YOUTH GROUP CURRICULUM · AGES 11–18

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

WEEK 1 OF 7

The Bread of Life

Theme: Jesus satisfies · Main text: John 6:25–35

I AM

I AM.

Seven words. One Jesus.

Inside: 45 / 60 / 75-minute plans · word-for-word scripts · 4 game options · response activity · Joys & Concerns · 3 student pages

DAHAM
NEXT GENERATION MINISTRY TOGETHER

WEEK 1 · LEADER GUIDE

The Bread of Life

Theme: Jesus satisfies · Main text: John 6:25–35 · Memory verse: John 6:35

THE BIG IDEA

We are all hungry for something. Jesus is the bread that actually satisfies.

The question to carry all night

"Who is Jesus to me?"

By the end, students will…

- Name what they're really hungry for, beyond food
- See why Jesus said "I am the bread of life" to a crowd that just wanted more bread
- Start the I AM Cards with Card #1 and one step

NIGHT AT A GLANCE · PICK YOUR LENGTH

SEGMENT	WHAT HAPPENS	45 MIN	60 MIN	75 MIN
Welcome	Greet new students by name and grade; your announcements	—	—	5
Game 1	Pick from the Activity Menu (next page)	8	10	10
Game 2	A second game from the menu (optional)	—	—	10
Hook + Message	"Mostly Air" · John 6:25–35 · Exodus 3:14	10	12	12
Response Activity	The Empty Plate + I AM Card #1 + My One Step	10	12	12
Small Group Talk	Pick 3–4 questions	—	8	10
Joys & Concerns	"I lift up ___ to God." / "Lord, hear our prayer."	10	10	10
Pastoral Prayer	Leader prays over what was shared + send-off	5	5	5

Supplies

- I AM Card #1: copy the card on student page 2 onto cardstock
- One binder ring or envelope per student to hold all seven cards
- A bag of chips for the hook · paper plates (optional)
- Game extras: food cards, meter cards, bowls (see menu)
- Student pages (last 3 pages) · Bibles · pens · hole punch

Before students arrive

- Choose your games using the Activity Menu
- Read John 6:1–40 and Exodus 3:1–15
- Practice the "Mostly Air" hook out loud once
- Think of something *you* chased as a teenager that didn't fill you up
- Pray for each student by name, especially anyone new

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

CHOOSE WHAT FITS YOUR GROUP

Activity Menu

Every group is different. Some nights you have fifteen students bouncing off the walls; some nights you have four quiet ones and a visitor. Tonight is all about food and hunger, so expect laughs and strong opinions about pizza. Pick one or two games, then finish with the response activity. Every game ends with a debrief that points back to tonight's question.

ACTIVITY	ENERGY	PREP	BEST WHEN…	MIN
A. Twelve Baskets Grab Teams race to fill a basket with food cards, answering each one	High	Food cards, bowls, 10 min	Students need to move; you want everyone talking	10
B. Hungry Again Meter How long does it really fill you up? Teams vote and explain	Medium	Meter cards, 5 min	You want laughs and the strongest link to the message	10–12
C. Which Bread Are You? Pick the bread that fits you, then introduce your partner	Medium	None	Lots of new students; zero prep time	8–10
D. The Best Meal I Ever Had Trios trade real food stories and spot what made them good	Low	None	Small or quiet group; right after the Ministry Meal	8–10
E. The Empty Plate Response activity (after message)	Reflective	Cards, rings or envelopes	Every night: this is the heart of the week and starts the I AM Cards	12

SUGGESTED COMBINATIONS

Big, high-energy group (10–15)

A. Twelve Baskets Grab → B. Hungry Again Meter → Message → E. The Empty Plate

Small group (4–6)

D. The Best Meal I Ever Had (whole group) → Message → E. The Empty Plate in a circle

Lots of first-time visitors

C. Which Bread Are You? → A. Twelve Baskets Grab → Message → E. The Empty Plate (low-pressure option)

Short on time (45 min)

B. Hungry Again Meter → Message → E. The Empty Plate → Joys & Concerns

GROUND RULES FOR EVERY GAME *Nobody is forced to share. Nobody is the punchline. New students get paired with a regular. Food is fun to talk about, but never comment on what or how much anyone eats. If a game ever starts to single someone out, change the round and keep moving.*

