

Jack and the Lunch Money

Introduction:

Jack and the Lunch Money is a worship drama based on John 6, the feeding of the 5000. This story is a spin on the classic Jack and the Beanstalk. Here, Jack is given some money by his mother to buy a certain amount of food. Along the way, Jack encounters an untrustworthy merchant, but is helped by a stranger. Then, after getting lost on his way home, Jack unknowingly becomes a part of a major miracle performed by that very same stranger who helped him in the marketplace. Once he arrives home, with a larger than expected amount of food, his mother is ready to discipline Jack for being a liar, until once more that same stranger arrives with one last surprise.

Characters

Jack
Mother
Stranger/Jesus
Shopkeeper
The Disciple Andrew
Extras, as indicated in the script

Setting

The story begins at the home of Jack and his mother. Jack then is at the marketplace. Jack ends up in the field where Jesus is feeding the 5000. The story ends back at the home of Jack and his mother.

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Scene 1

We are in the home of Jack and his mother. The mother is preparing Jack for an errand.

- Mother: Jack, it's time to get ready to go to the market.
- Jack: What do we need at the market?
- Mother: I need to get some bread and fish for our family dinner tonight.
- Jack: Mom, I can go by myself to the market and get that for you.
- Mother: Oh, Jack. You aren't ready to go by yourself. You are too young.
- Jack: I am not too young. I can go. Please, let me go to the market for you.
- Mother: I don't know Jack. What if the shopkeeper isn't nice to you?
- Jack: I have gone to the market with you many times. I am sure he will remember me and be nice to me.
- Mother: What if you get lost on the way?
- Jack: Mom – it doesn't take some futuristic hand-held map gadget to figure out the one road between our house and the market.
- Mother: And then the beggars – what if someone tries to beg from you, you might give all our food away.
- Jack: Come on, Mom. I won't give our food away. I can do this. Please, let me go to the market this once and show you what I can do.
- Mother: Well, I suppose. I'm trusting that God will watch out for you. Now here is the money (Mother hands Jack a sack with some money in it). We need 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish for tonight. Do you think you can remember that?
- Jack: Ok. 5 loaves and 2 fish. Got it. And I have enough money for just that much.
- Mother: That's right. Just the right amount.
- Jack: Can I have extra for some candy?
- Mother: No, Jack, just the 5 loaves and 2 fish. And Jack, remember – if the shopkeeper isn't nice, you just come straight home and get me. Don't get lost along the way, don't let anyone begging for food stop you from bringing home 5 loaves and 2 fish.
- Jack: Yes, Mother, I do. Thank you for trusting me. (out the door Jack goes)

Scene 2

We are at a marketplace. If you choose to have extras in your drama, you could make the marketplace appear more crowded.

Jack: Wow, so many things I could get. Oh, look –it’s the candy aisle.

VOICE OF MOTHER (from background): 5 loaves and 2 fish, Jack

Jack: Okay, I will have to get candy another time. (Jack walks up to counter, accidentally bumps into another shopper.) I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to bump into you.

Stranger: It’s okay, young man. Go ahead and place your order. I have time to wait.

Shopkeeper: Can I help you, young man?

Jack: Uh, yes. My Mother wants me to buy 5 loaves and 2 fish. She gave me enough money to buy just that much.

Shopkeeper: I see. Let me see how much money she gave you? (The shopkeeper takes the bag from Jack and counts it out.) Oh dear, young man. You actually only have enough here for 4 loaves of bread and 1 fish.

Jack: No, my mother said I had enough for 5 loaves and 2 fish. Can you please count it again.

Shopkeeper: (The shopkeeper counts it out again, intentionally dropping a coin on the floor), No, young man; see here, you are short one coin – you can’t get 5 loaves and 2 fish. You can get 4 loaves and 1 fish.

Jack: I don’t know. Maybe I should go get my mother.

Shopkeeper: Now, that isn’t necessary. You see, you have enough for this much food, and I am sure your mother will understand.

Stranger: My dear Shopkeeper, perhaps you should deal honestly with this young boy. I see you accidentally dropped one of his coins, with that he has plenty to buy the 5 loaves and the 2 fish.

Shopkeeper: Look, good sir, this isn’t your place to get involved. The boy will take what I sell him.

Stranger: His mother has taken quite the risk sending him like a sheep out among the wolves. You don't want to be a wolf that his mother won't trust again, do you?

Shopkeeper: (puzzled, by the stranger's insistence, relents) Uh, okay, pal. Here you go kid, 5 loaves and 2 fish, just like you asked for. You had the right amount of money for it after all.

Stranger: (to the boy) Now run along, young man.

Jack: Thanks, Mister, for all your help. (Jack leaves the store)

Stranger: (To shopkeeper) I am the bread that came down from heaven. You did not devour the unsuspecting, but ate the bread that I give for the life of the world.

Shopkeeper: Sir, give me this bread always.

Scene 3

Jack enters a large, crowded space. Extras are needed for the disciples. You will need a few, Andrew is the only one with a speaking line. Extras can again be used to fill out the crowd or you can use the backdrop of the gathered worship congregation to make the scene feel like the feeding of the 5000.

Jack: Oh no! This isn't the way home. I must have taken a wrong turn somewhere along the way. I'm going to be late getting home now, and Mother isn't going to be happy. (Jack sees the crowd of people.) Oh, maybe they can help me get home.

Andrew: (Sees the young boy) Hey, do you mind if I ask what you have in the bag there?

Jack: I'm not supposed to talk with strangers.

Andrew: I'm sorry, where's my manners. My name is Andrew. I work with Jesus of Nazareth. He's been talking with people all day long here, and now everyone is hungry. We are looking for whatever food we can find.

