

WEEK 4 LESSON GUIDE

Miraculous

BIG IDEA

Jesus can do anything.

BIBLE

Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand:
Matthew 15:29–39; Psalm 37:1–11

ABOUT THIS WEEK

Aquariums don't just introduce us to amazing creatures, but they remind us that anything is possible underneath the ocean. This week, we'll hear about the time Jesus did something that seemed impossible and fed four thousand people. Even though there wasn't enough food for everyone, Jesus knew exactly how to help, and the story of how he cared for these people shows us that **Jesus can do anything**.

LARGE GROUP TIME

It's Week 4 of *Miraculous!* What an incredible month of miracles we've had. You guys remembered some awesome ones involving water—like when Jesus turned water into wine, helped fishermen catch loads of fish, and even healed a man by a pool who couldn't walk.

And guess what? We're wrapping up our Scripture dive this week with one more amazing story that proves nothing is impossible for Jesus! Get ready for one final miracle that'll leave us all in awe of what Jesus can do.

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

ACTIVITY | Fish Feud

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, prepare a fish toy to use, like a plush, a pool toy, or even a realistic [rubber fish](#) (or [make your own](#) using cups). Bring two kids to the front and place the fish at an equal distance between them. Then, shout out a body part (head, shoulders, knees, right ear, waist) where kids should place both their hands. When you call out "Fish," they each try to be the one to grab the fish first. Vary it up using different players, speeds, and directions.*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Make this slightly more challenging by having the kids back to back on the floor with the fish in between them.*
 - ✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** *Set out play dough and [fish cookie cutters](#) and see how many fish the kids can make.*
- Wow, you guys had to really fight to get to that fish! Too bad there weren't more fish to go around.
- In today's Bible story, Jesus did something super miraculous so people wouldn't have to fight over who got to eat the last fish.

ACTIVITY | Restore The Reef

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, cover your surfaces with a tarp or tablecloth. Prepare paper plates with*

different colored paints, bowls of water, and sponges cut into [various shapes](#) (coral, fish, bubbles). Then, have them use the sponges to decorate [their own coral reef](#) on blue construction paper. To minimize mess, you can have kids color in their sponges with markers before stamping or use [large ink pads](#).

✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Show preteens [this video](#) of an upcycled 3D coral reef craft. Set out your own upcycled materials, paint, and glue. Then, let preteens create their own coral reef. [Read this](#) for more information on legally using copyrighted material for educational purposes!

- Coral reefs are living ecosystems that mostly grow near the Earth's equator because they need sunlight and warm temperatures to survive. But that's not all. Coral reefs are impacted by what humans do on land, from the kinds of fish we eat to how we use and overuse our water.
- Sea creatures like giant clams, starfish, seahorses, and sea turtles depend on the reef for food, shelter, and protection. Over 500 million people depend on the reefs, too.
- So if we help restore the reefs, the amount of help we're giving and getting gets multiplied. Today's Bible story is about when Jesus multiplied something and cared for so many people.

QUESTION | Seafood All Day

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask the following questions. You can have every kid shout their answer but then ask a few kids to share their answers with everyone. Comment briefly on their answers—and have fun with this!
- **How many of you like seafood? Which is your favorite?**
- **What would you choose if you could make any food (it doesn't have to be seafood) multiply and feed thousands of people? Why?**
- In today's Bible story, we're going to see Jesus do exactly this. He cared so much about the people that he showed his power to give them food from the very little available.

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | Matthew 15:29–39 (Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Like in previous weeks, pretend to be a marine biologist at an aquarium, sharing fun ocean tidbits and connecting them to the Bible story. Your diving gear could include wearing all black (sweats are okay), goggles, a snorkel, and flippers. Optional: Show a small handful of Goldfish crackers and then dump the contents of a large box into a clear bowl to go alongside how Jesus multiplied the fish.
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Preteens may feel skeptical about the fascinating miracles Jesus did and whether miracles still happen today, and that's okay. Make it a safe space for them to share. Stay curious about their doubts. See what questions they would ask God about any miracles they heard during this series.
- Have you all been enjoying the Miraculous Marine Institute so far? I hope so. I truly love it here. There's something just so majestic and wondrous about the ocean. Did you know that humans have only explored five percent of the world's oceans? That means 95% of the ocean is still a big mystery—who knows what other amazing creations from God are waiting to be discovered? It could be anything because God can do impossibly big things.
- Speaking of which, let me share with you one of my favorite stories about a time when Jesus did the impossible. What's that called again? That's right, a miracle. Let's dive right in.
- **It starts out in Matthew 15:29–31.**
 - Jesus had been walking around with his disciples, from town to town, teaching people about God and how much He loves them. He had also been doing miracles everywhere.
 - In fact, he had just recently been teaching a large crowd of people, and it was getting late, and the crowd was hungry. So Jesus multiplied five loaves of bread and two fish, so there was enough

bread and fish to feed the crowd—over 5,000 people. *Miraculous*, you say? You'd be right!

