

ON THE FEEDING OF THE 5000

A PRAYER EXERCISE

HOW MUCH BREAD YOU HAVE?" (MK. 6:38)

TO ACCOMPLISH MUCH OFFER GOD THE LITTLE YOU HAVE.

Alms of this Prayer Exercise .

- ✓ To grow in trust and confidence in God.
- ✓ To realize that all success and "efficacy" in our striving for perfection and in our apostolic works come from God.
- ✓ To foster generosity to give the Lord all we have, be little or much.

Uses of this Prayer Exercise

- ✓ For prayer services
- ✓ For personal prayer and reflection.
- ✓ For talks and sermons.
- ✓ For a Bible study class

Target Audience:

- ✓ All Christian audiences.
- ✓ Especially apt for committed and dedicated people.
- ✓ To humbly accept that all our successes come from God.

Requirements:

N.T. books.

Writing material for all,

Hymn Books.

Cardboard, paper, color felt pens, scissors, gum, etc to prepare our symbolic "loaves and fish"

Introductory Session

- Calm down. Relaxation and or breathing exercises will help.
- Opening prayers.
- Singing hymns.

Part One: BIBLE STUDY

Gospel Passage The Feeding of the 5000

Reading of the Passage: of Mark 6/30-44. You may complement it with Mt. 14/13-21

Read it yourself or have it read by a good reader, or ask the participants to read it by themselves.

Commentary on the Passage. *(Suggested thoughts)*

- The crowd was very large. (Lk 6/44)
- The time of the day was late (Mk 6:35).
- The place was lonely, a desert place (Mk.6:35).
- The crowds were tired and weary. They had followed Jesus the whole day and they had come from faraway towns (Mk 6:31, 33).
- The disciples worried for the crowds. They were afraid of what might happen if overtaken by the night (Mk. 6:35).
- So, they approached Jesus, and very sensibly asked Him to send the crowds away before night fall (Mk. 8:35, 36).
- But Jesus replied in a very strange and disconcerting way, one could even say, even a "nonsensical" way: *"They don't have to go away. You yourselves give them something to eat"* (Mt 14/36).
- Jesus asked his disciples to do an impossible task! To feed the crowds themselves there in the desert!
- The disciples felt disconcerted. They felt incapable, unfit for the task! They were despondent. (Mk 6/37)
- The trouble was that they thought that Jesus was asking them to feed the crowds on their limited power!
- That was their mistake! They forgot that Jesus was there. They never realized that if Jesus was asking them to do something, He was there to help them. He would make it possible for them
- What Jesus wanted was that they would offer him their willing cooperation. He wanted them to surrender whatever they had.
- And so Jesus asked: "How much bread do you have? Go and see" (Mk.6:38).
- They found out and said to Jesus: "Only five loaves and two fish!"
- Jesus asked for the five loaves and two fish: "Bring there here to me" (Mt 14: 8).
- He asked for all they had! The disciples had to keep nothing for themselves!
- With those five loaves and two fish, Jesus now makes it possible for the disciples to feed the crowds! For Jesus 5 or 10 or 100 loaves did not make a difference. After all, even 100 loaves would have been too few to feed a crowd of 5000!
- **What Jesus wanted was that the disciples should surrender to him their all – much or little**
- Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish, looked up to heaven and gave thanks to God (Mk 6:41).
- He broke there and gave them to his disciples to distribute them to the people (Lk 6/41).
- They did it as Jesus bade them! (Mk. 6/42: Mt. 14/19). and
 - Actually, it was the disciples who fed the multitudes.
 - But the power, the efficiency came from God.
 - Had they not surrendered to Jesus the five loaves and the two fish, they would have not been able to feed the crowds!

Application of that Passage to Our Lives.

- Today in our world we - disciples of Jesus - are faced with impossible demands. Jesus is asking for difficult things, for instance:

- "Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect!" (Mt 5:48).
- "Go to all the people everywhere and make them i disciples (Mt 28: 18-20)
- "Go, sell all you have, give the money to the poor then come and follow me!" (Mk 10:21).
- "Love one another as I loved you!" (Jn. 13:34).
- Love your enemies and do good to those who hurt you.
- Truly Jesus is asking us impossible things! Like the disciples we feel perplexed, disconcerted and despondent,
- The trouble with us, as it was with the disciples, is that we count only on our strength! We are so weak and frail! We can't do the things Jesus is asking us!
- We do not count enough on Jesus' power and strength. "*Without me you can do nothing*"
- We have forgotten that he is always there next us to help. He said: "*Remember, I' II be with you always till the end of time*" (Mt 28:20).
- **If Jesus is asking us, seemingly, "impossible" things, he will make them possible for us.** He will not ask us to do impossible things on our own.
- The only thing he expects from us is that we give him our "five loaves and the two fish"! in other words, **to give Him our all**
- I we have 5 loaves, we have to give him 5, if 10, 10, if 100, 100! **We should not keep back anything for ourselves of what we have or of what we are.** Not a thing!
- **God does not "need" our cleverness, our abilities, our expertise, our talents, but He"wants" them all.**
- **If we give all our talents to God - be few m be many - God will work wonders through us**

