

# 2

## Trust and Share—All Are Fed!

EXODUS 16:1-36; JOHN 6:1-14



### GOAL

By hearing stories of table community, the children reimagine mealtimes with a focus on building community.

- A** Art
- AM** Active/Movement
- C** Conversation
- D** Drama
- F** Food
- G** Game
- M** Music
- NS** Nature/Science
- QC** Quiet/Contemplative
- S** Service
- T** Technology
- X** Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



### PRAYER

God who provides, prepare me to lead this group to new understandings and deeper community. Amen.

### THIS SESSION

Holiday dinners, neighborhood cookouts, church potlucks, school ice cream socials: these are familiar events for children, often the events that they remember with the most fondness and clarity years later. When we eat together, something special happens; friendships are formed, and community is strengthened. Eating together binds the community and offers space to share stories from our lives and histories. This was true in Bible times, and is still true today.

### THE BIBLE STORY

Today's session looks at two Bible stories separated by thousands of years: the story of the Israelites being given manna from heaven in the wilderness in the Old Testament, also called the Hebrew Scriptures, and the miracle of the loaves and fishes on the mountainside in the New Testament. Both stories remind us that God provides, and that there is no use in hoarding for ourselves. The true miracle comes when all are fed with just what they need.

### CONNECTIONS WITH CHILDREN

Although children can get impatient at lingering meals when adults seem to talk for hours, today's session encourages them to embrace mealtimes as opportunities for building community through sharing. Children are often fascinated to hear stories of their parents' and grandparents' childhoods, and can find their own voices to share aspects of their lives with family around table. Through the stories, passages, and images of this session, the concept of breaking bread will be lifted up as an aspect of community where all have something to offer.

### SESSION PREPARATION

- "Singing Together" (p. 16): Obtain hymnals with the song "O Look and Wonder" or use the prepared newsprint with the lyrics of the song from session 1. If using the newsprint with the lyrics of the song, keep it for sessions 3 and 4.
- "Sharing Prayer and Food" (p. 19): Obtain a simple snack to share, such as cookies, crackers and cheese, or fruit. Be aware of food allergies and dietary restrictions. Make substitutions or provide alternative options.

Depending on the options you choose:

- "Stories of Table Community: Stone Soup" (p. 18): Obtain *Stone Soup* by Jon J. Muth (Scholastic, 2010), use the YouTube video "Stone Soup by Jon J. Muth: Children's Books Read Aloud on Once upon a Story" ([bit.ly /FMStoneSoup](https://bit.ly/FMStoneSoup), 7:43), or find another version of the folktale or video of your choice.



## GETTING STARTED

### MAKING A DREAM POTLUCK!

G

Greet the children as they arrive and invite them to form a circle sitting on the floor. Have each child come up with a food that they would enjoy eating that begins with the same letter as their first name. Explain that they will say their name and the food like this: “My name is (*Mary*) and I wish I had (*macaroni and cheese*) to share.” Go around the circle, inviting each child to say their sentence and the sentence of each person who has shared before them, until it comes back to the first person, who will then have the challenge of reciting the name and food for each person.

Have children take turns being the first and last person who speaks so they each get a turn hearing everyone’s names and foods before their turn. If anyone is having trouble remembering another child’s name or food, encourage the group to help.

- Hymnals with the song “O Look and Wonder” or prepared newsprint with the lyrics of the song from session 1
- Internet-connected device (*optional*)

### SINGING TOGETHER

M T X

Use hymnals or display newsprint with the lyrics to the song “O Look and Wonder.” Talk through the words to the song, then listen to the tune. If the whole song seems too ambitious, just sing the refrain, and perhaps the first verse in this session. Repeat it several times, especially the refrain.

To hear the tune, go to [bit.ly/FMOLookTune](https://bit.ly/FMOLookTune) (0:21). To sing along in Spanish (words not provided on the video), show the YouTube video “*Miren que Bueno* (O Look and Wonder)” ([bit.ly/FMMiren](https://bit.ly/FMMiren), 1:52). Try to sing the refrain in English and Spanish.



If using the newsprint with the lyrics, keep it for sessions 3 and 4.



## INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

- Mural paper
- Markers, glue sticks, scissors
- Magazines

### WHAT WILL YOU BRING TO THE TABLE?

C A

Tell the children that they will be creating a mural of a table where community will be built and stories will be shared. Invite the children to brainstorm things to create this scene. Some things to consider might be:

- Shape and size of the table (*perhaps noting size of chairs to accommodate different bodies and abilities*)
- Diversity of people (*age, ethnicity, gender, and so forth*)
- Variety of foods (*vegetables for people who do not eat meat, food that is reflective of different cultures*)
- Special touches to make the table feel warm and inviting (*candles, flowers*)

Allow the children to select a specific part of the project they would like to help create:

- “Setting the Table”—drawing the table on the mural paper
- “Inviting the Guests”—finding images of people and faces in magazines to cut out and add to the table mural

- “Preparing the Food”—finding images of food and dishes in magazines to cut out and add to the table mural




## FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

### HEARING AND SCULPTING THE STORY

QC A

Read both stories from Exodus 16:1–36 and John 6:1–14. You may have a leader read it or invite volunteers to take turns reading a couple of verses at a time. Give each child some modeling clay or play dough and invite them to sculpt as they listen to the story. Invite the children to share what they created.

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- Bibles
  - Modeling clay or play dough for each child

 The *Common English Bible* is a good choice for children, but use what you have available.

### STORY SORT

G C

Form the children into pairs or trios. Try to have a variety of age and reading ability in each group. Give each small group copies of Resource Pages 1 and 2, scissors, and a glue stick. Have the groups cut apart the words from the word bank, determine which ones go with each story, and glue them in place on Resource Page 1.

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- Copies of Resource Page 1
  - Copies of word bank cut apart from Resource Page 2 (There are two sets of words on the page)
  - Scissors, glue sticks

When the children have finished, review the activity together, and discuss the following:

- What are the similarities and differences between the two stories?
- What do these stories tell us about God?
- What do you think we can learn from these stories about sharing, hoarding, and greediness?



## FINDING THE PRACTICE ALL AROUND US

Choose one or more options.

### TABLE COMMUNITY: EATING TOGETHER


T C

Show the YouTube video “Nothing Brings Us Together Than Eating Together” ([bit.ly/FMEatingHallway](https://bit.ly/FMEatingHallway), 2:30). Then engage the children in conversation using the follow prompts and questions:

- We see this video from the perspective of the woman in yellow, but we have probably been the distracted people that she encounters as well. When was a time when you have found yourself too distracted to notice other?
- In the song playing in the background, we hear the repeated refrain, “What the world needs now is love.” What do you think the world needs now?
- What are some words to describe how you might feel if you came across a scene like this where you live?
- Which person in the video did you notice/relate to/identify with the most?
- What do you think changed in the apartment building after this?

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- Internet-connected device

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- ☐ *Stone Soup* by Jon J. Muth (Scholastic, 2010) or another version of this familiar folktale or internet-connected device

 There are a number of different book and video versions of the story about stone soup, even ones called *Cactus Soup* and *Quill Soup*. We have provided one recommendation, but you may use any version of the folktale you like.

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- ☐ Paper, pencil, hard writing surface
  - ☐ Smartphone (optional)

## STORIES OF TABLE COMMUNITY: STONE SOUP T C

Read *Stone Soup* by Jon J. Muth or show the YouTube video “Stone Soup by Jon J. Muth: Children’s Books Read Aloud on Once Upon a Story” ([bit.ly/FMStoneSoup](https://bit.ly/FMStoneSoup), 7:43). Use the following questions for conversation:

- ✦ How do you think the visitors tricked the villagers or helped them?
- ✦ What are some characteristics that keep people from sharing?
- ✦ What characteristics help people create community?

If you watched the video in “Table Community: Eating Together” (p. 17), ask the following questions:

- ✦ How is this story like the one in the video we watched? How is it different?
- ✦ Have you ever been a part of a meal that had anything in common with the one that is described in the video or in this story? Would you like to? Why or why not?

## GOING ON A MEAL HUNT! AM

As a group, walk around the church and make note of opportunities to share meals. Invite one or more members of your group to be a scribe and make notes or take smartphone photos of spaces that are identified. Consider the following places and items:

- Spaces where people regularly share meals in your building (*fellowship hall, space that houses a soup kitchen, dining area for a preschool, and so on*)
- Posters or flyers for events centered on food happening in the community or your church
- The site for coffee hour
- The sanctuary or worship spaces where communion is celebrated (Remember, communion is a *meal* we share together in worship!)

As you walk, invite children and leaders to share stories of meals that they have shared at church or with church friends. When you return to your space, use the following questions for reflection:

- ✦ Where are some other places besides home where you regularly share meals with others? Is church one of those places for you?
- ✦ What are some ways that people might feel welcome at shared meals at church? What are some ways that people might feel excluded?
- ✦ Were you surprised at the number of places where people share food at church? Why or why not?



## PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or both options.

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- ☐ Index cards
  - ☐ Different colored marker or pencil for each child
  - ☐ Mural from “What Will You Bring to the Table?” (p. 16)

## CHOPPED, CHURCH EDITION G

Play a game to work together to create a pretend group meal. Use the following directions:

- Give each child four index cards and a unique color of marker or colored pencil. Tell them to write or draw a food that they like on each their cards using their colored marker or pencil.
- Gather and shuffle all of the cards.
- Form the children into pairs or trios so that you have an even number of groups. Use adult helpers if necessary.

- Redistribute four cards for each member of the group, instructing them to:
  - Create a menu for a shared meal using the items on the cards as main and featured ingredients. The ingredients can be for any or all of the following: a snack, an appetizer, a main dish, a side dish, and a dessert.
  - Give your menu a creative name.
  - Display your menu near the table mural.

At the completion of the game, use the following questions for discussion:

- ➔ What surprises came up in this activity?
- ➔ What item on your menu would you most like to eat? Least like to eat?
- ➔ What foods do you wish you could have had to create your menu?
- ➔ Sometimes you can't choose what you are given to eat, but you have to make the best of it. How did your group use what you were given to "make the best of it"?
- ➔ How is this activity like the stories we heard today from the Bible, video, or book?

## MAKING CONVERSATION CUBES

C A

Mealtimes are a wonderful chance to share family stories! Have the children create conversation cubes to encourage the sharing of stories around meals at home. Hand out card-stock copies of Resource Page 3 and copies of Resource Page 4. Tell the children to select six of their favorite story conversation starters from Resource Page 4 or create one or more of their own conversation starters. Have the children cut out the conversation starters they have chosen and glue them to the six square spaces on the cube template on Resource Page 3. Then tell the children to cut out the cube template and assemble it to form a three-dimensional cube with the pictures on the outside. Have the children fold the tabs and insert them on the inside of the cube, using tape to hold the cube together. Encourage the children to take their cubes home to use for dinnertime conversation!



Example: If a card says spaghetti and meatballs, you may use the pasta, sauce, and meatballs as different ingredients in other dishes. Maybe you would bake the pasta with cinnamon sugar and butter for a dessert or use the meatballs in a barbecue sauce as an appetizer. Think creatively!

- Card-stock copies of Resource Page 3
- Copies of Resource Page 4
- Transparent tape
- Glue sticks
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils



As the children are working on creating their conversation cubes, encourage dialogue around the different prompts that the children choose.



FOLLOWING JESUS

## SHARING PRAYER AND FOOD

F X

To close this session on community in shared meals, invite one or more volunteers to lead the group in a mealtime prayer that they use in their home. If your church has a regular prayer that is your tradition to use for mealtime gatherings, you may choose to close using that prayer or use the following prayer:

God is great and God is good.  
 Let us thank God for our food.  
 By God's blessings we are fed,  
 Give us, Lord, our daily bread.  
 Amen.

Share a snack together.

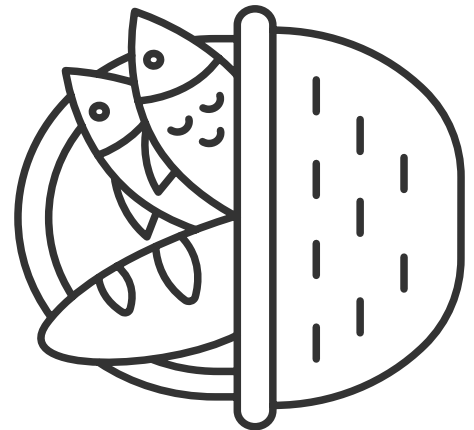
- Simple snack food, such as cookies, crackers and cheese, or fruit



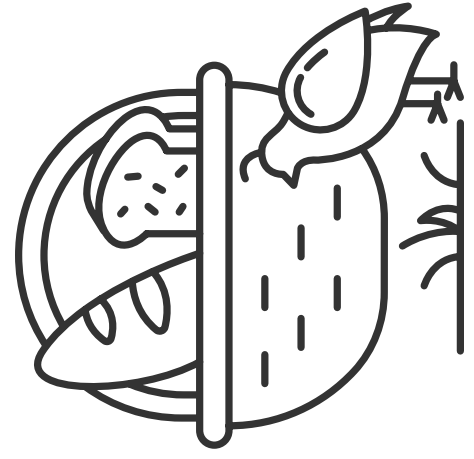
Be aware of food allergies and dietary restrictions. Make substitutions or provide alternative options.

