

# Learning Together

## I AM Statements of Jesus



---

**Sample Lesson**

---

# Contributors

## **Publisher**

Gregory Rawn

## **Layout**

Dawn Saxton

## **Editors**

Cynthia Fairman Paulson

Elaine Seekon

## **Graphic Designer**

Amanda Wolfe

## **Writers**

Kari Osmeck

Kirsten Patterson

Gregory Rawn

## **Artists**

Amanda Wolfe

# Copyrights

Learning Together: I AM Statements of Jesus

Text and illustrations copyright © 2021-2022 by Spirit & Truth Publishing

All rights reserved. No part of this curriculum may be used or reproduced in any other manner whatsoever without written permission. For information, contact Spirit & Truth Publishing at [www.SpiritAndTruthPublishing.com](http://www.SpiritAndTruthPublishing.com).

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is quoted from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# Lesson 1: The Bread of Life

**Bible Reading:**

John 6:25-51

**Key Verse:**

“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

– John 6:35

**The Point:**

Jesus nourishes us.



# Activities & Supplies

## Opening

### Bread Hopscotch

Play a game with “bread.”

**15 min.**

- Bibles
- Slices of bread
- Markers
- Paper
- Optional: craft foam, scissors

## Stations

### Storytelling

#### Jesus, Life for All

Taste a variety of bread and hear the lesson.

**20 min.**

- Bibles
- Variety of breads

### Craft

#### Jesus Is the Bread

Make a craft to remember this I AM statement.

**20 min.**

- Play dough or air-drying clay
- Pencils or toothpicks
- Optional: paper to cover work area, paper plates or zippered bags



# Stations

## Science

20 min.

### Rising Bread

Show how some bread rises to be fluffy and thick.

- Balloon
- Mixing bowl
- Whisk or spoon
- Funnel
- Clean water or soda bottle
- Sugar
- Active dry yeast,
- Warm water  
(105-115°F, 40.5-46°C)
- Flat bread or communion wafer
- Slice of yeast bread

### Feed the Birds

Care for God's creation.

- Used lard bread and crackers from games
- Little paper cups
- Bird seed
- Chenille stems
- Lard
- Table covering
- Optional: plastic gloves



# Stations

## Games

20 min.

### Bread Play

“Minute to win-it” bread game stations.

*Note: Keep all the food that used in Games to use in a science activity.*

### Sticky Situation

Play a sticky game.

- Sliced bread
- Lard
- Ping pong balls
- Hula hoops
- Masking tape

### Cracker Tower

How many oyster crackers can you stack in one minute?

- Oyster crackers
- Table
- Timer

### Go Fish!

Play a fast-paced game.

- Fish crackers
- Straws
- Plates
- Timer



## Stations

### Snack

#### Rainbow Toast

Beautiful bread for our stomachs.

**20 min.**

- Sliced bread
- Milk (divided)
- Food coloring (three colors)
- Spoons
- Plates
- Small containers
- Cotton swabs
- Parchment paper
- Marker
- Toaster, toaster oven, or oven
- Baking sheet
- Information about your congregation's food initiatives or local food pantry

## Closing Prayer

**5 min.**

- For the Home



# Background for Leaders

## The Bread of Life

### The Point

Jesus nourishes us.

### Did You Know?

- Manna was a food that God provided to the Israelites in the wilderness each morning (see Exodus 16). Manna only lasted one day, and the Israelites were instructed to take enough for one day, except on the day preceding the Sabbath, where they were instructed to take enough for two days.
- Many ancient Jewish teachers used the image of the manna from heaven to speak about spiritual food or God's Word. Jesus takes this a step further connecting this heavenly bread to himself.
- Jesus' proclamation here of the "bread of life" has parallels with the story of the woman at the well in John 4. There Jesus spoke of "living water." In both cases, Jesus connects things we need for physical life to eternal life (see John 4:10, 13-15).
- The word "life" here and elsewhere in the Gospel of John is not our physical life but eternal life. Eternal life is life in the new creation. Instead of being only in the future, Jesus teaches that this life is present and accessible now through himself.

### Why It Matters

- Spending time with Jesus feeds us spiritually.
- Every time we eat or drink, we can thank Jesus for his love.
- Spiritual practices give us the energy we need to do God's work in the world.