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

A. Twelve Baskets Grab

10 min · High energy

Purpose: After Jesus fed five thousand people with one boy's lunch, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftovers. In this game, teams race to fill their own basket with food cards. The catch: a card only counts after everyone on the team answers the question on the back. Students burn energy and hear real answers from everyone on their team.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Before group, write each food on an index card with its question on the back (see the list). Make 2–3 copies of each. Scatter them face down around the room.
2. Split into teams of 3–4. Each team gets a "basket" (a bowl, a box, or a hat) at a home spot. **Fast walking only**.
3. On "Go," one runner per team grabs **one** card and brings it back.
4. The runner reads the question. Everyone on the team answers in one sentence. Then the card goes in the basket and the next runner goes.
5. First team to **12 cards** wins, or the team with the most cards after 5 minutes. Then each team shares the funniest answer they heard.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
> "There's food all over this room. Well, food cards. Your team needs to fill your basket with twelve of them. One runner at a time, walking only, grab one card and bring it back. But here's the catch: before the card goes in your basket, everybody on your team has to answer the question on the back. One sentence each. No answer, no basket. First team to twelve wins. Ready? Go!"

FOOD CARDS (QUESTION ON THE BACK)

FOOD CARD	QUESTION ON THE BACK
Pizza	"Best topping, and one topping that should be illegal?"
Tacos	"Favorite place to eat out around here?"
Pancakes	"Big breakfast person or skip-breakfast person?"
Popcorn	"Last movie or show you couldn't stop watching?"
Birthday cake	"Best birthday you remember?"
Ice cream	"Your go-to flavor, and why?"
Chicken nuggets	"A food you loved when you were little?"
Mac and cheese	"Your comfort food on a bad day?"
Hot chips	"Spiciest thing you've ever eaten?"
Brussels sprouts	"One food you will not eat, no matter what?"

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

Bonus: Barley loaf (counts as 3)	"If you had to share your lunch with 5,000 people, what would you want it to be?"

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** One team, one basket, racing the clock. Runners take turns, and everyone answers every card. Try to beat 12 cards in 4 minutes.
- **Steal a snack:** Once all cards are picked up, a runner may take one card from another team's basket, but has to answer it out loud for that team first.
- **Limited space:** Keep the cards in one big pile in the middle and play seated. Runners just reach in.

LEADER NOTE *Make sure every runner gets a turn before anyone goes twice. If a team stalls on a question, let them answer "pass, but here's a food fact about me" instead.*

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
> "Twelve baskets. That number isn't random. In John 6, Jesus fed a crowd of five thousand people with one kid's lunch: five loaves and two fish. Everybody ate until they were full, and there were twelve baskets left over. Tonight we start a series called I AM, and the question for all seven weeks is: **who is Jesus to me?**"

B. Hungry Again Meter

10–12 min · Medium energy

Purpose: Teams decide how long different things actually "fill you up," from a slice of pizza to a new pair of shoes. Every vote needs a reason from someone's real life, so students learn what they love and what lasts. It sets up the message perfectly: the crowd in John 6 got full, and the next day they were hungry again.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Split into teams of 3–4. Each team gets four **meter cards**: **5 MIN**, **1 DAY**, **1 WEEK**, **LONGER**.
2. The leader reads one thing from the list. Teams have 30 seconds to agree: how long does it keep you happy before you want more?
3. On "Show me!" every team holds up one card at the same time.
4. Each team gives its reason, and at least one person on the team has to use a real example. ("New shoes: one week, because then they get scuffed.")
5. Everyone answers the talk question in their team (about 45 seconds). Play 8–10 rounds and always end with the Bridge round.

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
>
> "Get in teams of three or four and grab your meter cards: five minutes, one day, one week, and longer. I'm going to name something good. Your team decides how long it actually keeps you happy before you want more. You've got thirty seconds to agree. When I say 'Show me,' hold up your card. Then you have to explain it, with a real example."
>
> "First one: a large pizza, all to yourself. Thirty seconds. Go!"

METER ROUNDS + TALK QUESTIONS

HOW LONG DOES THIS FILL YOU UP?	TALK QUESTION (AFTER THE VOTE)
A large pizza, all to yourself	"What's your all-time favorite meal?"
A brand-new pair of shoes	"Best thing you ever saved up for?"
100 likes on a post	"What kind of post or picture is the most fun for you to share?"
Winning a big game	"Best win you've ever been part of?"
A new video game	"What game, app, or hobby are you into right now?"
An A on a really hard test	"What class are you proud of right now?"
The last day of school	"Best day of last summer?"
A really good nap	"Best place you've ever fallen asleep?"
A friend who really gets you	"What makes a friend a real friend?"
Bridge: Bread from heaven that never runs out	Lead into the debrief

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Everyone gets their own meter cards (or uses fingers: 1, 2, 3, 4). Reveal together, then go around the circle with reasons.
- **Student picks:** After a few rounds, let teams suggest a thing for everyone else to rate.
- **Real snacks:** If there are leftovers from the Ministry Meal, hand out one small snack and ask: "How long until you want another one?"

