

General Church Education



Family Lesson: Mark 6
The Loaves and the
Fishes

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Family Lesson 31-F

The Loaves and Fishes
Mark 6

Family Talk
THE MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES

Of all the miracles told us, there is one that is spoken of in all four Gospels — Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. And that miracle is the miracle of feeding 5,000 people — a true story about a time when there did not seem to be nearly enough food. The Lord gave not only *enough*, but far more than enough, so that there were baskets of fragments left over.

Jesus saw a great multitude. Think of His eyes as He viewed all those people. What feeling was in those eyes on this occasion, and why? He was *moved with compassion for them*. There is a strong feeling in this story. Why was He so concerned for them as He looked at them in this place? It was because they were like sheep without a shepherd. They had deep human needs. A human being needs to know what is right and what is true, and so in His love He began to teach them many things (verse 34). His teaching went on to the day's end, and it must have been a great feast for their minds, for here was the Lord Himself who knew everything, speaking directly to them.

A crowd of hundreds and hundreds of people far from the towns would need a lot of food as the day drew to its close. The disciples had some money, but even if they went off to a town and spent all of it, it would hardly begin to feed them all.

“How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” They obeyed the Lord and found that they had five loaves and two fishes. Out there in the green grass the Lord commanded that these crowds be told to sit down in groups of hundreds and groups of fifty. Hungry groups they would be.

Those compassionate eyes were raised to heaven when the Lord blessed and broke the food and began to hand it to the disciples. Did they get enough? **“They all ate and were filled.”** But it was more than enough. To show that there was more than enough, the Lord told the disciples to begin to gather what was left over, and their baskets began to fill with the surplus until they had no less than twelve baskets filled with what yet remained when all had eaten as much as they wanted.

More than enough! The Psalm says, **“My cup runs over.”** What the Lord gives overflows. **“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies”** (Psalm 23: 5).

What happened that afternoon while the disciples were giving and giving and giving, pictures something that takes place in heaven. Did the disciples wonder as they handed out the food whether any would be left for them? After they had been giving and giving, they ended up not with *less* than they started, but with *more*!

Think of food as more than food. Think of it as your very happiness, or all your good fortune. In heaven they try to share and give, and something amazing happens. Listen to what is said in the Writings, and notice the phrase “**Much more than he gives.**”

“When an angel does good to any one, he also communicates to him his own good, good fortune, and happiness, and this with the desire to give the other everything . . . Then good flows in unto him together with good fortune and happiness, much more than he gives” (*Arcana Coelestia* 6478).

Swedenborg saw that this really does happen. “It has been given to me to know this from much experience; and from this also it may be seen that the Lord is in every single thing, for the Lord is such that He wants to give Himself to all, and hence good fortune and happiness are increased with those who are likenesses of Him” (*Arcana Coelestia* 6478).

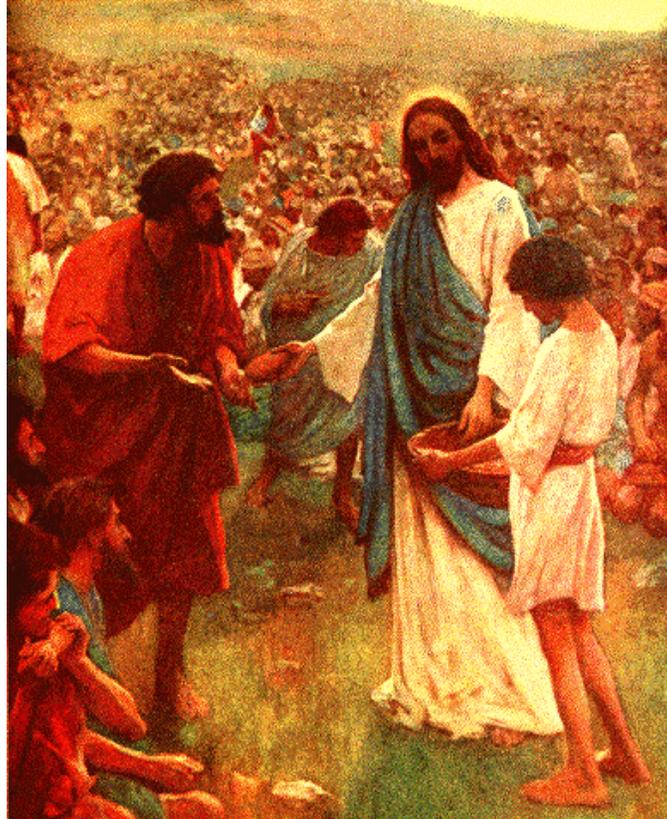
If you understood what was just said about the Lord’s wonderful presence, you understand one of the greatest truths. The Lord said, “The bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” He, the giver, also said, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst” (*John* 6:33, 35).

