

**Worship Material**  
**Teachable moments**  
**Materials from Roots Bible Study**  
**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> August**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Lord God, 'The eyes of all look to you,  
and you give them their food in due season.'  
We gather at your feet today,  
awaiting the spiritual succour you offer.  
Help us to be worthy of this honour, open to receive.  
**Amen.**

**Read Matthew 14:13-21**

**Bible notes**

The story of the feeding of the five thousand follows two blows to Jesus' ministry. In his hometown of Nazareth, he faces rejection (13:57), and then comes the terrible news of Herod's murder of John the Baptist (14:1-12). Jesus seeks to be alone, but at the same time he acts to reveal God's power in him.

The miracle of feeding combines a tapestry of themes. Unlike the disciples, Jesus is not alarmed by the practical demands of providing food for so many. He acts in harmony with God's will that hungry people should be fed (Psalm 22:26; 145:15-16; Isaiah 58:6-7), and he reveals his control over the basic matter of creation as the bread and fish multiply into people's hands. His actions recall Moses providing manna in the wilderness – consistently a place of encounter with God – but his words link this sharing into the sharing of the Eucharist (14:19). This meal foreshadows the feast of God's kingdom, where compassion enables sharing so that all are fed, and the leftovers reveal God's generous provision over and above what is needed.

Unlike Herod, Jesus is a host who respects his guests and organises his banquet well. The numbers are large (Matthew notes the additional 'women and children') and all are invited to sit down and share in an inclusive celebration of God's provision. These guests are the crowds from the towns of Galilee, for whom hunger is normal. Again, there is a contrast with Herod's banquet, which is only for the elite. Jesus shows God's concern to care for everyone and honour them.

**Prayer**

Lord, you are the ultimate host;  
we praise you for your generosity of spirit.  
Thank you for your ever-open heart and hands,  
swift to forgive and to bless,  
to feed our souls and to unburden our spirits.

Thank you for your nurturing nature,  
enfolding us in compassion and encouragement every day.  
We praise you for having all the time in the world for us,  
even when we do not honour you in the same way.  
Day by day, may we grow in love and grace,  
learning from you, becoming more like you, we pray.  
**Amen.**

### **A prayer to conclude**

Loving God,  
thank you for using our small contributions.  
Help us not to doubt  
that each of us has something to offer,  
and that, when we trustfully offer it to you,  
you do amazing things for us, among us and through us –  
in Jesus' name.  
**Amen.**