### Prayer of Preparation

God, you have fed your people and continue to nourish and care for us. Thank you. Amen.





# Lesson Plan

## Opening

---

### Bread Hopscotch

15 min.

Play a game with “bread.”

#### *Supplies:*

- Bibles
- Slices of bread
- Markers
- Paper
- Optional: craft foam, scissors

#### *Preparation:*

1. On slices of bread, write one of the following words: I, am, the, bread, of, life, John, 6:35. Make one set of bread for each small group. For a longer game, include the rest of the Key Verse as well (Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty).
2. If you prefer to not use actual food in a game, cut slices of bread from the craft foam and write the same words on each slice.

#### *Instructions:*

1. Welcome participants and divide them into small groups by their favorite types of bread. Place slips of paper with different types of bread on tables or call them out and arrange participants in small groups. Make sure that small children remain with at least one other family member.



2. Today we will begin a series on the “I AM” statements of Jesus. Our first statement is “I am the Bread of Life.” To get us started, we are going to do an activity to help us learn our Key Verse.
3. Distribute one set of “bread” to each small group.
4. Lay out your set of bread words to make a hop-scotch pattern on the floor. You will need to lay them out in the correct order so that as you hop, you can read the Key Verse. If you need help, the Key Verse can be found in John 6:35 in your Bibles.
5. If you have participants who have physical challenges that make it difficult to participate in hopscotch, make sure they take the lead in placing the bread slices in the correct order.
6. Give each person a chance to hop, with the group saying the words out loud as they go.
7. When everyone has had a chance to participate, conclude with: **Let’s all say the Key Verse together one last time: “I am the bread of life. John 6:35.”** Now let’s learn more about what that means.



# Stations

## Storytelling

20 min.

### Jesus, Life for All

Taste a variety of bread and hear the lesson.

#### *Supplies:*

- Bibles
- Variety of breads

#### *Preparation:*

1. Before serving any food, always check with participants or caregivers for participants who have food allergies. Provide an alternative if necessary.

#### *Instructions:*

1. **Today we are talking about bread. How many of you like to eat bread?** Allow responses. **Turn to someone near you and talk about your favorite bread. You each have 10 seconds.**
2. **What do you receive when you eat bread? Does it make you feel full, or do you like the flavor or texture, or is it just for holding the peanut butter? Do you enjoy eating with people that you love and care about? Or is it something else? Turn to a different person and talk about what you like best about eating bread.** Allow a short time for participants to talk.
3. **Different types of bread are an important part of the diet of people around the world. Bread provides us with nourishment and helps us to feel strong when we are feeling weak. We are going to look at a story in which Jesus calls himself the Bread of Life. That might sound kind of silly at first, but in what ways do you think Jesus**



might be like bread? Turn to one more person that you have not talked to yet and share your thoughts. Again, allow a brief time for discussion.

4. **This is the first in our series of I AM stories, where Jesus compares himself to something else. Jesus has just performed the miracle of feeding 5,000 people. Open a Bible and look at the beginning of John 6 to see what happened right before today's reading.**
5. Allow participants time to glance over John 6:1-24, and then review those stories as a large group.
6. **Read John chapter 6, verses 25 and 26 in your small groups. As our story today begins, Jesus and his disciples are heading out on a boat to Capernaum. The crowds follow him. Why do they follow him?** [*Because they want more of what he has to offer, because they are still hungry.*]
7. **What does Jesus say he can give them?** [*Food that endures.*]
8. **Continue reading verses 27-33. What story do you think Jesus is talking about when he talks about Moses and the bread from heaven?** [*God providing manna and quail in the wilderness—see Exodus 16:4-35 for a reminder of this story.*]
9. **Read verses 34-40. For whom does Jesus provide this bread?** [*Everyone, everywhere.*]
10. **Jesus provides nourishment for all people everywhere.** Display the different types of bread and invite participants to taste samples. **When you look at and taste these different types of bread, what country or area do you think of?**
11. **While we might all eat different types of bread depending on where we live, bread—or another grain—is an almost universal food. What does this say about Jesus' words?** [*He might appear differently in different areas, but his love is for all people in all countries.*]
12. **Let's finish reading today's lesson. Finish with verses 41-51. Verses 49-50 and 58 make an important distinction about how the bread that is Jesus is different from the manna that God sent to the Israelites. What is that difference?** [*Jesus brings eternal life, not just temporary satisfaction.*]
13. **Jesus is the bread of life, and that life is eternal life!**



## Craft

20 min.