He showed His power to give that day when with the compassion of love in His eyes He gave to the disciples that the people might have food enough, and much left over.

Loaves and Fishes

Mark 6

LEVEL 1 – THE MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES AND FISHES



When the multitude who were following the Lord needed food, He took a little food from His disciples and multiplied it to feed everyone.

- 1) On the next two pages are pictures for you to color.
- 2) Draw in 5 loaves and 2 fishes in the baskets on the first picture (page 2).
- 3) Then draw leftover pieces in all the baskets on the second picture (page 3).
- 4) Color the pictures, and if you would like, staple them together to make a little book of the story

The Lord said to the disciples:

“How many loaves do you have? Go and see.”

And when they found out they said,
“Five, and two fish.”

Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass.

And when He had taken the loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among them all.

So they all ate and were filled.

And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish.





Loaves and Fishes

Mark 6

LEVEL 2 – FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND

You will be using the following materials for this project:

- ❖ Long strip of drawing paper
- ❖ Crayons
- ❖ straight pins
- ❖ colored tissue paper
- ❖ scissors and white glue



1. Making the “loaves”

Stack four brown strips of tissue paper and pin them together with five straight pins.

Around each pin draw a loaf.

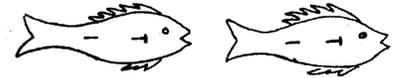


Cut out the loaves and set them aside, still pinned together.

2. Making the “fishes”

Stack five colored strips of tissue paper and pin them together in two places.

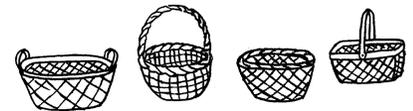
Around each pin draw a large fish.



Cut out the fish and set them aside, still pinned together.

3. On the long strip of drawing paper draw twelve baskets.

They could be many different sizes and shapes. (It would be a good plan to look at some baskets. They may be square or round or oval; some may have handles; etc.)



4. Remove the pins from the “loaves” and “fishes” and separate the piles. How many more there are!

5. Now tear each loaf and fish into smaller pieces. You can see quickly how the fragments multiply.

6. Put a little glue on a small piece of scrap paper. Dip the pieces of “bread” or “fish” lightly in the glue and paste them in the baskets, heaping and overlapping the pieces to show how much there was left over.



They all ate and had enough (Lk.9.17)

The Loaves and Fishes

Mark 6

LEVEL 3 – THE LORD HAS POWER OVER ALL THINGS

Fill in the crossword puzzle on the next page by reading Mark 6, and completing the following sentences:

In the New (5 - down) we read that after the Lord sent the multitude of (13 - down) thousand away, He sent His disciples to (11 - across).

They went by (11 - down) on the Sea of (2 - down).

The Lord went up into a (3 - down) to (12 - across).

About the (13 - across) watch of the night, which is from three o'clock in the morning until six, a strong (7 - down) began to blow.

The disciples became afraid. The (1 - down) came walking towards them on the (8 - down).

