

A Mammoth Picnic

By Susan Vogt



Summer is the time when many families have picnics and family reunions. Let's revisit the time when Jesus had a mammoth picnic. It may not have been planned but as the guests kept multiplying, Jesus, as host, was concerned about how to feed them all. Some were probably relatives and others were probably relatives of relatives. What can we learn from this Bible story about how our own extended family gathers for meals?

For

Adult / Couple

Season

Summer

Needed

Picnic supplies

Prepare in Advance

Plans for a family picnic, ideally one that involves your extended family

Activity Plan

1. Before your family picnic or family reunion actually begins, by yourself (or with whatever nuclear family members are willing to join you) take a short time to pray and remember the Bible story about Jesus feeding the 5,000. Read John 6:5-14.

Generous Jesus, you saw that the people needed to eat. You knew yourself well and called upon God your Father, to bless the meager food that was available. Help us to be good hosts, noticing what our guests need in warm greetings, enough food, and conversation that shows we care about them. Amen.

2. Read John 6:5-14 (see next page).
3. Ask yourself and discuss:
 - Have you ever felt real hunger (not just a craving for a particular food)?
 - Do you like cooking? Do you like preparing food for large groups?
 - Some Scripture scholars suggest that the "miracle" of Jesus feeding the 5,000 may have been the miracle of people who brought food with them for their own immediate needs, being willing to share. When have you shared food when there was only a limited supply?
 - When you have a big meal and there is food left over, what do you do with it? Most families send portions home with their guests. Are there any "guests" who are not family members who are hungry today? Perhaps you'd like to make a food or monetary contribution to a soup kitchen or food pantry that takes care of feeding people all year round.
4. Thank God that you have food to eat and loved ones to share it with.

Feeding the 5000

John 6:5-14

“When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, ‘Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?’ He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, ‘Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.’ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, ‘There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?’ Jesus said, ‘Make the people sit down.’ Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, ‘Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.’ So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, ‘This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.’”