LEADER NOTE *Write the meter cards before group (half sheets of paper work fine). Keep it light. The goal is not to say good things are bad. Pizza is good. The point is that most good things don't last.*

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
>
> "Notice something? Almost everything we rated was good. But almost everything wore off. Pizza, shoes, likes, even summer. Then you're hungry again. Tonight we're reading about a crowd that ate the best free lunch of their lives, and the very next day they were hungry again. And Jesus told them something about himself. So here's our question: **who is Jesus to me?**"

C. Which Bread Are You?

8–10 min · Medium energy

Purpose: Zero prep, lots of laughing. The leader reads a menu of breads, each with a "personality." Students pick the one that fits them best and explain why with a real example, then introduce their partner to the group. It's easy for new students because the menu gives everyone something to say.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Students pair up (or trios). New students pair with a regular.
2. The leader reads the Bread Menu out loud (or writes it on a whiteboard).
3. Each person secretly picks the bread that describes them best. Then they tell their partner which one and **why**, with a real example.
4. Partners also guess: "Which bread do you think I'd pick for you?" Then compare.
5. Each pair introduces each other to the group: "This is Riley. Riley is a tortilla, because..." Go around until everyone is introduced.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
>
> "Find a partner. I'm going to read you a bread menu. Every bread has a personality. Your job is to pick the bread that is most *you*, and tell your partner why. Give a real example. I'll go first: I'm banana bread. Sweet, a little mushy, and I get better with time. At least I hope so."
>
> "After that, you're going to introduce your partner to all of us as their bread. So listen well."

THE BREAD MENU

- **Bagel:** tough on the outside, soft on the inside
- **Croissant:** a little fancy, takes time to get ready
- **Tortilla:** wraps around everybody, goes with anything
- **Pretzel:** a little twisted, the best part of game night
- **Sourdough:** takes a while to get to know, worth it
- **Garlic bread:** walks in and everyone's happy
- **Pancake:** best in the morning
- **Cornbread:** loyal to home and family
- **Banana bread:** sweet, gets better with time
- **Dinner roll:** quiet, always there when you need it
- **Pita:** has a pocket for everybody's stuff (great listener)
- **Toast:** warms up fast, a little crunchy

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Skip pairs. Go around the circle; each person names their bread and why, then the group guesses which bread the leader would pick for them.
- **Family bakery:** Second round: "Which bread is someone in your family?" (Keep it kind.)
- **Bread draw:** Each person draws their bread with a face in 30 seconds and holds it up during introductions.

DEBRIEF

> **SAY**
>
> "That was fun. You just described yourselves as bread. Tonight we'll hear Jesus describe *himself* as bread. Out of everything he could have called himself, he picked the most ordinary thing on the table, the thing people needed every single day. Keep tonight's question in your head: **who is Jesus to me?**"

D. The Best Meal I Ever Had

8–10 min · Low energy

Purpose: A calm, story-based game for small or quiet groups, and perfect right after the Ministry Meal. Trios trade real food stories from a list of prompts. At the end, each trio looks for a pattern: what made the best meals the best? (Spoiler: it's usually *who* was at the table.) Everyone learns something true about each other.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Split into trios. If you can, mix older and younger students in each trio.
2. One person picks a prompt from the list and tells a short, real story (about 45 seconds).
3. The other two each ask one follow-up question. ("Who made it?" "Would you eat it again?")
4. Rotate until everyone has told 2–3 stories.
5. Each trio answers one last question together: **"What made the best meals the best?"** Then they share their answer with the group.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
>
> "Get in groups of three. I've got a list of food stories. Pick one and tell your group a real story. Keep it short. Then the other two each ask you one follow-up question. I'll go first: 'The best meal I ever had was ___, and the reason it was so good was ___.'"
>
> "At the end, your group is going to figure out one thing: what made the best meals the best? Okay, go."

FOOD STORY PROMPTS

- The best meal you've ever had
- A meal that made you feel at home
- The worst thing you've ever tasted
- A food that reminds you of someone
- A time you were really, really hungry
- A meal you helped cook (or burned)
- A holiday food your family can't skip
- A time someone shared their food with you
- A snack that got you through something hard
- A food from somewhere else everyone should try

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Stay together. Each person tells one story, and the whole group asks follow-ups. Finish with the "what made it best" question as a group.
- **Lightning round:** Skip the stories. The leader calls a prompt and everyone answers in five words or less.

