

The Bread of Life

JOHN 6:35-51 (BSB) · TEACHER GUIDE · DIGDEEPER.AI

THE BIG IDEA · SAY IT AT LEAST FIVE TIMES

Jesus is the bread from heaven, and he keeps everyone who comes.

Open with it, bring it back after every section, close with it. By the end they should be able to finish the sentence for you.

- Before this passage (day 8): John 6:1-15, Bread for Thousands. Its big idea: Jesus already knows what he will do, and it is more than enough.
- After this passage (day 10): John 6:60-69, To Whom Shall We Go. Its big idea: When Jesus' words are hard, no one else has words of life.

Open

Recall last time: five barley loaves fed thousands on a hillside (John 6:1-15). Fill the gap briefly. Next morning the crowd chased Jesus across the sea to Capernaum. They asked for a sign like Moses' manna and said, in effect, 'give us this bread.' Ask: What's something you have to keep going back for, because it never lasts? Let a few answer. Read John 6:35 aloud: "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to Me will never hunger." Big idea: Jesus is the bread from heaven, and he keeps everyone who comes. Ask one person what stuck from last time.

Run Sheet

1. The Bread Who Keeps (John 6:35-40, about 14 min)

The one thing: Jesus offers himself, and he keeps everyone who comes.

Ask: Why do you think Jesus says he IS the bread, instead of just offering more bread?

2. The Grumbling and the Drawing (John 6:41-47, about 14 min)

The one thing: The crowd sees a neighbor. The Father is showing them his Son.

Ask: What makes it hard to believe someone familiar could be far more than he looks?

3. Better Than Manna (John 6:48-51, about 10 min)

The one thing: Manna put death off for a day. Jesus gives himself to end it.

Ask: What's the difference between something that keeps you going and something that gives you life?

Close (never cut it)

The passage shows who Jesus is and promises what he will do, so land on rest, not homework. Say it plainly: he is the bread from heaven, he never drives away the one who comes, and he loses none the Father gives him. Read v37 once more, allow a short quiet, and close in prayer.

PROTECT THE ENDING

If section 3 starts late, drop its discussion question and optional points, read vv49-51 aloud, and go straight to the close.

KIDS SIDE ANSWERS

Story order: 1, 4, 3, 2, 5 (top to bottom) · Feelings: The grumbling crowd worried, Jesus, when people did not believe sad, Israel eating manna in the desert happy, Anyone who comes to Jesus happy · Code: I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

Act it out: One child stands as Jesus with open arms. Others walk up one at a time. 'Jesus' welcomes each one and never sends anyone away, while the class says together, 'I will never drive away.'

1. The Bread Who Keeps

JOHN 6:35-40 · ABOUT 14 MIN · SECTION 1 OF 3

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- Jesus doesn't just give bread. He is the bread.
- Whoever comes to him is welcomed, never sent away.
- The Father's will: lose none, raise them up.

Jesus says, "I am the BREAD of life."

"The one who comes to Me I will never DRIVE AWAY."

Discuss: Why do you think Jesus says he IS the bread, instead of just offering more bread?

Jesus offers himself, and he keeps everyone who comes.

MUST COVER

- v35: "I am" means he is the food itself, not the one serving it.
- vv37-40: never drive away, lose none, raise up. It rests on the Father's will, not our grip.

IF THERE'S TIME

- v36: they saw the loaves and still didn't believe. Seeing is not the same as coming.
- "Raise him up at the last day" comes three times (vv39, 40, 44). Have the class count them.

Illustration idea: A parent at school pickup doesn't drive off until every child is in the car and counted.

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: The loaves were a sign pointing to him.
- Listen for: Bread lasts a day, but people need something that lasts longer.

If it drifts: If it turns into a debate about who is chosen, read v37 aloud. Start where Jesus starts: whoever comes is not driven away.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

He isn't handing out bread. He is the bread, and he holds on to whoever comes.

Short on time? Skip v36 and the optional points. Read v37 and v40 aloud and move on.

Bridge → Not everyone in the synagogue felt comforted. Some started to grumble.

2. The Grumbling and the Drawing

JOHN 6:41-47 · ABOUT 14 MIN · SECTION 2 OF 3

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- The crowd trips over his ordinary family.
- Coming to Jesus begins with the Father drawing.
- Only the Son has seen the Father.

The Jews began to GRUMBLE about Jesus.

No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me DRAWS him.

Discuss: What makes it hard to believe someone familiar could be far more than he looks?

The crowd sees a neighbor. The Father is showing them his Son.

MUST COVER

- v42: “whose father and mother we know.” Their obstacle is familiarity.
- vv44-45: the Father draws and teaches. Isaiah, an Old Testament prophet, promised “they will all be taught by God.”

IF THERE'S TIME

- “Grumble” echoes Israel grumbling about food in the wilderness (Exodus 16, the manna story).
- v46: Jesus claims he has seen the Father. No prophet ever claimed that.

Illustration idea: A kid from your street becomes famous. It's hard to take him seriously when you remember him in braces.

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: We know their flaws and their family.
- Listen for: The claim feels too big for someone so ordinary.

