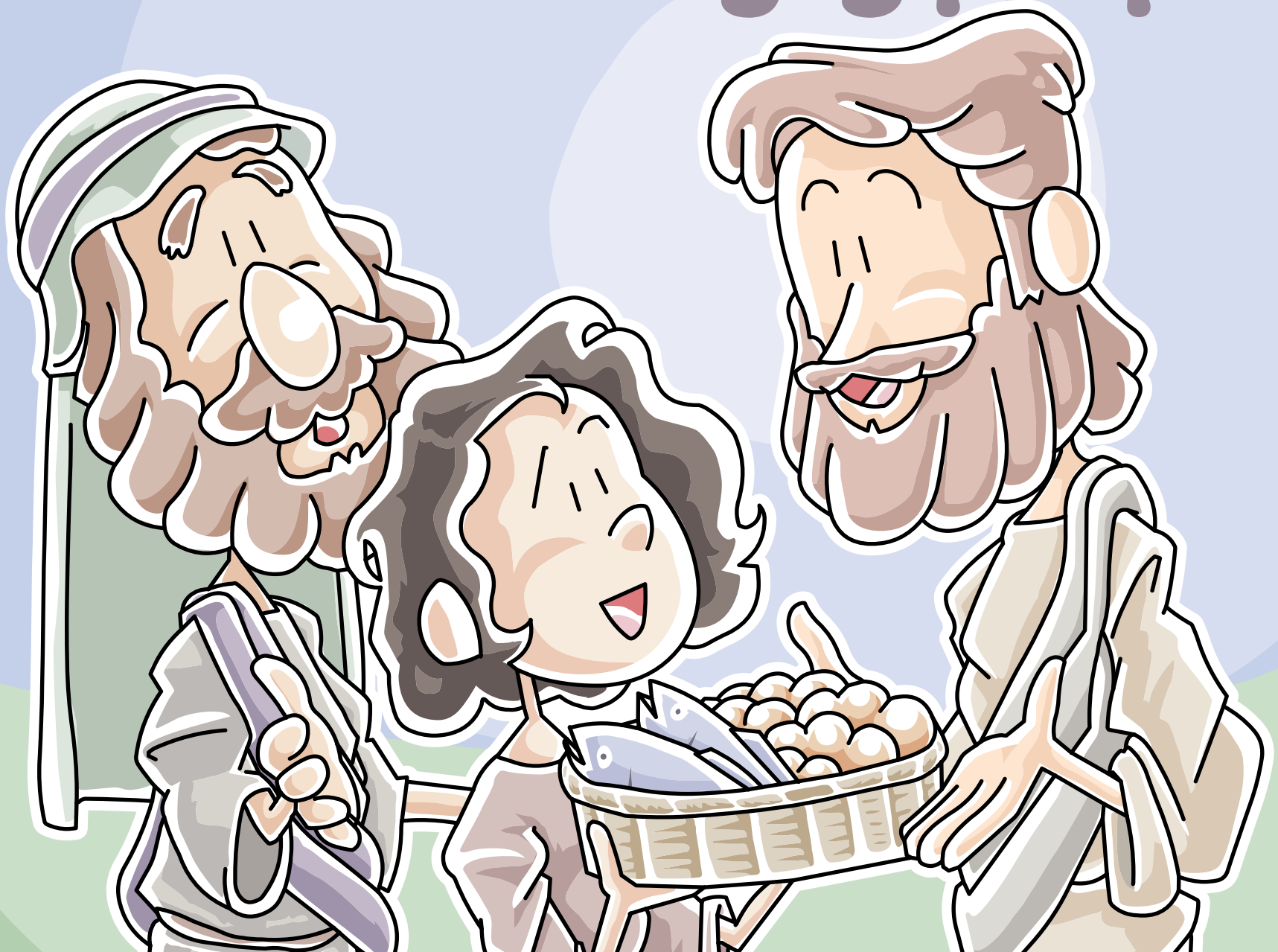


**A little basket of food  
and 5000 hungry people!**



## Colour me!



### Matthew 14:13-21

After Jesus heard about John [the Baptist], he crossed Lake Galilee to go to some place where he could be alone. But the crowds found out and followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus got out of the boat, he saw the large crowd. He felt sorry for them and healed everyone who was sick.

That evening the disciples came to Jesus and said, "This place is like a desert, and it is already late. Let the crowds leave, so they can go to the villages and buy some food." Jesus replied, "They don't have to leave. Why don't you give them something to eat?" But they said, "We have only five small loaves of bread and two fish." Jesus asked his disciples to bring the food to him, and he told the crowd to sit down on the grass. Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish. He looked up towards heaven and blessed the food. Then he broke the bread and handed it to his disciples, and they gave it to the people.

After everyone had eaten all they wanted, Jesus' disciples picked up twelve large baskets of leftovers. There were about five thousand men who ate, not counting the women and children.

## Commentary

Jesus has just heard that John [the Baptist], his second cousin, has been executed in prison. Clearly he needs time to mourn, and this is why he sets off to the far side of Lake Galilee. But his popularity is at such a high point by now that the crowds get there ahead of him. We might have been angry about this, but Jesus is not sorry for himself; he is concerned for the people. He knows how much need there is in the world and he longs to do something about it. What should have been a quiet afternoon of grieving turns into a busy time of healing and storytelling.

Finally, his exhausted disciples just want everyone to go home for dinner, when, to their surprise, Jesus suggests a picnic right there, even though they have barely enough to feed themselves. The little basket of bread and fish, however, is enough, as, blessed by Jesus, it turns into plenty for everyone.

This well-known miracle appears in all four Gospels and was clearly a favourite story among the very first Christians. It reminded them that Jesus would always provide for them and that no situation was too big for him to handle.

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## Questions

- ▶ It is always sad when a relative dies. How can we best support someone who is grieving like this?
- ▶ Jesus' reaction to the crowd is amazing. How would you have felt if this had happened to you?
- ▶ Can you imagine what sort of things the disciples said to Jesus to try to persuade him to send the crowd away?
- ▶ Do you think the crowd ever knew how great a miracle had just taken place?



## Visual aid

Fill a small basket with five small bread rolls and, if possible, two small fish from a sardine can or supermarket packet. Imagine how this was used to feed almost 10,000 people!



## Activity idea

Use the bread rolls from the visual aid suggestion and share them round so that everyone has a go at breaking one up into small, bite-size chunks. How many pieces do you have now, and so how many people would have just a taste?



## Prayer idea

Collect all the broken pieces on a plate and pass it around as you pray, each taking a piece of bread to eat after each prayer, for those who don't have enough to eat today, those who are sad because they have lost someone recently, those needing healing, and those who feel far from home today. As you eat the pieces, pray that Jesus, who once described himself as the bread of life, will give them strength, healing, inspiration and comfort.

## Key verse

[Jesus] looked up towards heaven and blessed the food (Matthew 14:19).

## Old Testament story link

2 Kings 4:40-44: Elisha prays to God and a small amount of bread goes a long way.



Colour me!

