

I am the bread of life: Leader's notes

Warm Up: Offer a snacks of piece of bread or a marshmallow. Which do you like better?

What if you could only have one for the whole day; for a week; for a year?

What is favourite food? Why do we need food? (live, grow, energy, to be happy, not to be hungry)

Here are two extracts from the Old Testament (or leaders could find images instead for the group to look at):

⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. ⁵ On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days."

⁴ , God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!"
And Moses said, "Here I am."
⁵ "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." ⁶ Then he said, "I am the God of your father,[a] the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

- What are the stories? Which comes first?
- When Moses first encountered God, do you remember what he asked him? (What is your name)
- Why do you think God described himself as I AM? (eternal/unchanging/constant; ever-present; source of all things I AM . . . everything)
- What are the people collecting? Was it normal? Where did it come from? For how long?

- This term we are going to look at 7 times that Jesus used the phrase I AM . . . They are all found in John's Gospel: John was a good friend of Jesus so he knew him well and he tells us why he wrote his book – John 20: 30-31
- John's gospel is a bit different to Luke and Mark. Doesn't start with Jesus being born and tell us the events of his life from beginning to end.
- John likes the number 7 and choses 7 signs and 7 bits of teaching from Jesus that help us understand who Jesus is. He tells the story around those key moments.
- And so there are 7 I AM sayings. Can you know any?
- Why is it important that they start I AM? John and Jesus are showing us that Jesus is God (link to Genesis 3/Moses) and therefore we need to listen to him.

The Bread

- Our first I AM starts with a familiar story and one of the 7 miracles Jesus performs in John's gospel. John 6.
- Imagine it happened in Oxford. How would people respond? What would they want to happen next?
- How do you think the people responded then? READ v.14-15
They see Jesus is very special; they even remember the manna story; they remember God was going to send another prophet like Moses; and they want Jesus to be king. They figure that they need to eat every day; if Jesus was king, they would have loads of free food – it doesn't even cost Jesus anything.
- Jesus knows what they are thinking. READ v.26-27
They're too interested in this world and they are in danger of missing the point.
- Why do you think Jesus did the miracle? - to show them what they needed
- to show them what he could give - to have an opportunity to teach them

The Lesson of the Bread

- And so maybe next day or a bit later in the week, in the synagogue he teaches them the lesson of the bread.
- READ v.35-37. It's important that some time has passed because they're hungry again! Even bread won't be enough.
- Jesus is teaching them about their need. They had miraculous food just like the people with Moses in the desert – how cool! – but now they are hungry again and they will die eventually.
- They have another need which is even more essential and that only Jesus can supply.
- We said we need food for energy, strength, life, but only for a little while.
- We need Jesus for true satisfaction and eternal life that doesn't end.

- Think: God didn't need to make us so that we need food. But he did. Maybe because it is such a good picture of our need of him. Our body needs food every day. Our inner body needs Jesus just as much.

The Bread or the Baker?

- Jesus describes himself as the Bread not the Baker. What's the difference? (You eat one and not the other) Huge difference between Jesus and the most loving of people - Sunday lunch – costs me time and effort and money to make a nice meal for our guests, but I don't get eaten!!!
- Why is Jesus the Bread then and not Heaven's Chef? It costs him his life – it is Him we need to feed on. Not just providing physical food, but something far more powerful.
- They thought Jesus was all about free food, but actually the food he offers couldn't be more costly. It costs him everything.
- READ v.52-58 It was going to cost Jesus his life to bring us true satisfaction.
- The only way for us to be raised on the last day is to come to Jesus and feed on him.
- How? V. 29. Believe. Humility.

Conclusion

- Living without Jesus might seem quite fun and might even work for a while – a bit like eating flumps/marshmallows BUT: it doesn't last on a hard hike; it isn't truly satisfying and in the end it is actually pretty harmful without real food.
- There is a hike one day – through death. On that day we need bread not marshmallows.

Prayer

- Thank God that Jesus offers true satisfaction.

Sum Up

- Please remember the bread. But not just the bread that you eat now and then it's gone and you get hungry again. So when we're hungry or we're busy preparing food, let's remember our need for Jesus is even more important than our need for food. And let's remember how much it cost Jesus to feed us and be thankful.