## What will we eat?

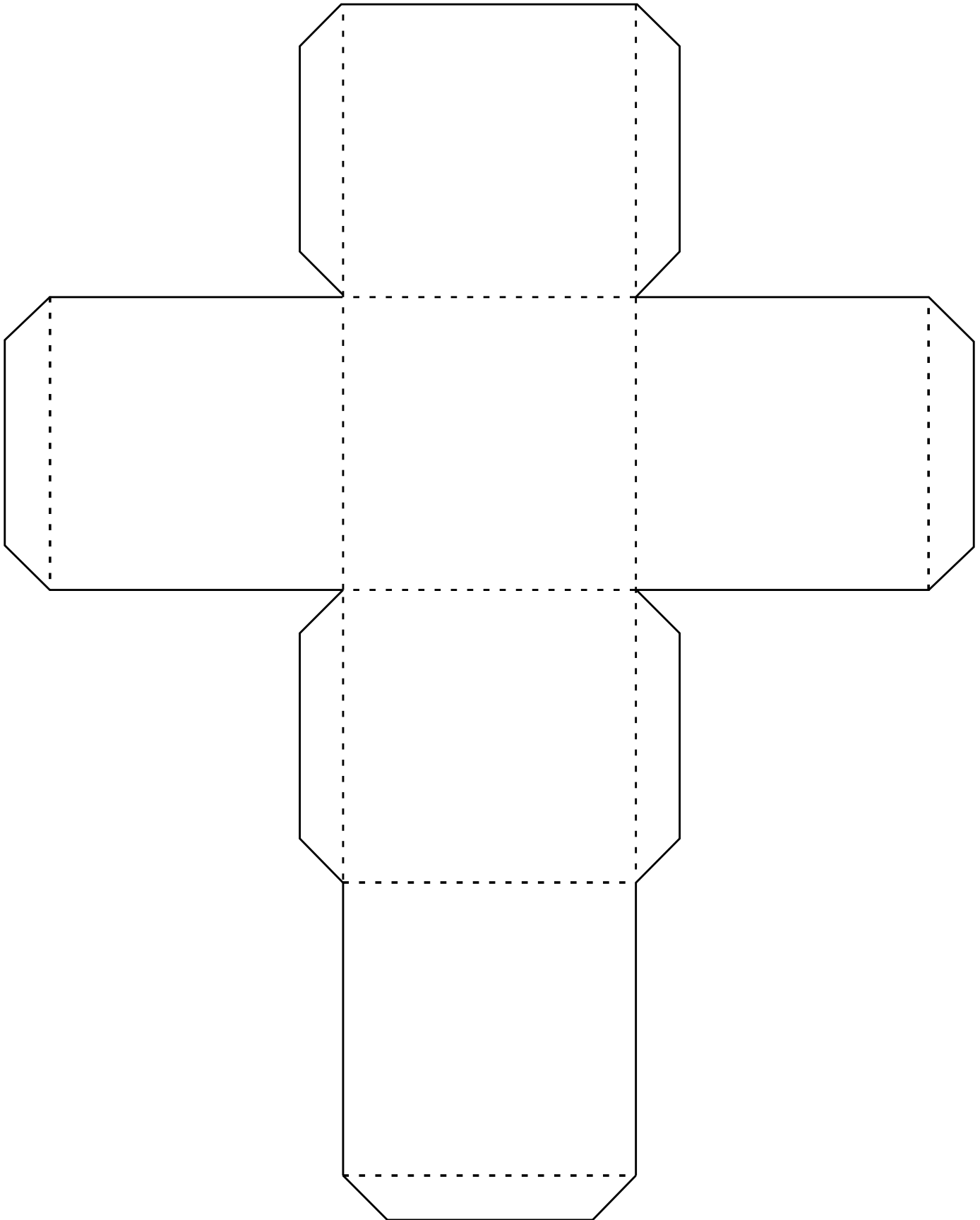
Scripture verse		
Location		
Who was complaining		
Food they received (1)		
Food they received (2)		
What happened to the leftovers?		



**God provided enough.**



wilderness	Exodus 16:1–36
loaves	got moldy & wormy except before the Sabbath
quail	fish
disciples complained to Jesus	John 6:1–14
manna	Israelites complained to Moses and Aaron
mountainside	filled twelve baskets
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<p>Share a story of sharing a meal with new people.</p>	<p>Share one meal that you will never forget.</p>	<p>If you could have dinner with one person, who would it be?</p>
<p>Share a story about a funny thing that happened at a meal.</p>	<p>Share a story about a time when you were really hungry.</p>	<p>What food do you never want to try?</p>
<p>If you could only eat one food for a week, what would you choose?</p>	<p>Describe a time when you got a surprising gift of food.</p>	<p>Who is your favorite person (not at this table) to eat with?</p>
<p>What is your favorite restaurant?</p>	<p>Which meal (breakfast, lunch, or dinner) is your favorite?</p>	<p>Tell a story about someone sharing food with you.</p>