### Jesus Is the Bread

Make a craft to remember this I AM statement.

#### *Supplies:*

- Play dough or air-drying clay
- Pencils or toothpicks
- Optional: paper to cover work area, paper plates or zippered bags for transport

#### *Preparation:*

1. If desired, cover work areas with paper.

#### *Instructions:*

1. **Today we heard Jesus say that he is the bread of life, providing nourishment for us and sustaining us when we feel weak or tired. We are going to make a reminder that you can take home about Jesus' words.**
2. Distribute a ball of play dough to each participant.
3. **What is your favorite type of bread? Is it a round loaf, like sourdough? Or just a slice that reminds you of a sandwich? Or maybe it is a fancy braided loaf. Shape your play dough into your favorite kind of bread. As you work, talk with the others at your table about your favorite thing about Jesus.**
4. **When you have finished shaping your loaf, use a pencil (or toothpick) to inscribe a reminder about today's lesson. You might want to remember that Jesus is the Bread of Life. Or you might want to write down your favorite thing about Jesus. Write whatever will help you remember the lesson today.**
5. Optional: pass out paper plates or zippered bags to make transport home easier.
6. **When you get home, you can place your bread where you will see it to help you remember today's lesson. Be sure that someone in your house keeps a loaf in the kitchen!**



# Science

20 min.

## Rising Bread

Show how some bread rises to be fluffy and thick.

### *Supplies:*

- Balloon
- Mixing bowl
- Whisk or spoon
- Funnel
- Clean water or soda bottle
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 packet or 2 1/4 tablespoons active dry yeast,
- Warm water (105-115°F, 40.5-46°C)
- Flat bread or communion wafer
- Slice of yeast bread

### *Preparation:*

1. Set all supplies above out in front of you for your presentation.

### *Instructions:*

1. **Look at these different kinds of bread!** Show flat bread and risen bread.
2. **The flat breads just used baking soda, but this risen bread used yeast to make it rise to make a fluffier bread.**
3. **Let's do an experiment to see how yeast, sugar and water make bubbles to help the bread dough rise. We will see how the yeast eats the sugar and makes carbon dioxide, which is the same process that yeast goes through in our bread dough.**
4. Mix the yeast and water together gently.



5. Add the sugar.
6. Pour into the bottle using a funnel.
7. Fit the balloon over the top to catch all the air rising from the yeast mixture.
8. Place on a tray.
9. The bubbles are slow-moving. Once the bottle fills up completely, pull the balloon off and watch the foam slowly pour over the bottle's top onto the tray.
10. While you are waiting, do the Feed the Birds activity below.



## Science

20 min.

### Feed the Birds

Caring for God's creation.

#### *Supplies:*

- Used lard bread and crackers from games
- Little paper cups
- Bird seed
- Chenille stems
- Lard
- Table covering
- Optional: plastic gloves

#### *Preparation:*

1. Place used bread and crackers into bowls.
2. Sprinkle bird seed on top of the bowls.
3. Put several spoonfuls of lard in the bowl.
4. Place covering on tables or work area.
5. Give each participant a cup and a chenille stem.
6. Plan to do this activity while the above yeast experiment is rising.
7. Note: if you are using this in a rotational setting, you will need to prepare one set of lard bread and crackers for the first group.

#### *Instructions:*

1. Set bowls of used food with the bird seed on the table.
2. Have participants mix loosely together.





3. **There is a science called environmental science where we can take care of the world God created, including its creatures. When we reuse supplies and not waste them, we are helping our environment, our world.**
4. **Let us feed the birds with all our leftover game food.**
5. **Take a big handful of the food from the bowl in front of you and squish it all together until it is well mixed.**
6. **Place your handful of food inside the cup and mash it all together.**
7. **Poke two holes in the top of your cup and place the chenille stem through each to make a handle to hang on a tree.**
8. **Now this is ready to hang on a tree for the birds.** You could hang them on trees around your building or have participants bring them home to hang on a tree of their choice.
9. **Make sure participants wash their hands well.**



## Games

20 min.