Part Two

PERSONAL PRAYER

AND EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Instructions to the Moderator

- ✓ Leave the participants alone with God.
- ✓ Encourage them to spend time in personal prayer.
- ✓ Next, give them a copy of the "Instruction Sheet for Personal Prayer and Examination." below here.

Instruction Sheet for Personal Prayer and Examination

Personal Prayer

Be alone with God.. Try to feel the presence of God.

Pray to Jesus to give you a deeper understanding of the mystery of the feeding of the 5000.
Ponder, meditate and pray over the four points below

1st: Although God does not "need" you he "wants" you!

He can do pretty well without you - He is almighty - He does not need you
 Yet, without you and me, he will not do a thing! He wants us! He wants you and me!
 Although He could have saved the world without human co-operation, he called Mary,
 Joseph, the Disciples, you and me to do it through us by his power.

2nd: Give the Lord, your five loaves!

All the Lord expects from us is that from our poverty and indigence we surrender to Him our
 five loafs and the two fish.

Be generous and surrender him "your all".

3rd: Trust the Lord: With him you can do everything.

When faced with insurmountable difficulties trust the Lord.

When you feel weighed v down by misery and sin, frustrated and despondent, hope in the
 Lord.

Remember that when united with Him, you wield his almighty power!

4th: All Success is God's

If ever you succeed and accomplish anything, do no become puffed up. In the area of
 salvation ant sanctification all success comes from God. We are just God's "willing"
 instruments!

Personal Examination of Conscience

Write down your reflections on the twp questions bellow:

1st: Is there anything –however difficult may be - God is asking you to do in the "here and
 now"?

2nd: What are the loaves and fish God wants you to surrender to him? What will you do
 about it?

Part Three

PRAYER SERVICE:

OFFERING OF YOUR LOAVES AND FISH TO GOD

Preparation for the Prayer Service:

Instructions for the Participants

Ask the participants to prepare the following items for the Prayer Service.

Their symbolical loaves and fish

Using Paper, cardboard, gum, color felt pens, drawing pins, etc., the participants will prepare symbolically the loaves and fish they feel the Lord is asking them to surrender to Him

A Prayer of Offering.

They will write down a prayer of offering of their loaves and fish. They will recite this prayer during the prayer service while offering their symbolic loaves and fish.

Choosing of a passage of the Bible that appeals to them and which has a bearing on the topic of today's session.

Instructions to the Moderator:

- ✓ Use a small chapel or prayer room
- ✓ Make the participants sit in a circle.
- ✓ Keep a table in the centre.
- ✓ Place a basket on the table where the participants will offer to God their symbolic loaves and fish.
- ✓ If you intend having the Blessed Sacrament exposed, make necessary arrangements on the same table. Place a little stand with a corporal and some candles.

Prayer Service: (Suggested order)

1. Singing appropriate hymns..
2. If possible expose The Blessed Sacrament.
3. Reading of Luke 6:30-44.
4. Give the participants a short summary of the main ideas of the day.
5. Shared group-prayer. Invite the participants;
 - to read the passages selected by them and comment on them,
 - to spontaneously pray for one another,
 - to ask the group to pray for some special intentions, etc.
6. Give some time for silent prayer and adoration.
7. Offering of their "Loaves and Fish".
 - The moderator will invite the Participants to come forward to the centre of the circle and offer their loafs and fish to the Lord.
 - The following (or similar dialogue) may follow:
Moderator: *Are you willing to offer all you are and all you have to Jesus that he may use you as wishes for the good of others?*
Participants will reply: *Most willingly.*
Moderator: *Now, in low voice, read or recite the prayer of self-offering you wrote above.*
8. Then the participants will place their loaves and fish in the basket lying on the table
9. Moderator: I thank you in the name of Jesus. He wants to use you and all your talents to work wonders in our world through you! May it be so!
10. Next, moderator or celebrant will hold the basket in his hands, raise it up towards heaven, bless the loaves and fish and give thanks to God
11. If the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, Benediction will- follow:
12. The moderator will dismiss the participants with word like these:

Go in peace. Do not be afraid. Jesus is with you. Remember his words: "I'll be with you always! Yes, till the end of time!"