

Attitudes for integral mission

Vision: to see that God wants to use us and our resources to bring about transformation in our own lives and the life of our community.

Mark 6:30-44 – The Feeding of the 5000

Questions to discuss:

1. What was the need in this story? What were the resources?
2. What did Jesus answer his disciples when they told him that people were hungry?
3. What steps did Jesus take to perform the miracle?
4. What does this mean for the way Jesus wants us to work with our community?
5. What resources do we have that we can put in God's hands?
6. What holds us back from trusting God with the little that we have?

Going deeper:

Ask three volunteers to read out the imagined (over page) dialogue about what would have happened if the boy had not been willing to share his food.

And/ or watch this Bible Project video on 'Generosity': <https://youtu.be/62ClEkRCso> (5:11)

Act of Love: ask the group to pray and talk through the following questions:

- What physical resources do you have as a church/ group/ individuals?
- How can you give all these completely to God so that they can be used to bless people who have need of them?
- What action will you do as a group or church in the next two weeks?

Notes for facilitator: see over page

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- *The need at that time was that everyone was hungry; and it was late in the day and far from the town. There was not enough money or time to buy them all something. All they have was 5 loaves and 2 fish.*
- *Jesus told his disciples: 'You feed them'.*
- *Jesus first involved his disciples, asking them what they had already and to find out what resources there were in the wider community. The disciples gathered everything they could; and then they organised everyone into groups to make sure everyone could access what they shared. Jesus thanked God and multiplied the food miraculously. And the disciples served all the people and then gathered up the leftovers.*
- *Jesus wants us to involve everyone in finding the solutions to their needs together. He wants us to recognise the resources we have among us, whether physical, time, skills, or anything else and see how we can use them. Then He comes in to bless and multiply our efforts to reach far beyond what we can imagine.*

God wants to work through us as we use our resources to bring about transformation in our own lives and the life of our community. Jesus demonstrated the kind of attitudes we need if we are to help the poor:

- **Servanthood:** Jesus was humble and put others before himself; He saw their needs before they saw their own; and nothing was too small for him to care about.
- **Compassion:** Jesus responded compassion to their needs, taking action to address them and not just noticing. Compassion is real love in action.
- **Using what you have:** Jesus says to his disciples: 'you feed them'. The disciples deny responsibility for people's hunger, but Jesus asks them, "What do you have?"

Jesus trusted in the God of abundance – the disciples could not see past the huge numbers and the cost of feeding so many, but Jesus looked at the situation through God's eyes and knew that God could turn their little into enough to feed a multitude. He used the resources the boy offered, when the disciples did not value the boy's contribution.

As His disciples, God calls us to play our role in building His kingdom. He wants us to think about what we already have, not wait for money or resources from elsewhere. All of us have something to offer.

Dialogue: see over page

Dialogue: (by Paul Burbridge and Murray Watts)

Cast - Narrator one, Narrator two, Boy

One: And in those days Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Two: And a great crowd of people followed him because they had seen the miraculous signs he had performed upon the sick.

One: And the disciples said to Jesus, "Where shall we find food for all these people to eat?"

Two: But Andrew spoke up and said. "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves, and..."

Boy: Oh, sorry.

One: What?

Boy: I've eaten them.

Two: You've WHAT?

Boy: I've eaten my bread and fish.

One: But – you can't.

Boy: I have.

Two: No, you don't understand – you're supposed to offer your loaves and fish so that Jesus can feed the 5000.

Boy: Well, like I said, I'm sorry.

One: Sorry?? That's not enough!

Boy: It was my packed lunch. I had the right to eat it! I was hungry!

Two: But what about the crowd? It was your bread and loaves that was meant to feed them!

Boy: Well, I've eaten them. If this Jesus can do such miracles, why does he need my loaves and fish?

One: But the whole point of the story is that God wants us to use what we've got, however little...

Two: To share around what he has given us....

One: And you've just eaten everything yourself!

Two: And the 5000 are still hungry!