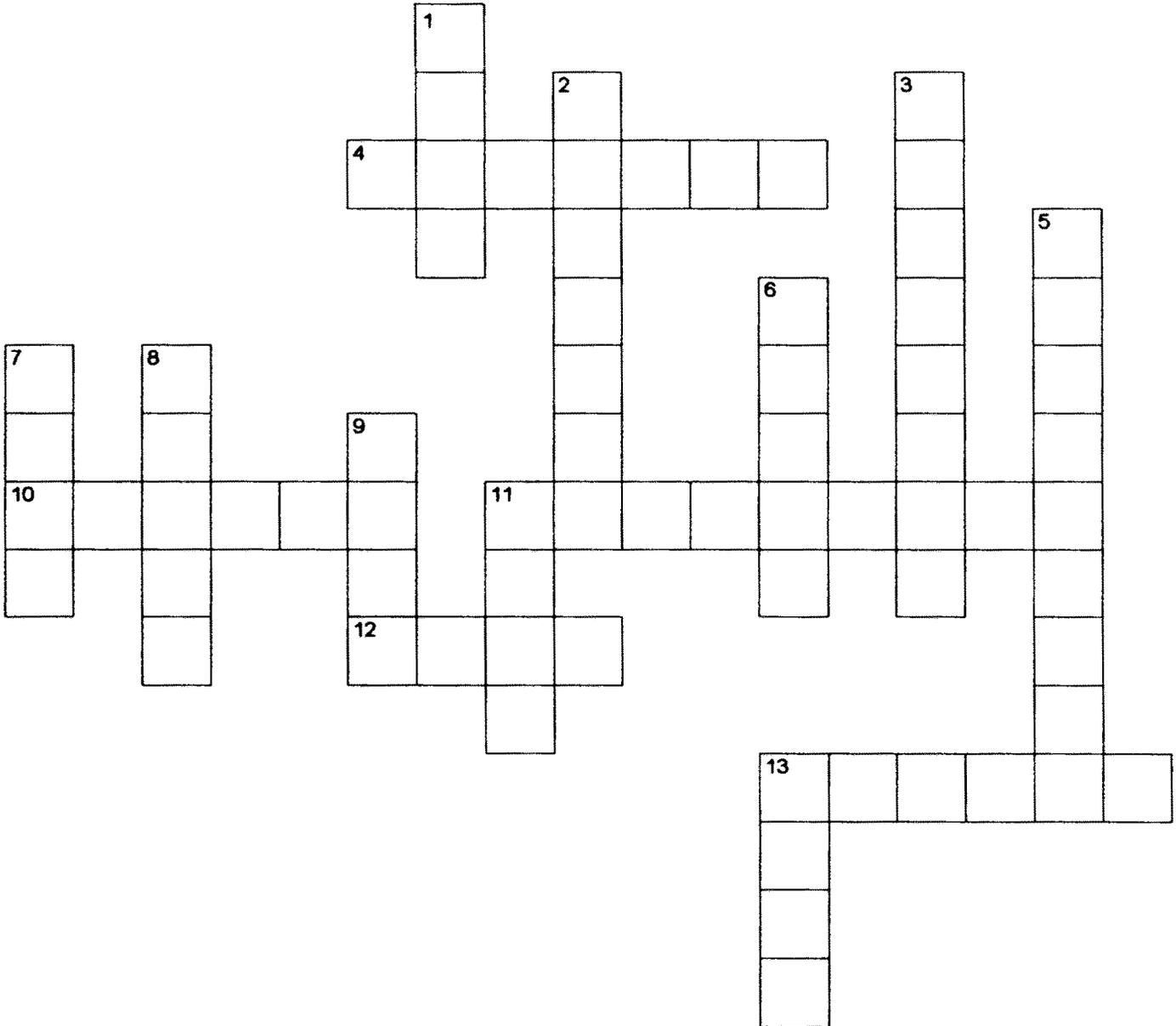
He would have passed them by but they cried out in fear. They thought the Lord was a (6 - down).

