

CONCEPTS that will be covered in the lesson

- Discuss how the perspective / vision of an object can differ between two people
- Introduce the idea of symbolic numbers of completeness
- Highlight the *take, bless, break, give* process that Jesus uses to “unpack” the complete amount of food

Materials needed:

1. Movie clip (available on rfour.org) from *The Great Outdoors*
2. Electronics that show the video clip
3. Two tissue boxes (second one may not be needed)
 - a. Regarding what size to get, I recommend anything around 200 tissues. That size requires about 3 tissues per second, which is doable, but difficult (because they get tired)
4. A stopwatch or smart phone to use as a timer

THE LESSON

OPENING PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION

- One of the things we do every class is ask and answer the opening question at the beginning of class – because it helps us 1. Learn more about each other and 2. Helps “warm us up” for some of the ideas in the upcoming lesson. So we’re going to do that now.
- So here’s the opening question for today’s class. I [the teacher] will ask the question and then to give you some time to think of an answer, I will answer first.
- Once I answer the question, we’ll go around the circle and each of us will answer.
- When it’s your turn, start with your name and then answer the question to the best of your ability.
- ***Here’s this week’s question:*** What is something that you have more of now than you did this time last year?

TRANSITION TO VIDEO CLIP

- We’re starting a new session today.
- It is a session about Jesus stories with food in them.
- Because food is this thing that keeps us alive (and can also be very tasty), it is a very central component of our lives.
- Which also means it is often connected to (or serves as an entry point that leads to) other ideas and issues.

- In today's story, we'll see how the story starts with food, but then leads us to talking about seeing abundance when scarcity is initially the only visible thing.
- To get started, we're going to watch a brief clip where two characters talk about an object that is front of them, but obviously see two very different things.
- Let's find out what they are seeing.

WATCH Video clip

ASK

- What does the character on the left see? (underdeveloped resources; business; money)
- What does the character on the right see? (trees)
- Does what they see seem to affect how they think of the place? (yes – guy on the left doesn't like it there; guy on the right likes it there)
- Does it seem to affect how they think life should be lived? (yes, one is ready to die of strokes and heart attacks while the other isn't and...“wouldn't that be great?”)?

TELL

- The movie clip is meant to help us think about how two different people, looking at the same thing, can see two very different things.
- And the thing is, neither one of them is wrong, though only one vision is actual reality (in that moment)
- But the other vision could become reality (I'm not saying that it should, I'm just saying that it could)
- In today's scripture story, a similar thing happens. Jesus and his disciples are looking at the same thing, but see two different things.
- It then causes them to make different decisions
- We'll also discuss, then, how Jesus makes what he sees into actual reality.
- But first, let's read the story and see what happens.

READ Mark 9:22-43 *(recommendation: Have class read it aloud; one person per verse)*

32And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. 33Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. 34As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

35When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; 36send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat.” 37But he answered them, “You give them something to eat.” They said to him, “Are we to

go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?” 38And he said to them, “How many loaves have you? Go and see.” When they had found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.” 39Then he ordered them to get all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass. 40So they sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. 41Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all. 42And all ate and were filled; 43and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. 44Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men.

ASK

- Verse 32 – The “they” in verse 32 is Jesus and his disciples. Where are “they” going and how are they going there? (to a deserted place by boat)
- Verse 33 – Who sees them, what do they do, and how do they get there? (many – or the crowd – saw Jesus and his disciples in the boat and went ahead of them to the deserted place *by foot*)
- What do you think about this many people chasing Jesus? Does it remind you of anything that you see in today’s world? (crowds trying to see a sports star, actor, or musician; or the paparazzi [*that is: independent photographers who take pictures of athletes, entertainers, politicians, and other celebrities who are typically going about their usual life*] who swarm celebrities)
- Verse 34 – What is Jesus’ response to these people when he gets off the boat? (he has compassion for them and starts teaching)
- So if you wanted to be alone for a little while and a whole bunch of people followed you and asked things of you, what would *your* response be to the people? (my own response would not be one of compassion, that’s for sure)
- Verse 35 and 36 – What do the disciples see and tell Jesus? (That it’s getting late and the people should be sent away so that they can get something to eat)
- Verse 37 – What does Jesus say they should do instead? (that they should feed the crowd)
- Still verse 37 – Do the disciples think this is a doable idea? (no – 200 denari is a lot of money; a lot of money that they did not have)
- Verse 38 – Jesus tells them to go see how much food they can find. How much food do the disciples find? (5 loaves and 2 fish)
- Verse 41 – What four things does Jesus do with this food? (he takes it, he blesses it, he breaks it, he gives it)
- Verse 42 – Did everyone have enough to eat? (yes, they ate and were filled)
- Verse 43 – How much food was left over? (12 baskets worth)
- Verse 44 – How many people were there? (5000 men; so including women and children, maybe 10,000, maybe more; the idea though is that *a lot* of people were there)