LEADER NOTE *Some students may not always have enough food at home, and some may have a hard relationship with eating. Keep the focus on stories and people, never on bodies or how much anyone eats. If a story turns heavy, thank the student and follow up privately (see the Care Note).*

DEBRIEF

SAY

"What did you notice? The best meals usually weren't just about the food. They were about who was there, and how full you felt afterward, inside and out. Tonight Jesus talks about a kind of hunger food can't fix, and he says *he* is the answer. So keep this question in your head: **who is Jesus to me?**"

Hook: "Mostly Air"

2 min

SAY

(Hold up a big bag of chips. Shake it.) "Okay, how many chips do you think are in here? Give me a guess." *(Let students answer. Then open it and pour the chips into a bowl or onto a plate.)*

"Look at that. Big bag, big promise, and it's… mostly air. Has that ever happened to you? You're starving, you open the bag, and you're done in four bites."

"Here's the thing. A lot of stuff in life is like this bag. It looks like it's going to fill you up, and then it's mostly air. For the next seven weeks we're doing a series called I AM. Jesus describes himself seven different ways in the Gospel of John, and every week we'll ask one question: **who is Jesus to me?**"

Message: Hungry Again

10 min

1. Everybody is hungry for something

SAY

"We all know what it feels like to be hungry for food. But we get hungry in other ways too. Hungry to be noticed. Hungry to fit in. Hungry to feel like we're enough. Hungry for things to finally calm down. And we try to fill those hungers with all kinds of stuff: likes, grades, a relationship, being busy, being funny. Some of that stuff is good. But a lot of it is mostly air. You get full for a minute, and then you're hungry again."

LEADER NOTE *If you have a short, honest story about something you chased as a teenager that you thought would finally fill you up (a team, a relationship, being liked, a goal), tell it here. Thirty seconds is plenty. Students trust leaders who go first.*

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

2. Read the story

SAY

"Here's what just happened in John 6. Jesus took one boy's lunch, five loaves of bread and two fish, and fed more than five thousand people. Everybody ate as much as they wanted. The next day the crowd goes looking for him. They cross a whole lake to find him. Listen to what Jesus says when they show up."

25 When they found him on the other side of the sea, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you
come here?" 26 Jesus answered them, "Most certainly I tell you, you seek me, not because you
saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. 27 Don't work for the food which
perishes, but for the food which remains to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to
you. For God the Father has sealed him." 28 They said therefore to him, "What must we do,
that we may work the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that
you believe in him whom he has sent." 30 They said therefore to him, "What then do you do
for a sign, that we may see and believe you? What work do you do? 31 Our fathers ate the
manna in the wilderness. As it is written, 'He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.'" 32 Jesus
therefore said to them, "Most certainly, I tell you, it wasn't Moses who gave you the bread
out of heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread out of heaven. 33 For the bread of God
is that which comes down out of heaven and gives life to the world." 34 They said therefore to
him, "Lord, always give us this bread." 35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever
comes to me will not be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

JOHN 6:25–35 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

"Did you catch it? Jesus basically says, 'You're not here for *me*. You're here for more bread.' And honestly, who can blame them? Free lunch is great. But Jesus says, 'Don't work for the food which perishes.' Yesterday's bread is already gone. You're hungry again. 'Always give us this bread,' they say. And Jesus answers: 'I *am* the bread.'"

3. "I am" is a big deal

SAY

"Those two little words, 'I am,' go way back. Long before Jesus, Moses met God at a burning bush and asked, 'What's your name?' Here's what God said."

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM," and he said, "You shall tell the children of Israel this: 'I
AM has sent me to you.'"

EXODUS 3:14 · WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

"So when Jesus keeps saying 'I am' in John, people who knew their Bible heard an echo of God's own name. Jesus isn't just a good teacher with good advice about bread. He's saying God himself has come close enough to feed you. Over seven weeks we'll hear Jesus say 'I am' seven times. Tonight is the first one."

4. The bread that actually satisfies

SAY

"Here's our memory verse. Jesus said: 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will not be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'"

"Two things. First: bread isn't a fancy dessert you have once a year. It's the everyday thing. Jesus isn't saying 'try me once.' He's saying 'come to me every day, like you come back to the table.' Second: he doesn't promise to fill you up with more *stuff*. He says he *is* what fills you up. Being known. Being loved. Being enough. That's not mostly air."

