



Children's Message
By Sara DeBoer

Storyteller Instructions: *For this children's message, you will need a small food item that you can pass out to each child. Small wrapped granola bars are ideal because they can be found inexpensively, the wrapping will keep floors clean, and there are varieties that will allow even those with food allergies to participate. It's wise to have your food item in an opaque container like a grocery bag, so that you can be sure to have enough but, once you've given each child one, it appears that you are now out of food. You also have the option to use a roll of quarters later in the message if you like. If you usually have a large number of children, you may want two rolls.*

Good morning everyone! I am so glad to see you all!

Today I want to tell you about something that has been worrying me. Do you ever have worries? (You can give the children a chance to reply but try to move on quickly and avoid a recitation of all their worries) Well, I have had a worry that I want to tell you about because something wonderful happened. I found an answer to my worry in a Bible story I was reading. And I'd like to tell you that story too!

But *first*, I want to ask each of you to hold onto something tightly because we are about to do an **experiment**.

(Pass out your chosen food item, reminding the children to hold onto it tightly and be ready for the experiment.)

Ok, here is the experiment: **We are going to see if we can together feed all the people in this church with all the food I just gave you.**

When I say "Go!" I want you to take your granola bar, *walk* out there and give it to someone and then *walk* back. Ready? **GO!** (Let the children go to whomever they like, gently pointing the shy or reluctant to someone nearby)

Ok! Good job, everyone! I am happy to see you all be so generous and help those hungry people. Now, let's see if we were right? **DID we feed everyone or not?** Can everyone in the congregation who did NOT get a granola bar and is still hungry please raise your hand?

Wow, there are still a lot of hungry people out there.

SO THIS HAS BEEN MY WORRY! I am worried about hungry people around the world. So many people don't have enough to eat. There are millions of hungry people around the world and I only have a little bit. I didn't even have enough to feed everyone in this church today!

But do you remember that I said I learned something amazing from a *Bible* story that I wanted to share? Well, here is the story I read. Maybe you've heard it . . .

Once, Jesus and his disciples went far, far out into the countryside to try to rest. Jesus had been preaching a lot and he and his disciples were trying to get away from the crowds. But the people wanted to hear Jesus so much that they *followed him all the way out into the countryside* and sat on a hill all day and listened to him preach. Can you guess how many people came and sat on that hill?

(*Give the children a chance to guess. If someone gets it right, say "Wow, you are right! 5,000 people!" or, if the children guess far less, try "It was even MORE than that! About 5,000 people were there!"*) It was a BIG CROWD, waaaaaay more than here at church today!

And as it came close to suppertime, Jesus' disciples came to him and said "Hey Jesus, we should really tell these people to go home so they can eat. There's no food way out here and it's going to get dark and these people will go hungry."

Now that sounds smart to me! If I were one of those disciples, I would send those people home to get dinner. **But guess what Jesus said to them?** "*You give them something to eat.*"

WHAT?! There were 5,000 people there! The disciples hadn't planned for this! **How could they ever feed them??**

The disciples had only found 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish belonging to a child in the crowd. Now, do you think you could feed 5,000 people with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish? NO WAY! I bet we couldn't feed this congregation with 5 loaves and 2 fish, right?

But the disciples collected the food as Jesus asked. And Jesus gave thanks for the bread and the fish and tore it all into pieces and told the disciples to pass it out. *And guess what?*

EVERYONE IN THE CROWD ate as much as they wanted and when they were done there were still BASKETS full of food leftover! Jesus changed many people's stories that day—not only were hungry people fed, but people also experienced God's love and power.

Boys and girls, that is called a miracle.

And it also is the solution to my worry I was telling you about earlier. Do you remember that?

I was worrying about the people in the world who are hungry every day. And I was thinking that I am just 1 person. How can I help feed all the hungry people in the world? I don't have enough money for that! (*If feasible, at this point the storyteller could pull out a roll of quarters and say "I only have this roll of quarters!"*)

But when I read this story of Jesus feeding 5,000 people with only 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish, I realized something very important.

Jesus doesn't expect ME to give enough money to feed all the hungry people in the world. **He just expects me to give the small amount I have and then trust Him to make it enough.** Just like the child on the hill with the loaves and fish.

And I want to tell you about something amazing we are doing today that will let you and I be like the child that generously gave the loaves and fish to Jesus.

Today we are celebrating Growing Hope Globally Sunday. Growing Hope Globally is made up of a bunch of Christian people who want to feed hungry families all over the world. And here's how that works. *(If you're using the roll of quarters, break it open now).*

First, I give what I can. *(Put a quarter in the offering plate. If the church doesn't keep their offering plate on the altar, then a jar labeled "Offering" works great.)* Then, our church and a whole lot of other churches give money to an organization called World Renew, which supports farmers and helps hungry people all over the world *(Put a few more quarters in the jar or offering plate).*

World Renew works with Growing Hope Globally who ALSO gives money *(Put a few more quarters in the jar or offering plate).*

So pretty soon my little contribution has joined many, many others and becomes quite large. This way, when people are hungry and farmers need help growing food, Growing Hope Globally has a LOT OF MONEY, to help.

This reminds me so much of the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000. Jesus took *what was there* and then used it to make even more.

So now, when I start to worry about all the hungry people all over the world, I remember the story of the loaves and fish and I trust that God is going to turn *my* small contribution into something very big. **Jesus wants us to contribute what we can. And together we can help change the story of hungry families, so that they have enough to eat!** Let me give each of you a quarter and, as you leave, you can put it in the offering plate too, just like the child on the hill with Jesus *(pass out the remaining quarters to each child).*

Before you go, would you let me pray with you?

Dearest God, thank you for sending Jesus to teach us so many wonderful things about You. We know you care that people are hungry. And we know that you want us to give what we can, and that you will take our small contribution and make it something powerful. Amen.