If it drifts: If it becomes 'who gets picked,' go to v45: everyone who has heard the Father comes. The point is that coming is God's gift, and Jesus welcomes whoever comes.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

They called him Joseph's son. He is the bread from heaven, and he keeps whoever comes.

Short on time? Drop the optional points. Keep v42 and v44.

Bridge → Now Jesus turns to the story everyone in the room knew by heart: the manna.

3. Better Than Manna

JOHN 6:48-51 · ABOUT 10 MIN · SECTION 3 OF 3

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- Manna fed Israel, but they still died.
- Jesus is living bread. Whoever eats lives forever.
- The bread is his own flesh, given for the world.

Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they DIED.

This bread, which I will give for the life of the WORLD, is My flesh.

Discuss: What's the difference between something that keeps you going and something that gives you life?

Manna put death off for a day. Jesus gives himself to end it.

MUST COVER

- vv49-50: the manna (Exodus 16) kept them alive one day at a time. It could not beat death.
- v51: "My flesh... for the life of the world." He is pointing ahead to giving his life on the cross.

IF THERE'S TIME

- v50: "anyone may eat of it." The invitation is wide open.
- Many then hoped the Messiah would bring the manna back. Jesus says he is more than that.

Illustration idea: Afternoon coffee gets you through the slump. It doesn't give you a life.

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: One is temporary and one lasts.
- Listen for: With the first, you have to keep going back.

If it drifts: If it slides into communion debates, call it a fair question and return to v51: "for the life of the world." Today's focus is the gift.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

Every other bread runs out. This one came down from heaven, and he loses none who come.

Short on time? Read vv49-51 aloud and go straight to the two must points.

Bridge → Let that last line sit a moment, then move into the close.

With One Friend, Over Coffee

ABOUT 30 MINUTES · FOR A FRIEND WHO IS CURIOUS, OR NOT SURE

1. Start with the loaves. Tell the story briefly. Jesus fed thousands with five loaves, and the next day the crowd chased him down wanting more bread.
2. Read it together. Read John 6:35-51 aloud, or just vv35-40 and 48-51 if time is tight. Ask what line stuck out.
3. Name the claim. He doesn't offer more bread. He says he is the bread, that he came down from heaven, and that he won't turn away anyone who comes.
4. Take the objection seriously. Point out that the crowd raised it first (v42): we know his parents. Jesus doesn't argue his family tree. He points to the Father, and to the life he will give.
5. Leave their question with them. End on the crowd's own question: "How then can He say, 'I have come down from heaven?'" Leave it with your friend. Is he only Joseph's son, or the bread from heaven?

QUESTIONS YOU MAY HEAR

"Isn't it likelier a local man was just wrong about himself?"

That's a fair instinct, and the crowd had it too. The real question is whether his life, death, and rising back up the claim. That's worth weighing, not dismissing.

"Eating his flesh? That sounds strange."

It does, and it startled them too. In v51 he ties it to giving his life "for the life of the world." Taking him in is like eating: you receive him, you don't earn him.

"If the Father has to draw me, what if I'm not drawn?"

Honestly, the passage doesn't explain every part of how that works. It does say whoever comes is never driven away (v37). Being curious enough to ask may be part of the drawing.

"“Never hunger” — but believers still struggle, don't they?"

Yes. He isn't promising an easy life. He's promising that the deepest hunger, for life that death can't take, is met in him.

Evergreen Principles

Four standards every week. The rest rotate: each lesson brings the few that fit its passage best.

EVERY LESSON

1. Pray before you prepare

Teaching the Bible is spiritual work first (John 15:5).

If you're new: Pray for your class by name during the week.

If you've taught for years: Pray for the one person you find hardest to reach.

2. Study the text first

Understand the passage yourself before any help.

If you're new: Read it in two translations; write your own questions first.

If you've taught for years: Don't lean on old notes. What did you miss last time?

3. Teach one big idea

People remember one sentence, not four points.

If you're new: Write it in 12 words or fewer before anything else.

If you've taught for years: Test every story against it. If it doesn't serve it, cut it.

4. Point to Christ

All of Scripture points to him (Luke 24:27).

If you're new: Ask: what does this show about Jesus?

If you've taught for years: Show grace as the reason for obedience, not just the rule.

FOR THIS LESSON

1. Plan for the skeptic and the grieving

This passage holds a skeptic's objection (v42) and a promise to raise the dead.

If you're new: Expect someone to voice the 'we know his family' doubt, and thank them. It's in the text.

If you've taught for years: Watch for grievors when 'raise him up' comes up, and slow down there without singling anyone out.

2. Admit what is hard

"Unless the Father... draws him" raises real questions that won't be settled in an hour.

If you're new: Say, 'Christians have wrestled with this for centuries.' Then point to v37.

If you've taught for years: Hold drawing (v44) and welcome (v37) side by side without forcing a system onto the text.

3. Let the passage land the way it lands

Jesus reveals himself and promises to keep his own. That calls for rest, not a task.

If you're new: Resist adding an action step at the end. Restate the promise and stop.

If you've taught for years: Let the quiet after v37 carry the close, instead of your own summary.

