

A wicker basket filled with several round loaves of bread, some topped with seeds, and two whole fish. The basket is resting on a wooden surface. The background is a textured, brownish wall.

Loaves & Fishes

*A Mission Trip
Journal*

from the Author

All four of the Gospel writers (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) include the story of how Jesus multiplied five small loaves and two fish to feed thousands of hungry people. This story has often been called the “Miracle of Multiplication.” Take a moment to read the whole story from Mark 6:34-44 on the back cover.



Lord, I’m hungry!

Think of all that you hunger for and desire in life - food, health, knowledge, friendship, acceptance, challenge, laughter, truth, growth, home, value, respect, hope, mission, success, meaning, freedom, joy, faith, peace, rest, life, purpose, love and so much more. God has created us to have many needs and desires. The crowds of people who had gathered to hear Jesus teach that day were hungry, not only for food to nourish their bodies, but also, for spiritual food to nourish their souls.



Lord, You provide!

Jesus is able to provide what we need, even when the spiritual baskets of our lives seem empty. In that lonely place, the disciples could find only 5 small loaves and two tiny fish. That was it! And yet, with such an impossibly small amount of food, Jesus was able to provide a meal for all the people. Let’s not forget that the Lord had already provided the seed, soil, sun and rain to make the wheat which became flour and finally bread. During your mission trip take time often to thank the Lord for all that has been provided to give you life, health, freedom, faith and love.



...and Lord, You multiply!

Jesus looked up to heaven, gave thanks, and in the spirit of gratitude and generosity, the baskets of bread and fish were multiplied. The tiny expanded to become great and all were satisfied. It is amazing what God can do when we look up to heaven, give thanks, and let the Spirit of multiplication expand our horizons and our lives. God is able to do more than we can ask or imagine, if we are willing to offer the baskets of our lives to His mission.



What do I have to give?

Jesus invites us to share in the mission of sharing the bread of life with others. What is the bread of life? It’s the love, grace and friendship of Christ being received and given. As you prepare for His mission, be prepared to share the bread of your life and your love with others. Trust that the Lord will provide all that you will need and God will even multiply all that you give.

The miracle of the five loaves and two fish teach us that God’s mission requires our response. We and the whole world are hungry for both physical and spiritual bread, and the Bible reminds us over and over again that God provides bread for both the body and the spirit. May this be true for you in the days of mission that lie ahead.

—Rev. Dr. Frank Nelson, author

Using *this mission trip journal*

14 Pre-Trip Pages

During the 7 days before the trip, prepare your heart by asking God to prepare you to have a more generous spirit. As the little boy shared his simple lunch of 5 loaves and 2 fish, be prepared to share the bread of yourself in God's mission. Take 10-15 minutes daily to complete the pre-trip pages beginning on page 8. This daily time of devotion will help to prepare your heart to let God open you to the possibilities of being generous in the days of your mission trip. An "Open Basket Page" is available to you each day as a place to record new insights, notes on the scriptures you will read, prayers, thoughts, commitments, and whatever the Lord gives you to fill the basket of your life.

20 On-Site Mission Pages

When you have landed on site, let God prepare you to share your life and faith with others. Take time every day to pray and reflect on your experiences. For each of the on-site days you'll find a page with suggestions to guide your prayer and scripture reflections and a second "Open Basket Page" to give you an open space to reflect on the experiences God will provide to you. It's also a good idea to bring your journal to both large and small group gatherings, so you'll have a place to write down things you will not want to forget.

14 Back Home Pages

It's not always easy to return home. The back home pages will guide you through re-entry into your "real world," the world of your family, church and community. Know that your hunger for God won't end when the trip ends, and God will provide new mission opportunities when you return home. Trust that God will continue to provide and multiply all that you need in life to continue serving God and others.

Before, during and after your mission trip remember the important lessons from the story of the miracle of multiplication:

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 his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied. (Mark 6:41-42)

May you offer yourself to Jesus Christ so that in His hands, your life will be multiplied, and the hungry of the world fed and satisfied.

In 7 Days We Land

TODAY'S DATE _____

Today's Theme: HE LANDED!

The 5 + 2 Story begins: When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd... (Mark 6:34)



Lord, I hunger for a land where I can serve!

(Use the Open Basket Page if you need more space to add to your responses.)

1. During our mission trip the land where we will be serving is (where?) _____.
2. When I think about the people who live there, I'm curious about... and excited about... and I want them to know that I...
3. I'm unsure or fearful of...
4. Some of the things I still need to do before our departure day include...
5. Make a list in the "Open Basket" of a few of the things you hunger for, desire, and need in life.



You provide land!

(If you'd like to take notes from today's Bible readings, use the Open Basket Page.)

- God called the dry ground "**land**," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:10)
 - And I will bring you to the **land** I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.' " (Exodus 6:8)
 - "But you, Bethlehem, in the **land** of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.' " (Matthew 2:6)
 - The **earth** is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. (Psalm 24:1)
- EXTRA READING** (if time permits): Genesis 1:1-2:3; Hebrews 11:1-9; Psalm 24:1-10



You multiply!