- **Watch what happens next in Matthew 15:32–34.**
 - Well, this is starting to sound familiar. Great crowds of people? Jesus performing miracles and teaching the people who gathered there? People were hungry, but there wasn't enough food. Jesus had fed a crowd just like this one with five loaves and two fish not that long ago.
 - It was happening again.
 - They had seven loaves of bread and a few small fish this time. Just like last time, this would not be enough food to feed thousands of people.
- **What do you think Jesus did this time? Let's read Matthew 15:35–39 to find out.**
 - Jesus gave thanks to God and began distributing the food. From a few small fish and seven loaves of bread, Jesus fed over four thousand people until they were so full there were leftovers.
 - Jesus used what was available and turned it into something *miraculous*. Everyone else thought the food was not enough, but Jesus gave everyone more than enough.
- Friends, it's been a blast chatting with you while you visited our aquarium. I hope you're walking away with a deeper understanding of Jesus. And remember to take care of your oceans, too.

BIG IDEA | Jesus can do anything.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *You will need four plastic clam shells (like these) and ping pong balls to be the pearls. This week, try using different colored ping pong balls. You can secure the clams closed with tape or rubber bands. You can also use clamshell to-go containers (like these) instead. Write one word from the Big Idea with a permanent marker on each "pearl." Place the clams at the bottom of a large clear plastic tote container and invite a few kids to come up and dig for the clams, taking the pearls out of the clams. Level it up by lining the bottom of the container with sand and adding water (you will use this for the Big Idea every week this month). Once all the "pearls" are found, put them in order and say the Big Idea together.*
- **Did you know that not all pearls are white and round?** Some have irregular shapes and the colors can be black, pink, or a rainbow of colors. It can really be anything. That should help us remember our Big Idea.
- **Jesus can do anything.**

STORY | The Time I Saw A Miracle

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Share a story about a time when you or someone you know experienced a miracle. It could be someone sick, being healed, finding something lost, or being kept from something that could have been very bad, like an accident.*
 - ✳ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** *Remember kids with disabilities experience social interactions differently. While some will want to talk over you and tell you about their weekend, some will not want to talk at all. Follow their cues rather than trying to manufacture learning for them. It's enough that you are there with them, demonstrating your love and care for their needs.*
- Miracles are not things that only happened in the past while Jesus was on the earth. Miracles happen every day, in big and small ways. Sometimes we don't see it because we're not paying attention, or we're too busy being worried and afraid to notice that God is still doing miracles.
- The next time you have a situation, why not ask Jesus for a miracle? It may not appear in the way you'd expect, but we can be sure **Jesus can do anything!**

OBJECT LESSON | Disappearing Water

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you will need plastic cups (not clear), water, and slush powder. Watch this video for a visual example. Prep the cup by placing some of the slush powder at the bottom of the cup (make sure kids can't see the slush powder). Then, pour some of the water into the cup. Say a "trick" word or have the kids say a "trick" word (like "Miraculous!") and then turn the cup upside down. There is "miraculously" no*

water. If there's time, allow kids to try doing the trick themselves. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)

- We've learned about all kinds of different miracles of Jesus during our time together this month. Come to think of it, all of these had something to do with water. Or fish. Or *both!*
 - We heard about Jesus' very first miracle of water turning into wine.
 - Then, there was the miraculous catch of fish when Jesus called his very first disciples.
 - We also heard about the time Jesus helped a paralyzed man get up and walk without the help of a healing pool.
 - And today, we learned about the time Jesus fed over 4,000 people with seven loaves of bread and a few small fish.
- **What is the difference between a trick or illusion and a miracle?**
- Tricks can be taught and explained exactly how they work, but miracles don't have a logical explanation for them. It's only by the power of God that all of these things could have happened. **Jesus can do anything**, and he doesn't need any tricks up his sleeve to do it.