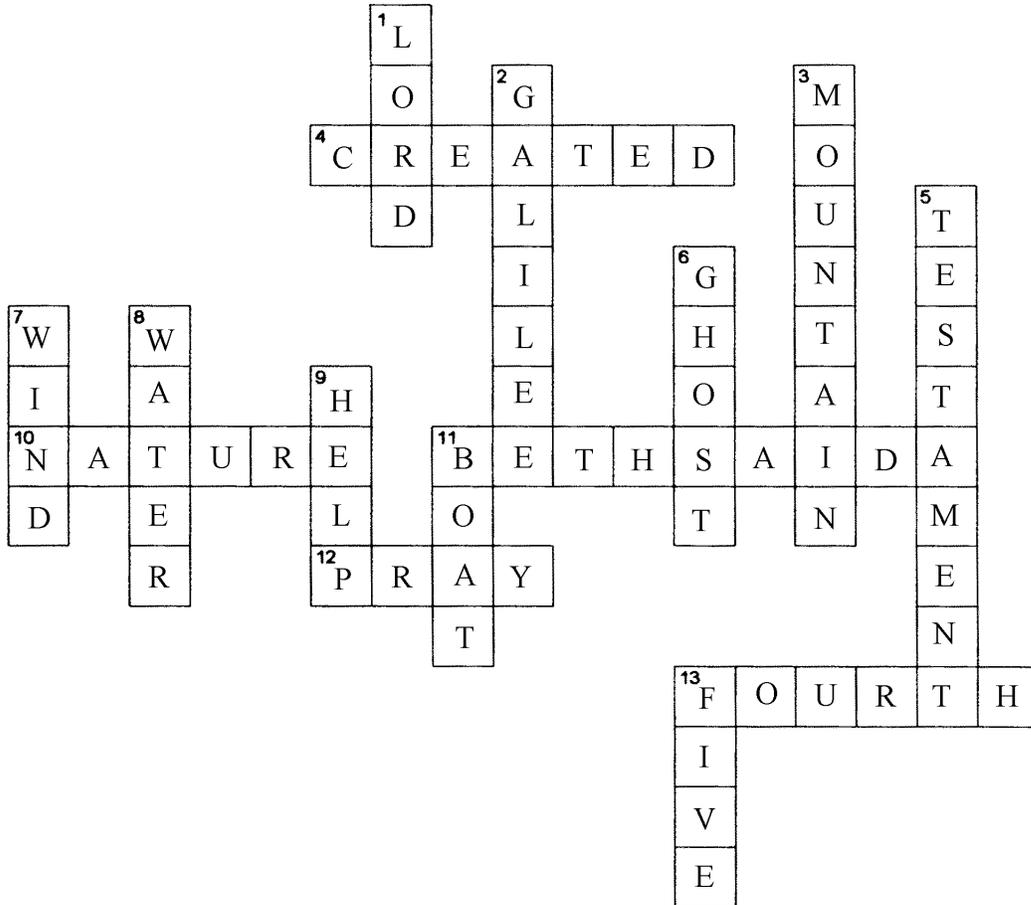
When the Lord went up to the boat, the wind ceased because the Lord has power over all things of (10 - across). The Lord made or (4 - across) everything in nature.

The Lord is always present to (9 - down) us when we meet our contrary winds.



The Lord Has Power Over All Things





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LEVEL 4 – SPIRITUAL FOOD

Our bodies need food to stay healthy. In the same way, our minds need “food” to stay healthy. What is the food that the mind needs? We need to feed our minds with the truth from the Lord’s Word.



The Lord had been teaching the multitude of people who had followed Him. He had been “feeding” their minds and spirits.

Isn’t this interesting! Here in the Word we read that the Lord performed this miracle of feeding more than five thousand people with only five loaves and two fishes to show the people that they were being fed spiritually by His teaching.

First, they listened to Him, until they were full of new ideas. Then they ate what He alone could feed them, until they were also physically full.

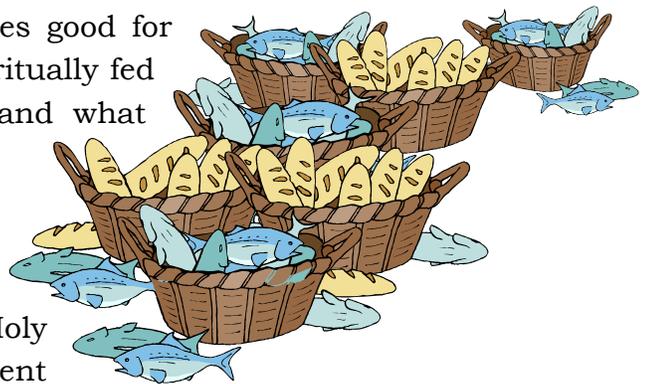
Only the Lord can create food. We can prepare the soil, and plant the seeds, but is the *Lord’s* life flowing into the plant that causes it to grow into food. So the miracle of creating food is happening all around us all the time.

“The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how.”

Mark 4:26,27

The Lord also tells us that it is sometimes good for people to physically eat after they have been spiritually fed (AE 617). The natural image helps us understand what happens in our minds and spirits.

The Children of Israel were fed manna in the wilderness to help them realize that they depended on the Lord. We celebrate the Holy Supper to act out our reception of nourishment from the Lord.



Project

Your project is an illustration of this idea.

- 1) Go to the Word to look up the missing ingredients in the recipe below.
- 2) Then bake some “bread” from this simple recipe and serve it to your family.