Close your eyes and breathe in God's Spirit. Continue with this prayer:

Dear God, as I prepare for the mission trip, please calm my fears and multiply my desire to serve you. Help me to trust in your purpose for the trip. The land where we will serve is your land. Prepare me to respect the people I will soon meet, to be open to their culture and customs, to know that they have many of the same hungers and desires I have. I offer this trip to You that Your will for the trip might be done. Please use me in the ways that will best serve Your land and Your people. Amen. (Consider writing your own prayer in the Open Basket. Include your praise, thanks, and any personal requests you have for today.)



I give you, Lord, what I have!

Actions to think about doing in the next 24 hours:

- Use the internet or library to research the land and the people you will be serving. As you explore and learn, continue to pray for the land that the Lord has provided. You may want to use an Open Basket Page to take notes of things you want to remember.
- Tell friends and/or family members about the land where you will be serving on your mission trip and some of your reasons for going. Invite them to pray for you during the trip.

Open Basket *page*

A place for new insights, scripture verses, songs, stories, experiences, sketches, commitments, and whatever the Lord gives to fill your basket.



Mission Day 1

TODAY'S DATE _____

Today we travel, arrive & begin the challenge of serving.

Today's Theme: CHALLENGE!

The 5 + 2 Story: "Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?"



Lord, I hunger for a real challenge!

(Use the Open Basket Page if you need more space to add to your responses.)

1. One of the biggest challenges I had to face was the time...
2. I believe one of my challenges during our mission trip will be to...
3. I'm excited about... I'm hopeful that...
4. Use the "Open Basket" to create a list of additional things you believe will be a challenge for you in the coming days.



You provide the challenge!

(If you'd like to take notes from today's Bible readings, use the Open Basket Page.)

- They also will answer, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?" He will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me." (Matthew 25:44-45)
- Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. (Mark 8:34-35)
- Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. (James 1:2)

EXTRA READING (if time permits): Joshua 24:11-15; Matthew 25:31-46; James 1:2-18



You multiply the challenges of life!

Close your eyes and breathe in God's Spirit. Continue with this prayer:

Dear God, I know that in the days ahead, some will be more challenging than others. Prepare my spirit for each challenge that lies ahead. I want to meet each challenge with Your strength, wisdom, love and understanding. Forgive me for the times when I avoid meeting challenges head on, especially the times You have challenged me in Your Word. May I be faithful to You in doing all I can to serve You and the people You have called me to serve in coming days. Amen. *(Consider writing your own prayer in the Open Basket. Include your praise and thanks for this day along with personal requests you have for the days ahead.)*



I give you, Lord, what I have!

Actions to think about doing in the next 24 hours:

- Travel can be very challenging. We leave the familiar to enter the realm of the unfamiliar and new. Be especially aware of your own needs on this first day of mission, and reach out to others to encourage them, also.
- At the mission site, find a small rock or pebble to carry with you during the mission trip. Let the rock remind you of both the challenge God has given to you, but also God's constant presence, provision and strength.

Telling My Story

Many of your family and friends will want to hear about your trip. The following questions can help you put together some of your thoughts and be ready to tell others when they ask (and even if they don't ask). On page 45 is your "Elevator Speech," a great way to summarize your experience in less than 30 seconds which is about the time it takes for you to go from one floor to the next in an elevator.

Three words to summarize my experience include...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



I'm most thankful to God for...



Three positives about my experience...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Three negatives...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Back Home Day 1

TODAY'S DATE _____

Today's Theme: GRATITUDE!

The 5 + 2 Story: Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks... (Mark 6:41)



Lord, I hunger to be grateful for my home!

(Use the Open Basket Page if you need more space to add to your responses.)

1. Now that I'm home, I'm especially thankful for... (Make a list on the "Open Basket" page of the many things you appreciate in a new way.)
2. Some of the people I really appreciate being with again include...
3. Some of my feelings now that I'm home include...
4. Now that I'm home, I'm looking forward to...



You provide an attitude of gratitude!

(If you'd like to take notes from today's Bible readings, use the Open Basket Page.)

- Enter his gates with **thanksgiving** and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. (Psalm 100:4)
- I **always thank God** for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. (1 Corinthians 1:4)
- You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in **thanksgiving** to God. (2 Corinthians 9:11)
- For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with **thanksgiving**. (1 Timothy 4:4)
- **Give thanks** to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. (1 Chronicles 16:34)
- Then he took the cup, **gave thanks** and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. (Mark 14:23)

EXTRA READING (if time permits): 1 Chronicles 16:27-36; Psalm 100; Mark 14:12-26



You multiply my appreciation!

Close your eyes and breathe in God's Spirit. Continue with this prayer:

Dear God, I have arrived home with so much more in my head and heart than when I left home. You have expanded and multiplied my world and my faith in new ways, and I am grateful. Thank you for all that I have learned and for the opportunity you gave for me to be a part of the mission trip. During the next few days help me to remember each morning when I wake up to be thankful for the new day you have given. Help me to remember to thank you each time I prepare to eat and to pause knowing that You provide food and all that is good. Remind me, also, to appreciate the people you have given me to love. I am deeply grateful to You for Your many blessings. In Jesus name, Amen. *(Consider writing your own prayer in the Open Basket. Include your personal gratitude as well as your greatest hopes and needs as you serve in your home mission field.)*



I give you, Lord, what I have!

Actions to think about doing in the next 24 hours:

- Send a note, text message or email to a friend or family member to say thanks for their help in making it possible for you to go on the trip. Share your "Elevator Speech" from page 45 either in written form or in person.
- If you haven't completed "Telling My Story" on pages 42-45, try to complete it today.