



Note to Leaders: Every Link is Different. Don't feel like you have to answer every question. Pick questions that will stir up conversation and action among your group

## SERMON SYNOPSIS

Throughout our lives, God is working to grow our faith. And you've met people with that kind of faith. They just trust God in good times, and in bad times. They give him credit for the good, and they trust him in the bad. They just have this uncanny, almost sometimes irritating confidence and faith in God's presence in their lives. That's because they've worked with God to allow God to grow their faith, and that's what he wants to do in all of us.

One of the primary ways God grows our faith is through personal ministry. If you have ever volunteered to do something for which you felt totally unqualified, then you already know what an experience like that can do for your faith. In this lesson, we will explore the relationship between our faith and our service to others.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been asked individually or in a group setting to serve in a church or ministry- related context?
2. What has your initial response been to those kinds of requests?
3. Have you ever sensed that God was urging you to do something, yet you refused to do it because you felt inadequate or unprepared? If so, what was it? Why did you refuse?
4. When have you ever said yes to something God was urging you to do for which you felt unprepared? What was the impact of that experience on your faith?
5. Read Matthew 14:13-17. The disciples used the size of the crowd and their lack of food as excuses to not do what Jesus asked. What excuses have you used?
6. As you consider the disciples' excuses, what were they forgetting to factor into the equation?
7. Read Matthew 14:18-21. What talent, skill, experience, expertise, or ability do you have that, like the loaves and fish, don't appear to be things God could use in a significant way?
8. The disciples did what they knew how to do. They passed out the broken pieces of bread and fish. And God blessed their efforts and allowed them to accomplish far more than they could have in their own strength. What is the lesson for us? *We do what we can do and trust God to do what only he can do.*
9. Who has chosen to serve you in spite of the fact that he/she was busy, ill-equipped, and unsure of how things would turn out?
10. For parents: Is there someone who has set aside time to invest in your children?

## MOVING FORWARD

What opportunities do you sense God opening for you to practice an act of personal ministry?

## CHANGING YOUR MIND

Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children. Matthew 14:19-21