

Instructions: Read the following article and complete the “Food in the Bible” fill in the blank activity on the next page.

Bread

Bread was the most important food in Bible times, and a lot of time was spent preparing it. Women would start early each morning, grinding wheat or barley on a millstone to make flour. The flour was then mixed with water to make dough. Sometimes, the dough was rolled out very flat and thin (like tortillas); after it was cooked, it was used to scoop up food. At other times, the dough was made into rolls or round loaves, like those in the little boy’s lunch which Jesus used to feed 5,000 men plus women and children. While Jeremiah was in prison, he was given a loaf of bread every day (Jeremiah 37:21).

Very thin bread was cooked on hot, flat stones or laid across the bottom of a large metal pan over an open fire. Other breads were cooked in outdoor ovens that were shared by several families. The dough was baked slowly overnight and taken out before the coals were stirred (Hosea 7:4-6) so the hot, fresh bread wouldn’t be covered with ashes.

Wheat made the best flour, which made the best bread. Bread made from barley was not as tasty, so it was cheaper. Barley bread was the bread of poor people in Bible times, but it was also common during famines and other times when food was scarce.

[The King James Version often uses the word “corn” for the grains used to make bread. “Corn” was an Old English word for any common grain or cereal, including wheat and oats. Today, when we say “corn,” we mean maize or Indian corn, like corn on the cob.]

Jesus: the Bread of Life

After Jesus fed more than 5,000 people (Matthew 14:21), He left the crowds to find a quiet place where He could rest and pray. But the people followed Him. They wanted Jesus to perform another miracle and feed them again. But Jesus told them, “Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him” (John 6:27). He said the “work” was to believe in Him—the One God sent from Heaven (6:29). “Then Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’ Then they said to Him, ‘Lord, give us this bread always.’ And Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst’” (John 6:32-35).

Jesus did not want the crowds to follow Him just to fill their bellies. He wanted them to listen to His words and believe that He was the Son of God. He was willing to help them, but He knew that ordinary bread wasn’t what they needed. Jesus wanted the people to understand that believing in Him was more important than just having something to eat or seeing another miracle.

Believing in Jesus, and then obeying His words, would give them life now and life after death. The same is true for us today. Remember what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount? “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness [being right with God], for they shall be filled [satisfied]” (Matthew 5:6). Jesus is the Bread of Life for us, too, and we will also be satisfied and pleasing to God if we believe in Jesus and obey His words.

Food in the Bible

Fill in the Blank

Instructions: Fill in the blanks from the paragraphs about bread and the Bread of Life.

1. Very thin, flat bread was cooked on _____.
2. _____ or _____ were ground to make flour.
3. _____ was ground for the best flour and the best bread.
4. _____ started early in the morning grinding grain for bread.
5. Grain was ground on a _____ to make flour.
6. _____ was the grain used to make a cheaper and less tasty kind of bread.
7. _____ bread was used to scoop up food.
8. Sometimes several families in a village shared _____.
9. In John 6:35, Jesus called Himself the _____.
10. Jesus did not want people to follow Him just to see miracles or be fed. He wanted them to _____ to His words, _____ He was the Son of God, and _____ Him.

