

Word One Bible Study

Feeding on Jesus

by Tim Rolfing & Timothy Rynearson

Text: John 6:51-69 for the Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

1. Consider ways of growing deeper in personal spirituality;
2. Discover the intimacy and depth Christ desires in His relationship with us;
3. Review and reaffirm the power of the Lord's Supper to bring life, now and in eternity;
4. Discover the "radicalness" of Jesus' claims, His "hard saying," both for the Jews then and for us now.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Bible for each participant

One copy of discussion questions for each small group (groups are 5-10 people)

One newsprint sheet and marker for each group

A fresh loaf of bakery bread, possibly something special like cinnamon raisin.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Have each person introduce him/herself by saying their name and the food they would "live on" if given the chance (My name is Tim, and I could eat a pepperoni pizza every day for at least one meal). When all have shared, made each other hungry (or sick), and had a laugh, make the transition into the lesson with this:

Today's Gospel, as well as those of the last few weeks from the previous parts of John chapter 6, has Jesus talking about eating. Having fed the 5000 just a day or two before today's lesson takes place, Jesus again claims to be the "Bread of Life," and expands on what that means with some strong statements that His listeners, even His disciples, find hard to swallow.

Label the four corners of the room as a, b, c and d. Ask participants to go to the corner of the room that best represents their personal answer to the multiple choice questions below, as you read them. After each question, take just a moment to ask one or two people in each corner why they chose this answer.

1. If I had an extra hour today, I'd spend it...
 - a. Catching up on reading
 - b. In prayer or quiet thought
 - c. With my friends
 - d. With my family
2. The thing I like most about taking Communion is:
 - a. Knowing my sins are forgiven
 - b. The unity I feel with my brothers and sisters in Christ
 - c. The closeness I feel with Jesus as I taste the elements
 - d. The power I receive for daily living
3. My relationship with Jesus could best be described as:
 - a. French silk pie: rich, smooth and sweet
 - b. Swiss Cheese: tasty, but full of holes
 - c. Catch of the Day: sometimes great, sometimes bad
 - d. Empty cream puff: pretty bland and empty

Use this next one to divide into groups of 5-10 people. Combine or split the corners after they respond to make the groups about the same size.

4. My usual breakfast is:
 - a. Cold cereal
 - b. Nothing
 - c. Bagels, rolls, or sweet stuff
 - d. Hot and nutritious, like pancakes or eggs

LOOKING AT GOD'S WORD

Have each group sit in a tight circle around the room. Have two volunteers, one from each end of the room divide the reading of the lesson, John 6:51-69. Then ask the groups the following questions which you have reproduced for the group leaders. Instruct the leaders (perhaps an adult or older youth) to be sure each person has a chance to speak and each question is understood and discussed for a few minutes.

1. What outrageous claims have you heard modern cult groups making?
2. Why are these so hard to believe?
3. What claims of Christianity seem particularly hard for the secular world to understand? Why?
4. How do you think Jesus' listeners reacted to the words of today's Gospel? Why?
5. Of all the teachings of Christ, which ones are the hardest for you to understand or accept? Share your faith struggles and doubts.
6. What does Jesus expect of his disciples? Does Jesus' expectations of us change from day to day? Is it dependent on whether we are feeling good or if everything is going right in our lives?
7. God's gifts to us not only includes forgiveness of sins and our salvation through the death and resurrection of His Son, it also includes the faith to trust In His Son. How does John 6:65 make this clear?

REINFORCING WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED

During the discussion, distribute a piece of newsprint and a marker to each group. When ready, have them title the page "True Rock Cafe: Ways and Benefits of Feeding on Jesus." Challenge them to develop a menu. They should list each item and a restaurant-style description of its benefits. Encourage them to be creative and personal, moving beyond the 'churchy' answers to ones that are truly meaningful to them. Put an example of your own on the board or on a prepared newsprint.

TRUE ROCK CAFE

Ways and Benefits of Feeding on Jesus

WEEKLY YOUTH BIBLE CLASS - A delicious assortment of topics to meet all interests, brings you closer to God and His people, strengthens friendships.

THURSDAY BREAKFAST WITH JIM - Quiet and personal sharing of concerns and joys. We pray for each other and grow as brothers in Christ.

Invite the groups to form one large circle and have each group present their menu. Affirm their work, their creativity and their spirituality.

Get out your loaf of fresh bakery bread, warm if possible, for the aroma. Pass the loaf from person to person. Instruct them to each break off a bite size piece. Read verse 54 aloud, and ask each person to share what it means to "remain in Him." Do this for about the first one-third of your circle. Then continuing to pass the bread, change the question to "What feelings do you have when you receive Holy Communion"? For the final one-third of your group, read verse 58 aloud and ask them to share what they think it means to "feed on this bread." Participants may eat their bread after they have spoken, as they pass it to the next person.

Then ask "Who'd like seconds?" Give the loaf to one who requested it and ask them to select two "menu" items, one that they have already "tasted" and will continue and one that they never tried before but would like to. Then have them pass the loaf to another person. Continue until all have shared again (participants may need to adapt menu selections, e.g. "Breakfast with Jim" might become "Lunch with Jennifer").

CLOSING

Suggest that each person reread the lesson silently and pray for the courage to believe and to partake of the "menu" items this week.

Originally published in Discovery Bible Studies 19, 1996.

Updated for youthESource in August 2015