physical bread! Moses taught Israel this after their 40 years of wandering, saying, “Yes, <the LORD> humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.” (Deuteronomy 8:3).

It is for that reason that God sent His Son Jesus into the world. Jesus came as bread from heaven — the bread of life — the only Person who could truly save people from death.

In order to be saved, in order to obey God and follow His instructions, a person must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the bread of life. When a person believes in Jesus, they are born again and receive the power to follow God's instructions. Then, and only then, can they truly follow God's commands and instructions and walk in a way that pleases Him.

Therefore — come to the Lord Jesus Christ for life. If you turn from your sins and believe in Him, He will become to you living bread from heaven. And the promise for all who come to Jesus for living bread is that they will never die.

Pray

## **Lesson Activities (20-25 minutes)**

Secret Word — God

# **Children’s Church — John 6:22-71**

## **Preparation**

Materials:

- Two levels of word searches to emphasize the main point
- Bread of Life Coloring Page

Set-up:

- Print out materials

## **Bible Verse (5-10 minutes)**

John 3:36 (ESV) – “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.”

Memorization — Have the students repeat the Bible verse with hand motions 2-3 times.

Song — Have the students sing “I Believe” (Seeds Family Worship, ESV) at least once.

NOTE — Starting with the Bible verse in Children’s Church will help the children get some movement in before the lesson starts.

## **Lesson (20-25 minutes)**

**Main Idea – Jesus, the bread of life, saves.**

Pray

### **Introduction (5 minutes)**

This morning in Sunday school we learned that Israel wasn’t saved by bread. When God delivered them from slavery in Egypt, they complained to God for bread so that they wouldn’t die of starvation. Israel did not die of starvation, because God graciously and faithfully provided them with bread for 40 years in the wilderness. But that generation of Israelites still died! The bread that God gave them didn’t save them from death. They needed a better provision than mere physical bread.

Today, we are going to learn about the better bread that God has given to sinners so that they might be saved from death. But first, let's start with an opening activity!

Opening Activity — Save me! (We played this in SS, so it will be familiar for some of you). In this game, you will attempt to match the picture of something that needs saving with the picture of something that can save it!

World	Cross (Christ's saving work)	Thomas the train (off track)	Cranky the Crane
In Jail	Get out of jail free card	Injured skier	Ski patrol
Bird caught in plastic	Scissors	Mayor Humdinger (falling)	Paw Patrol

Now let's go to our main point.

### Body (15 minutes)

Main Point — Jesus, the bread of life, saves.

After witnessing the feeding of 5,000, the people understand that Jesus is unique. Some even said, "This is the Prophet that Moses told us would come!" (John 6:14). They tried to make Jesus their king by force! (John 6:15). But what did the people really want? Let's look at our passage to see.

Our passage starts with the crowds tracking down Jesus in Capernaum. **Were they there to honor Jesus?** No. Jesus says they wanted to be with Him because He gave them free food. He rebukes them for working for food that perishes instead of for the food that endures to eternal life! So the people respond:

People — *We want to work!* (Read John 6:28)

After being rebuked by Jesus for working the wrong way, they ask for instruction on how to work, or earn, eternal life from God.

This is how it goes for sinful humans. Sinful humans want to work for their salvation. They want to earn it. That is why every religion in the world (other than biblical Christianity) teaches that you must work to be saved. But that is not how it works with God.

Jesus — *Believe the Son!* (Read John 6:29)

Jesus makes it clear for them that the only way they can receive eternal life from the Son of Man is by believing in Him! God does not give salvation to those who work (those who do more good than bad, those who aren't as bad as others, etc.). God only gives salvation to those who believe in the One that He has sent — Jesus.

People — *We want a sign!* (Read John 6:30-31)

The people respond, alright Jesus. If you want us to believe in you, then give us a sign! **Now, did the people need a sign? Why not?** Because Jesus had already given them a sign — feeding 5,000! But there is a problem for the Jews. They believed, and correctly at that, that the Prophet would be greater than Moses! (That's what Moses said!). If Jesus wants them to believe, He needs to do a

greater miracle than Moses in giving them bread. After all, Jesus only gave them bread once and Moses gave bread to all Israel every day for 40 years! How will you top that Jesus?

Jesus — *Receive the Son!* (Read John 6:32-33)

Jesus wastes no time correcting the major flaw in their thinking. It wasn't Moses that gave Israel bread, but God! It was God who faithfully provided bread for 40 years in the wilderness.

Next, Jesus reveals something truly incredible — God, at this very moment, is giving a free offer of living bread to the whole world! **What does that mean for the people?** They must receive God's offer of living bread by receiving His Son! Which is the same as believing in His Son! **Will the people get it this time?** Let's find out!

People — *We want bread every day!* (Read John 6:34)

Because of their spiritual blindness, they do not understand what Jesus is saying. They are still focused on the possibility of having stomachs full of free bread for the next 40 years, just like Israel did in the wilderness. This prompts Jesus to exhort them one last time to believe and receive Him.

Jesus — *Eat the Son!* (Read John 6:35, 48-51)

Jesus explains in a powerful way that He is not talking about physical bread, but living bread. He tells them, "Do you want the bread that gives eternal life? It's Me! I'm the bread of life, the living bread that comes down from heaven! If you want to have eternal life, you can't eat physical bread, you must eat living bread. You must eat the flesh of the Son of God!"

**Now, does Jesus really want them to eat His flesh?** No! Jesus is using a metaphor (This is important, because this is why the Catholic Church says that communion actually becomes the body and blood of Jesus). The people are caught up thinking about physical bread. So Jesus uses the example of bread to tell the people how they must receive Him. "You must eat physical bread to enjoy its benefits and have life. You must also eat spiritual bread to enjoy its benefits and have eternal life!"

**So how do the people "eat the Son"?** By believing in Jesus and receiving Jesus! Eternal life is only available one way — through Jesus, the bread of life.

### **Conclusion (5 minutes)**

This was very difficult for the people to understand. Listen to how John writes it — Read John 6:60,66. Even Jesus' disciples couldn't handle His teaching here. But the truth remains — to have eternal life, you must Receive the Son by Believing in the Son.

God has offered the world eternal life in His Son. How will you respond to God's gracious offer? Will you receive the Son and believe in the Son and have eternal life? Or will you reject the Son and not believe the Son and be punished forever?

Pray

## **Lesson Activities (20-25 minutes)**

Secret Word - Eat