Jack: My mother said I am not supposed to share this food, I am supposed to bring it home. It is just enough for our dinner tonight – 5 loaves of bread, and 2 fish.

Andrew: 5 loaves and 2 fish. That's it? That's all you have?

Jack: Well, it's enough to feed my family dinner – look at this crowd you have, this can't possibly be enough for everyone.

Andrew: You are probably right. (turns to Jesus) Hey Jesus! The only food anyone has is just what this young boy has come with – 5 loaves and 2 fish.

Jesus: (Jesus emerges from the crowd. Jack recognizes him as the stranger who helped him in the marketplace) Hello again, Jack. I am glad you made it on time. People here are very hungry, and what you brought is going to make a major difference. And I promise, you will have more than enough for your family when you go home tonight

VOICE OF MOTHER: (from background) Don't let anyone begging for food stop you from bringing home 5 loaves and 2 fish. It's all we need.

Jesus: Yes, Jack, your mother did not know you would meet me and that today your food would become a sign for the world to come to believe in me.

Jack: (to audience) How did he know I just heard my mother's voice? (to Jesus) Please help whoever needs to be helped with this food.

Jesus: (Taking the bread, raise it up, and say) Blessed are you, Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.
(taking the fish, raise it up, and say) Blessed are you, Lord, our God, King of the Universe, through whose Word everything comes into being.

Jesus begins breaking the bread and passing it around and sharing the fish. The disciples may even share some of the bread with the gathered worship congregation. During the feeding sequence, a sign is brought out and walks across the stage. It reads "Several Hours Later" and 12 baskets of food, with more than 5 loaves and 2 fish in each basket, are set out next to Jesus.

Jesus: (to the disciples) I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. These people came hungry – desperate for a sign from God, to be fed and to be made alive again. This is the will of God who sent me – that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.

(To Jack) Jack, young friend, your gift of food today was blessed by God and because God loves his people, enough was provided to feed. Here is a gift of God's love for you to take back to your Mother. (hands Jack a basket of leftovers)

Jack: Wow – there's 10 loaves and 4 fish in this basket – that's more than we needed!

Jesus: Take it on your way – specifically, that way (pointing down a particular path) to home. (Jack leaves with his basket, skipping away).

Scene 4

We return once again to the home of Jack and his mother.

Jack: (Coming into the house where his mother is) Mother, Mother

Mother: Jack, my son! Where have you been – it's been hours since I sent you to the market. You should have been home long ago.

Jack: Mother – when I got to the market, the shopkeeper was going to cheat me and only sell me 4 loaves and 1 fish. But this stranger was there, and he helped me, and made sure the shopkeeper sold me the right amount of food.

Mother: That scoundrel, that is the last time I will go to his market.

Jack: But Mom, this stranger who helped me was Jesus! God was watching out for me indeed. And look at this basket, Mother!

Mother: Jack, where did you get this? I didn't give you the money to buy all this.

Jack: I bought the 5 loaves and 2 fish with the money you gave me. On my way home, I got lost in this crowd of people, and Jesus was there – and I recognized him, I don't know how he got from the market out to the seaside ahead of me, but he did. And he took our food, blessed it, and shared it with this large crowd of people – I think it had to be over 5000 people, but I was only counting the kids – I couldn't count all the grown-ups. And then they had all these baskets of leftovers, and Jesus gave me this one to bring home with me.

Mother: Well, I have never heard of such things before. You go off and spend hours goofing off, who knows where you have really been. Who knows how you came up with all this extra money to buy this much food. You tell me you meet Rabbi

Jesus, who is a big important person, and that he not only helped you, but took our food and used it to feed a small village. I have heard enough from you young man. You are grounded until you tell me the truth. (there is a knock on the door) And I will tell you how long right after I answer the door. (answers the door) May I help you?

Jesus: Good evening. I am sorry for the intrusion. I just wanted to stop by and bring back to Jack something he left by the seashore while I was feeding everyone.

Jack: Jesus!

Mother: (faints)

Jesus: I seem to have that effect on some people.

Mother: (coming to her senses). Rabbi Jesus. Is it really you?

Jesus: It is I. Do not be afraid. Your son was very brave today. (holds out the small bag with the money in it that his mother gave him that morning) I hope you enjoy the food Jack brought home. It was just a small portion of what he first brought to us.

Mother: A small portion?

Jesus: Yes. With God, from little comes abundance, and everyone had enough to eat and be satisfied. But the real gift is not the multiplied loaves, but the life that is received when people eat of the bread I provide. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.

Mother: Lord, you have the words of eternal life. I believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.

Jack: Mother, can I go back to the market with Jesus and buy some candy with this money?

Mother: Jack!

Jesus: It's okay. I think I would enjoy going and getting some "Bit O'Honey" myself.

Jesus and Jack leave to return to the marketplace to buy some candy.

ELCA World Hunger Fundraising Considerations

At the end of the play, collect an offering for ELCA World Hunger.

Announce ahead of the worship drama that items are being collected during the play for a local food pantry. During the scene when food is being distributed, have the “disciples” collect the items from the audience to fill the 12 baskets.

Have the ELCA Good Gifts Catalog available in the congregation gathering space before and after worship. Invite those gathered to peruse the catalog and make donations to purchase a fish farm, or items from the agriculture page.

Consider using this worship drama on a special worship occasion like the congregation worship in the park, or a community worship with neighboring churches.

Consider involving youth from a local acting company, or the local schools, to perform the drama. Invite the guests to join the congregation in supporting ELCA World Hunger with the ELCA Good Gifts Catalog and with collecting items for the local food pantry.