*Before playing check with participants or caregivers for potential food allergies.*

### Bread Play

“Minute to win-it” bread game stations.

*Note: Keep all the food that used in Games to use in a science activity.*

**What did Jesus say about bread?** *[I am the bread of life.]*

1. **What kind of bread is Jesus talking about?** *[Learning about Jesus, worshipping and praying.]*
2. **What else can you do with this kind of bread?** Hold up a slice of bread, accept all answers.
3. **Have you ever played a game with bread?** Accept all answers.
4. **We are going to play several bread and cracker games! The first one we will try to make a ping pong ball stick onto this slathered piece of bread!**



# Games

---

## Sticky Situation

Play a sticky game.

### *Supplies:*

- Sliced bread
- Lard
- Ping pong balls
- Hula hoops
- Masking tape

### *Preparation:*

1. Place hula hoops on table or floor.
2. Mark four places of varying distance around the hoop for participants to stand.
3. Spread a couple slices of bread with a thick covering of lard.
4. Place the slathered bread slices in the hula hoop.

### *Instructions:*

1. **As we learn about Jesus, all that learning sticks in our hearts and fills us up.**
2. **Can you stick your ping pong ball onto the bread in the hula hoop?**
3. **Stand behind these lines and throw or bounce your ball until it sticks in the bread.**
4. **Keep trying! When you stick your ping pong ball, go to the next station.**



# Games

---

## Cracker Tower

How many oyster crackers can you stack in one minute?

### *Supplies:*

- Oyster crackers
- Table
- Timer

### *Preparation:*

1. Place a bowl of oyster crackers on the table.

### *Instructions:*

1. **We have another bread game! Did you know that there are many kinds of bread? Crackers are a type of bread. This is a cracker game! You will try to stack up as many crackers as you can. You can do this any way that you wish!** For a more difficult challenge have participants use only one hand.
2. **As we learn stories about Jesus they add up in our heart and continue to stack up as we learn.**
3. Give each participant a minute or two to stack as many crackers in a tower as possible.



# Games

---

## Go Fish!

Play a fast-paced game.

### *Supplies:*

- Fish crackers
- Straws
- Plates
- Timer

### *Preparation:*

1. Place two plates and a straw in front of each participant.
2. Place ten fish crackers on one of each participants' plates.

### *Instructions:*

1. Participants will have one minute (to win it!) to see how many fish they can transfer from one plate to another with the suction from the straw and no hands.
2. **Jesus fed 5,000 people who were hungry with bread and fish from one boy's lunch. Jesus knew that we all need to care and feed each other to fill our stomachs. We need to hear the stories of how Jesus loves all of us to pass on that love to others.**
3. **See how many crackers you can move from one plate to the other using only your straw and no hands!**
4. Optional: Have participants work in competing teams.



## Snack

20 min.

*Before serving any food check with participants or caregivers for potential allergies, provide an alternative if necessary.*

### Rainbow Toast

Beautiful bread for our stomachs.

#### *Ingredients:*

- Sliced bread
- 3/4 cups milk (divided, per group)
- 3 drops food coloring (three colors, per group)

#### *Supplies:*

- Spoons
- Plates
- Small containers (three per group)
- Cotton swabs (five per participant)
- Parchment paper
- Marker
- Toaster, toaster oven, or oven
- Baking sheet
- Information about your congregation's food initiatives or local food pantry

#### *Preparation:*

1. Pour 1/4 cup milk into each small container.
2. Add three drops of food coloring per color per container of milk.
3. Stir each cup until vibrant color appears.