BEFORE CLASS

- ☐ Read the passage three times
- ☐ Big idea in one sentence
- ☐ Opening and close chosen
- ☐ Know what you'll cut
- ☐ Handouts, pens, extra Bibles
- ☐ Prayed for the class by name

Openings, Closings & Hard Moments

Pick one opening and one close; rotate so class doesn't get predictable.

OPENINGS

- ask a real-life question: What do you have to keep going back for because it never lasts?
- use an object: Hold up a store loaf and note its 'best by' date. Every bread has one. Then read v35.
- start in the text: Read v42 first, the crowd's grumble, then ask why a hometown boy's claim is so hard to swallow.

CLOSINGS

- restate the big idea: Jesus is the bread from heaven, and he keeps everyone who comes. He loses none.
- allow quiet reflection: Read v37 slowly, then give thirty seconds of silence before praying.
- send them out with a verse: "The one who comes to Me I will never drive away." John 6:37.

WHEN CLASS GETS HARD

- Someone grieving hears "I will raise him up at the last day" and thinks of a loved one, maybe unsure of that person's faith.: Don't rush past it or pronounce on anyone. Name the hope gently, say only God knows each heart, and offer to talk afterward.
- Someone who drifted hears "lose none" and wonders, 'Then I was never really his.': Don't rule on their past. Point to v37: whoever comes now is never driven away. The door is open today.
- Silence after a question: Wait. Then rephrase simpler, or ask them to talk to a neighbor first.
- One person dominates: "Thanks. Let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken yet." Talk privately if it continues.
- A question you can't answer: Say so, write it down, bring an answer next week.
- A tangent takes over: "Great question. Let's catch it after class so we can finish the passage."

READ THIS WEEK

- Exodus 16:13-21 (the manna in the wilderness)
- Isaiah 55:1-3 (God's invitation to come and eat freely)
- John 10:27-29 (no one can snatch Jesus' sheep from his hand)

Free at digdeeper.ai/devotionals/john/6-35-51/lesson

The Bread of Life

JOHN 6:35-51 (BSB) · WHO DO YOU SAY I AM? · DIGDEEPER.AI

Key verse: "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to Me will never hunger, and whoever believes in Me will never thirst." John 6:35

THE BIG IDEA

Jesus is the bread from heaven, and he keeps everyone who comes.

1. THE BREAD WHO KEEPS · JOHN 6:35-40

- Jesus doesn't just give bread. He is the bread.
- Whoever comes to him is welcomed, never sent away.
- The Father's will: lose none, raise them up.

Jesus says, "I am the _____ of life."

"The one who comes to Me I will never _____."

Discuss: Why do you think Jesus says he IS the bread, instead of just offering more bread?

2. THE GRUMBLING AND THE DRAWING · JOHN 6:41-47

- The crowd trips over his ordinary family.
- Coming to Jesus begins with the Father drawing.
- Only the Son has seen the Father.

The Jews began to _____ about Jesus.

No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me _____ him.

Discuss: What makes it hard to believe someone familiar could be far more than he looks?

3. BETTER THAN MANNA · JOHN 6:48-51

- Manna fed Israel, but they still died.
- Jesus is living bread. Whoever eats lives forever.
- The bread is his own flesh, given for the world.

Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they _____.

This bread, which I will give for the life of the _____, is My flesh.

Discuss: What's the difference between something that keeps you going and something that gives you life?

Read this week: Exodus 16:13-21 (the manna in the wilderness) · Isaiah 55:1-3 (God's invitation to come and eat freely) · John 10:27-29 (no one can snatch Jesus' sheep from his hand)

For Kids: The Bread of Life

JOHN 6:35-51 · NAME: _____

Big idea: Jesus is the bread that gives forever life.

1. PUT THE STORY IN ORDER! NUMBER THE BOXES.

- ☐ Jesus says, I am the bread.
- ☐ Jesus talks about manna long ago.
- ☐ People grumble: we know his parents!
- ☐ He promises never to send anyone away.
- ☐ He says his bread lasts forever.

2. HOW DID THEY FEEL? CIRCLE ONE.

The grumbling crowd: happy · sad · worried

Jesus, when people did not believe: happy · sad · worried

Israel eating manna in the desert: happy · sad · worried

Anyone who comes to Jesus: happy · sad · worried

3. WORD SEARCH

R V F O R E V E R
U S B H E A V E N
L C F M A N N A V
I C T H I R S T S
F B R E A D C Y P
E F D N D Y K Y O
G S S H U N G E R
S F R K K K S V P
F V N F A T H E R

BREAD · LIFE · HEAVEN · MANNA · FATHER · FOREVER · HUNGER · THIRST

4. SECRET CODE

1=A 2=B 3=D 4=E 5=F 6=H 7=I 8=L 9=M 10=O 11=R 12=T

7 1 9 12 6 4 2 11 4 1 3 10 5 8 7 5 4

5. DRAW IT!

Draw a table with a loaf of bread, and people of every kind coming to sit and eat.

6. MEMORY VERSE

"I am the bread of life." John 6:35 Say it to a grown-up: ☐ ☐ ☐

Jesus is the bread of life, so I can _____. _____