



AUGUSTINE INSTITUTE®

BREAD OF LIFE

The Eucharist in Galilee

BREAD OF LIFE GROUP REFLECTION

EPISODE 1:

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

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STUDY GOALS

When we think about the Eucharist, we think first and foremost about the Last Supper. But that culminating event is prepared for by Jesus' ministry. Jesus prepares us to understand one of the most important events in history, the institution of the Eucharist, with his words and deeds during his Galilean ministry. In this first session, we look at Jesus' multiplication of the loaves and fish recounted in Mark 6.

Scripture

Jesus Feeds The Five Thousand

(Mark 6:30–44; see also John 6:1–15)

³⁰The apostles returned to Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³²And they went away in the boat to a lonely place by themselves. ³³Now many saw them going, and knew them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns, and got there ahead of them. ³⁴As he landed he saw a great throng, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. ³⁵And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This

is a lonely place, and the hour is now late; ³⁶send them away, to go into the country and villages round



about and buy themselves something to eat.”³⁷ But he answered them, “You give them something to eat.” And they said to him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?”³⁸ And he said to them, “How many loaves have you? Go and see.” And when they had found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.”³⁹ Then he commanded them all to sit down by companies upon the green grass.⁴⁰ So they

sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties.⁴¹ And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all.⁴² And they all ate and were satisfied.⁴³ And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish.⁴⁴ And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

VIEW AND DISCUSS

1. What time of year is it when this event takes place (see John 6:4; Mark 6:39)?
2. Why does Jesus have the people sit in separate, number-based groups? What is this action recalling (see Exodus 18:25)?
3. What is the length of time between the feeding of the five thousand in Mark’s Gospel and the Last Supper?
4. How does this miracle lay the foundation for the Last Supper? What details connect the two events?
5. Why did Jesus say to the apostles, “You give them something to eat”? How does this anticipate the role of the priest from whose hands we receive the Eucharist at each Mass?
6. If we give Jesus all that we have, what is the result? What is Jesus asking you to give to him?

REVIEW

Dr. Gray connects the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand (one of the few miracles described by all four of the Gospel writers) as a foundational action in Jesus’ preparation for the Last Supper and the gift of the Eucharist. Jesus’ actions both recall the first Passover (when God feeds his people with manna in the desert) and anticipate the next year’s Passover (when Jesus, the Lamb of God, will institute the Eucharist and the priesthood so that he can feed his people with his Body and Blood at the hands of his priests at each Mass). During the first year of Jesus’ ministry (recounted in John 2), Jesus turned water into wine at the feast. After, Jesus feeds the people with an abundance of bread and fish (recounted in Mark 6–8). Then at the next Passover, Jesus will change bread and wine into his Body and Blood. The Eucharist was at the very heart of Jesus’ ministry. From the beginning, Jesus was preparing to bequeath this treasure to his apostles and the Church.

What did you find most helpful or most challenging in this teaching?

What one thing will you do differently because of this session?