***Instructions:***

1. **Jesus was concerned about empty stomachs as well as empty hearts.**
2. **What are your favorite foods? How do you fill your stomachs?**
3. **Jesus wants people to be fed and not go hungry.**
4. **How do you help hungry people have food?** Explain your congregation's food initiatives and any connections to a food pantry.
5. **When Jesus said "I am the bread of life" he is talking about our lives and our hearts being fed and full of God.**
6. **How can we fill our hearts with God today?** Accept all answers.
7. **Let's decorate our bread and then eat and enjoy.**
8. Give each participant a slice of bread on a plate and five cotton swabs.
9. Spread out colored milk containers within reach of each plate.
10. **Jesus fills our hearts as we learn about him. Bread and milk fill our stomachs. When we learn about Jesus and eat this snack, we will have more energy to love and help others.**
11. Show how to dip a cotton swab in the "paint" and decorate one side of the slice of bread.
12. Mark parchment paper with each participant's name.
13. Bake in a toaster on medium heat or in the oven at 350°F (175°C) for five minutes.
14. **Before we eat, let's pray. Repeat after me.**

**Dear God, (echo)**

**Thank you for Jesus. (echo)**

**Help us fill our hearts with your love. (echo)**

**And fill our stomachs with our beautiful bread. (echo)**

**Amen.**



## Closing Prayer

---

Play or sing the song “I am the Bread of Life” as a closing meditation on today’s lesson. A lyric video can be found on various websites, [for example on YouTube](#). Website hyperlinks are provided for your convenience and are correct and relevant at the time of publication but may not be at the time of use.

Remember to send “For the Home” take-home sheet with participants before dismissing them.





## The Bread of Life

### The Point

---

Jesus nourishes us.

### Key Verse

---

“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

– John 6:35

### Did You Know?

---

- Manna was a food that God provided to the Israelites in the wilderness each morning (see Exodus 16). Manna only lasted one day, and the Israelites were instructed to take enough for one day, except on the day preceding the Sabbath, where they were instructed to take enough for two days.
- Many ancient Jewish teachers used the image of the manna from heaven to speak about spiritual food or God’s Word. Jesus takes this a step further connecting this heavenly bread to himself.
- Jesus’ proclamation here of the “bread of life” has parallels with the story of the woman at the well in John 4. There Jesus spoke of “living water.” In both cases, Jesus connects things we need for physical life to eternal life (see John 4:10, 13-15).
- The word “life” here and elsewhere in the Gospel of John is not our physical life but eternal life. Eternal life is life in the new creation. Instead of being only in the future, Jesus teaches that this life is present and accessible now through himself.

### Why It Matters

---

- Spending time with Jesus feeds us spiritually.
- Every time we eat or drink, we can thank Jesus for his love.
- Spiritual practices give us the energy we need to do God’s work in the world.

## Prayer of the Week

---

God, you have fed your people and continue to nourish and care for us. Thank you. Amen.

## Discussion Starters

---

Prior to this week's lesson, we find the story of Jesus' miracle of feeding many people with bread and fish. Read that story in John 6:1-14. What do you think it was like to be in the crowd on this day? Share your thoughts. As you talk, eat goldfish crackers and bread together.

Read this week's lesson found in John 6:25-51. The crowd has followed Jesus because of what they witnessed in the miracle of the loaves and fishes. Why do you follow Jesus? What miracles do you see him performing even today? Go outside and find a miracle.

What does it mean to you that Jesus is the bread of life? Find a simple bread recipe and bake it together. As you do, talk about ways that Jesus nourishes and sustains you.

One of the ways that Jesus nourishes us is through community. Think of a favorite family meal. Why is it a favorite? What do you feel during this meal? Tonight, set your table with the "good dishes," light candles, and create a special meal together.

One way that Jesus nourishes us is through Holy Communion. Talk about communion at your church. How does it make you feel? What do you think about first when you think about communion? Watch the video [#EatTogether Commercial](#) together. (Website hyperlinks are provided for your convenience and are correct and relevant at the time of publication but may not be at the time of use.) How does this give you a different perspective on the shared meal of Holy Communion?



## Blessing for the Week

---

Share this blessing while tracing a cross on each person's forehead or hand with their permission: **Be fed and filled by God. Amen.**

## Did you like this lesson?

You can get this entire *Learning Together* unit “The I AM Statements of Jesus” for FREE when you sign up for our quarterly e-newsletter. Just visit

<https://spiritandtruthpublishing.com/get-a-free-product/>

and complete the sign-up form!

