

Certificate in Children's Ministry - Denmark

Morning prayer Saturday 1st Feb 25

Jesus & Children 2

Weber H-R, *Jesus and the children*, Treehaus (US publisher)

Opening prayer:

We still ourselves: As the day begins, open yourself to us Lord Jesus, with your light, your warmth, your peace.

We open ourselves: As the day begins we come to you Lord, with grateful hearts for the gifts you shared with us yesterday and with excitement for the new treasures you will share with us today.

We offer ourselves: As the day begins we express our thanks for the new day and our joy in the Lord of all.

Prayers of thanks for the day that lies ahead

Song:

This is the day, this is the day
That the Lord has made, that the Lord has made
We will rejoice and be glad in it and be glad in it!

Reading: John 6:1-13

"After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. 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, "Two hundred denarii 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."

John 6: 1-13 NRSV

The human story – a packed lunch:

I am a rambler...a walker. So, I am used to packing a lunch! You pack for yourself or maybe your walking partner. But you travel light. I usually get away from crowds when I am out...but our story talks about joining a crowd.

There's a mum in the Bible who makes a packed lunch for her son one early morning. (Greek: paidarion - little boy / lad). Is he so young still that he has no obligations? Or is he so old he's been given a day off? On his own, or with family? Either way off he goes to banks of Lake Tiberias – to see

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and listen to this Jesus. His mum doesn't send him off empty handed. She makes a packed lunch. Five loaves of bread and two cooked fish (Greek: opsarion). A small lunch – enough for some open sandwiches for a small boy.

Origin – link word to little boy paidarion is pais – servant (contributor to the household duties).

Question 1: Did Jesus see the boy? – if he knew what he was going to do before he asked the disciples to feed the crowd maybe he did. Not the only child in the crowd. 'Not including the women and children' (Matthew 14:20)

Question 2: Was he testing if they were child-attentive?

Question 3: Was he checking if they paid attention to this child, his ability to contribute and to the mum behind him who had send him out into the world?

The theological story: Bread from heaven

The feeding of the 5,000 is a really important story in the gospels – the only miracle – aside from the resurrection – recorded in all four gospels (Matt 14, Mark 6, Luke 9, John 6). Huge impact to the early Christians. Theologically linked to the God who provided in the wilderness wanderings of the Exodus... 'manna' from heaven. [Manna = 'what is it?' – 'it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey']

"Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat." 'Then Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.'" John 6: 31-34 NRSV

Culminates in one of the great announcements – one of John's signs, Jesus declaring 'I am the bread of life'.

Bread from heaven. Manna - What is it? Jesus - Who is he?

Prayer

The parents, carers, teachers, social workers, doctors and nurses, volunteers at scouts, sports coaches who supply children with their 'daily bread'.

The children left with no care, no provision, ignored or dismissed...not given their daily allowance of food, love, attention.

The children who are seeing the needs of the world and offering their small fika of concern, support, giving and protest.

For one another: That we might have what we need and see the hands of Jesus take what little we have and amplify it to the Father's glory.

Amen.