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 37:1–11

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read this passage or invite a volunteer to read.*
- This scripture reminds us to wait on God and not to be envious or worried or compare ourselves to what others are doing or how their lives seem to be going. We should trust in God and stay focused on Jesus, even when life is difficult and we can't see how things will turn out. Jesus will always be with us, and **Jesus can do anything.**
- **What seems kind of impossible in your world?**
- Sometimes, we might wonder why God doesn't just step in and make everything in our world perfect. There would be no more violence, hate, or disasters. All the bad guys would go away, so we can have peace and happiness forever.
- We have to remember that even though Jesus can do anything, he doesn't just do anything. There is a plan for all of us that we don't fully know, and we have to trust that what he sees is a much bigger picture than the one we can see.
- Just like the psalmist says in this passage, we can *"be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him."* Even though we might see things that aren't so great happening around us, we can continue to pray and put our hope in the one who is greater than everything.
- **Jesus can do anything.** And those who continue to trust in him will *"inherit the land,"* meaning God will bless us.

VIDEO | *Miraculous*, Episode 4

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).*

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

REFLECTION | Big Idea Deep Dive

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play some ocean sounds like [this](#) as you discuss the Big Idea with kids and have them reflect on the prompts given below. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)*
- Let's dive deeper into what we learned today.
- **What part of today's Bible story is the most memorable to you? Why?**
- Our Big Idea for today is **Jesus can do anything.** But we often forget this truth because the miracles Jesus

gives us nowadays might not look exactly like these jaw-dropping miracles we read about in the Bible.

- Sometimes we don't recognize a miracle when it happens in our lives. We might explain it away as a coincidence or just happenstance. Sometimes we don't see everyday things as miracles, like having a place to sleep or someone to love and care for us.
 - **Think of something you now realize could be a miracle in your life.**
 - **How do you think God might help you be a part of a miracle for someone else?**

RESPONSE | Mural Of Miracles

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Add to the mural you started in Week 1 using the [printable](#) provided. If you're in a mobile space, you can roll up the paper and unpack it again next week. You may choose to show a video about sea otters (like [this one](#)) before kids respond and share. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- Sea otters are unquestionably cute! But did you know they are something called a "keystone species?" That means that they are a super important part of their ecosystem. Sea otters make sure there aren't too many sea urchins, which helps the kelp forests survive! Otters are little marine miracle workers!
- Did you know that humans are also a keystone species? We are all an important part of God's creation, and we don't have to sit around and wait for things to happen. We can ask for the miracles we need and be a part of God's miracles by helping where we're needed.
- **On your otter handout, write a prayer. What is one miracle you want to ask Jesus for now that you know he can do anything?**
- Add your otter to the mural to remember that **Jesus can do anything** and invites us to be a part of his miracles. God takes care of us and gives us the ability to take care of each *otter*, too!

MEMORY VERSE | Psalm 77:14 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Learn the memory verse together using any combination of the resources provided: [memory verse coloring page](#), [sign language motions](#), or choose from [this list](#) of our favorite memorization techniques!
- "You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples."

PRAYER

- Thank you, Jesus, for all the miracles you've shown us in the Bible and every day! Help us to see and recognize these miracles today. Help us to trust you with everything because we know you can do anything! Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- **SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS**
 - **What concern did Jesus have for the people in the crowd?** *He knew they had been there for days and had run out of food to eat as they waited for healing. He knew they were hungry.*
 - **How did the disciples react to Jesus' suggestion that they feed the crowd?** *They were puzzled about how they could get enough food to feed such a large crowd.*
 - **What miracles did Jesus perform in today's Bible story?** *Jesus fed the crowd of over four thousand with seven small loaves of bread and a few fish. He also healed all sorts of people.*
 - **Read Psalm 37:7. In what ways do you need to wait and be patient for God's miracles?**
- **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**
 - **Describe a time when Jesus gave you more than you even knew to ask for.**

- How can you be sure Jesus still does miracles today?
- Who is someone you know that might need a miracle? What could you do to be a part of that miracle?

ACTIVITY | Fin-tastic Big Idea

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this craft, you will need square paper, scissors, glue, and wiggle eyes. After watching the [video here](#), model the fish project for the kids. Then, each of them will be handed a piece of square origami paper to make their own fish, and the Big Idea will be written on it somewhere!
 - ✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** Precut the paper beforehand. Add a dot with a marker or pencil as a visual for where kids need to apply glue and where they need to bend the ends of the paper strips.
- We've been learning about all kinds of marine animals like sea turtles, beluga whales, emperor penguins, sea otters, and more, but we forgot the most common sea creature ... fish!
- Fish come in all shapes, sizes, colors, and abilities. Some are very fast, some have great memories, some can change color, and some can even feel! We can really see God's creativity when we look at all the different species of fish out there.
- Take your *fin*-tastic Big Idea fish and place it somewhere you can be reminded of Jesus' miracles and that **Jesus can do anything!**