Remember as you serve them how natural eating is a picture of learning from the Word.

* * * * *

OATMEAL DROP BISCUITS

- Mix together: 1 cup(II Samuel 13: 8)
- 1 Tablespoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon..... (Mark 9: 50)

- Cut in: ¼ cup (Psalm 55: 21)
- (that means mix in with a knife)*

- Stir in: 1 cup oatmeal

- Stir together 1(Deuteronomy 22: 6)
- in second 1/3 cup..... (Lamentations 4: 7)
- bowl: 2 Tablespoons (Psalm 19: 10)

Add wet ingredients to dry ingredients. Stir just until moistened.
 Drop by spoonfuls onto greased cookie sheets.
 Bake at 425° for 8 to 10 minutes. Makes 12 biscuits.

The Loaves and Fishes

Mark 6

LEVEL 5 – THE LORD'S QUESTIONS, DOWN TO THE VERY NUMBERS

When you have finished reading this, you will be asked to list at least four questions which Jesus asked people, and you will be asked to give one example of *why* He asked the questions, that is, what was His *purpose* in putting the question.



The miracle of feeding the 5,000 is recorded in each of the four Gospels. Besides *Mark 6*, it is in *John 6*, *Matthew 14* and *Luke 9*.

One can put together a wonderful scene. In *John* we find that when the Lord saw the crowd, He singled out one of the disciples (it was Philip) and asked him a question. The question was this:

“Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?”

Philip’s answer shows that Philip went through a quick calculation in his mind. For Philip said,

“Two hundred denari worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.”

Pause and consider why the Lord asked the question. You will probably conclude that the Lord didn’t ask this because He wanted to know where they could buy bread. When you have guessed in your own mind why He did ask, read the 6th verse of *John 6*, and write the verse below:

THE LORD'S QUESTIONS

You may have seen a red-letter Bible, a Bible which in the New Testament puts in red the words spoken by the Lord. Do you know in the sequence of the story what are the first words in red? They were spoken when the Lord was twelve years old. Look them up now in *Luke 2: 49*. Notice that the words are in the form of a question. Write the question the Lord asked:

The questions the Lord asked go on through the story, and we may be sure they have purpose. After the Lord was crucified and appeared in His glorified Human, He asked questions, such as:

“**Woman, why are you weeping?**” (*John 20: 15*). He asked two disciples what they were talking about and why they were sad (*Luke 24: 17*).

“**Why do you worry about clothing?**” “**Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?**” (*Matthew 6: 27,28*).

“**Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread will give him a stone?**” (*Matthew 7: 9*).

“**Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin?**” (*Matthew 10: 29*).

The questions get people to think about their worries, and see them in new perspective.



QUESTIONS ON THE LOAVES AND BASKETS

In *Mark 6* we see that the Lord asked the disciples very specifically, “**How many loaves do you have? Go and see.**” And they themselves made the count and answered, “**Five, and two fish.**”

This would help them remember when questions were later asked. They themselves took up the baskets of fragments, twelve in number, that were left after five thousand had been fed.

Questions bring a new level of awareness

Now we come to the fascinating situation recorded in *Mark* Chapter 8. The striking questions are directly related to the event of the feeding of the five thousand in *Mark* 6. The disciples thought that the Lord was concerned, because they had forgotten to take bread. The Lord then asked them no less than nine questions in a row in *Mark* 8 verses 17-21. Here they are:

- 1) “Why do you reason because you have no bread?” (vs.17)
- 2) “Do you not yet perceive nor understand?” (vs.17)
- 3) “Is your heart still hardened?” (vs.17)
- 4) “Having eyes, do you not see?” (vs.18)
- 5) “And having ears, do you not hear?” (vs.18)
- 6) “And do you not remember?” (vs.18)
- 7) “When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?” (vs.19) *They said to Him, “Twelve.”*
- 8) “And when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?” *And they said, “Seven.”*
- 9) “How is it you do not understand?”

The disciples had counted the loaves to begin with, and they had themselves gathered the twelve baskets of fragments and the seven baskets of fragments. This enabled them to allow these other questions the Lord asked to bring them to a new level of awareness so that they would not worry in the same way again.

Application

List here at least four questions that the Lord asked in the gospels. In at least one case give the reason **why** He asked the question.