TELL

- Just like in the video clip that we watched where two people saw two different things even though they were looking at the same thing, today’s story has Jesus and his disciples seeing two different things even though they are looking at the same thing.
- Now, to help us out some – there *is* some symbolism in today’s story.
- Throughout the Bible stories, we see that Israelites use certain numbers to explain “wholeness” and “completeness.” Those numbers are 3, 7, 12 and 40.
- And in this story, the disciples see 5 loaves and 2 fish.
- But Jesus sees 7 pieces of food – or in other words – Jesus sees a complete amount of food for everyone who is there.
- So after Jesus sees that there is a complete amount of food, Jesus then has to “unpack” that complete amount of food.
- The story tells us that the way Jesus unpacks the complete amount of food in four (easy) steps: He **takes** the food, he **blesses** the food, he **breaks** the food, and then he **gives** the food.
- The actions are pretty basic and so my following words might just be me being Captain Obvious, but I want to make

sure we're clear about this:

- a) The **first** thing Jesus does is "take." In other words, this is not a "from a distance" sort of thing. Instead, he takes the food; he holds it; he's touching it; he's interacting with it. This is a hands-on sort of a thing.
 - b) The **second** thing Jesus does is "bless" the food. Meaning: He invites God into the situation. Whatever he's going to do with the food, he's going to do it with God's help.
 - c) The **third** thing Jesus does is "break" the food. Once God is invited into the situation, then the situation is being transformed / being made different. The breaking of the food is this process of transformation.
 - d) The **fourth** thing Jesus does is "give" the food. Now that the food has been unpacked and has been transformed in the unpacking, Jesus shares it.
 - e) Bonus action (and not part of the four steps above): Cleaning up! Once everyone cleans up, it is revealed that not only was there enough food for everyone, but there were 12 baskets of food leftover. And that number of "12" is another one of those complete numbers, right? Which means that number is being mentioned there as a symbolic reminder that when we invite God into our situations of scarcity, then abundance – aka more than we need – is the result.
- So we're going to do an activity now to help us think a little bit more about "unpacking" a complete amount and how the take, bless, break, give process works.

EXPLAIN ACTIVITY - ROSLYN

- Once upon a time, there was a TV game show called "Win It In A Minute."
- The idea was that the contestant had to complete an activity within a minute (or less) to advance in the game.
- We're going to do one of those "Win It In A Minute" activities now.
- So we need two volunteers.
- We need one volunteer to hold this tissue box
- And we need one volunteer to pull all the tissues out of the box, one at a time
- [pick volunteers]
- Now, for the person who is pulling the tissues out, you only have **one minute** to do pull out all the tissues.
- And, you **must** pull the tissues out one at a time.
- You may **not** rip the box open
- You may only use one hand. However, we'll let you switch hands once you begin (if you get tired).
- So you're going to want to go really quick – which means you're not really going to want to care too much about the tissue once it's out of the box. Feel free to just throw it over your shoulder or drop it on the ground once you pull it out of the box
- Before we start, let's take a poll. Who thinks our volunteer will succeed? Who thinks they will not succeed?
- Any questions?
- [get your timer ready]
- On your mark, get set...go!
- [note: if volunteer doesn't finish in one minute – tell them to keep going and you'll time them to see how much longer it takes them to go before they get the box empty]

DO ACTIVITY

ASK / EXPLAIN Next Round

- Did our volunteer succeed!?
- So, to our volunteer, what do you think, was there a lot or a little of tissue?
- Class, do you agree or disagree with our volunteer? Why?
- What if we had used this box of tissue in the usual way, how long would it have lasted, do you think? (a couple of weeks, a month – if left in this classroom – at least half a year).
- How long did it last today (1 minute-ish)
- Do you want to do it one more time? But with a different twist?
- Ok, then I need two different volunteers. [*choose them*]
- What you're going to do is put the tissue *back* in the box. You have one minute!
- You can use two hands and *both* of you can put tissues back into the box.
- You may not tear the box apart though.
- Let's take a poll first – do you think that our volunteers can get all the tissues back into the box?
- Any questions?
- Ok, here we go...on your mark, get set, go!

DO ACTIVITY – 2nd round

ASK / TELL

- Did our volunteers succeed? Did they get all the tissues back into the box? [*if “yes,” go to line that starts with “if yes or no” in brackets*]
- [*if no*] Volunteers, even if you had more time, do you think you could've gotten the tissues to fit back into the box?
- [*if no*] Does it seem strange that the tissue doesn't all fit from where it came from?
- [*if yes or no*] Even though we understand that there is a certain way that the tissues have to be folded into the box to fit in there, this activity is *sort of* like today's story, isn't it?
- In the story, there was this complete package of food, but because of the packaging, people didn't know it was a complete amount.
- But Jesus knew. And Jesus knew how to unpack it with God's help.
- Once Jesus unpacked the food with God's help (using *take, bless, break, give*), then there was far more than what the original packaging suggested there would be, right?
 - 12 baskets of food is far more than 7 pieces of food, yeah?
- And you know what? This isn't the only time Jesus does this – he does it two other times. We'll discuss both those times in the other lessons for this session.
- But what is unique about today's story is how this process of take, bless, break, give serves as a reminder of how a situation of scarcity can be transformed into an abundant situation.
- And the reason Jesus does this is to help his disciples learn how to see it.
- Which means, this is process is for us to learn, should we choose to be students and followers of Jesus.
- That's the good news for today.

CLOSING PRAYER