"You can still love pizza and new shoes. But they were never meant to fill the deepest hunger in you. Jesus was. So here's the question again, and I want you to actually think about it: **who is Jesus to me?** Is he a snack I grab when things get bad, or the bread I come back to every day?"

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

E. Response Activity: The Empty Plate

12 min

Purpose: Help students name, privately and honestly, what they're really hungry for and what they've been trying to fill it with, and then pray for each other. Tonight they also start the **I AM Cards**: every week of the series, each student gets one card with that week's "I am" saying and a simple icon. By Week 7, they'll have a full set of seven, on a ring or in an envelope.

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Hold up a ring with Card #1 on it. Explain the I AM Cards: one card a week, seven in all, each one a different way Jesus describes himself.
2. **My Hungers:** On student page 1, students privately check what they're hungry for, write what they usually fill it with, and circle how long it lasts. Nobody shares their page.
3. **The Empty Plate:** Students circle **one** hunger and write it on the empty plate on their page (or on a real paper plate).
4. **Plate Prayers:** In pairs, each partner shares one hunger (only what they want to share). The other prays one sentence: "Jesus, be ___'s bread when ___." Then switch.
5. **I AM Card #1:** Students cut out the card on page 2 (or use a cardstock copy) and fill in the back: "Jesus, you are my ___ when ___." Punch a hole and add it to the ring or envelope.
6. **My One Step:** Students fill in "My One Step This Week" on student page 2.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY (I AM CARDS)**
>
> "This is your first I AM Card. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says 'I am' seven times, and every week you'll get a new card. Bread, light, door, shepherd, and more. By the end you'll have all seven. Put it on a ring or keep it in an envelope, somewhere you'll actually see it."
>
> **SAY (MY HUNGERS)**
>
> "On your first page, find My Hungers. Check anything you've been hungry for lately. Next to it, write what you usually try to fill it with. Be honest. Then circle how long that thing actually lasts. This is just between you and God. Nobody is going to see it."
>
> **SAY (EMPTY PLATE + PLATE PRAYERS)**
>
> "Now pick one hunger and write it on the empty plate. That's the one you're bringing to Jesus tonight. Find a partner. Share that one hunger, only if you want to. Then your partner prays one sentence for you: 'Jesus, be Sam's bread when Sam feels left out.' That's it. One sentence. It might feel awkward. Do it anyway."
>
> **SAY (I AM CARD + ONE STEP)**
>
> "Grab your I AM Card. On the back, fill in: 'Jesus, you are my ___ when ___.' Tonight that might be: 'Jesus, you are my bread when I feel empty after scrolling.' Then write one small step on your page. Keep it tiny. Like: 'Every time I open the snack cabinet, I'll pray, Jesus, you're my bread.'"

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

Hungers (read aloud if stuck)

- To be noticed
- To fit in
- To feel like I'm enough
- A friend who gets me
- Peace in my head
- Rest
- To know I'm loved
- To know what's next
- To be forgiven
- Something to look forward to

"Come to the bread" step ideas

- Read John 6:35 on my card every morning
- Pray one sentence before I eat lunch
- When I reach for my phone out of boredom, say "Jesus, fill me first"
- Text my prayer partner one line on Monday
- Thank God for one thing that filled me up today, at bedtime

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Sit in a circle. Each person prays one sentence for the person on their left, all the way around.
- **Low-pressure option:** Skip the pairs. Students write their hunger on the back of their card, and the leader prays one prayer over everyone: "Jesus, be the bread for every hunger on every card in this room."
- **Real plates:** Give out paper plates. Students write their hunger in the middle and stack the plates face down on a table as a sign of bringing it to Jesus. Leaders pray over the stack later without reading them.

LEADER NOTE *Never collect or read student pages or plates, and don't ask anyone to share what they checked. Bring extra cards and rings for students who show up later in the series; they can start their set any week. If a student seems really empty or down, check in quietly afterward (see the Care Note).*

DEBRIEF

SAY

"Look at that card. It's small, but it's a reminder: when you feel empty, you don't have to grab whatever bag of air is closest. You can come to Jesus. **Who is Jesus to me?** Tonight, maybe he's the bread. And tonight, somebody in this room prayed for your hunger too."

Small Group Talk

8–10 min · Optional

Groups of 3–5, with one adult or student leader per group if possible. Pick 3–4 questions that fit your group.

WARM UP

1. What's a food you could eat every single day and never get tired of?
   Follow-up: Is there a story behind it?
2. When you're hungry, are you a "snack right now" person or a "wait for a real meal" person?
   Keep it light. It's a warm-up.

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

GO DEEPER

3. The crowd chased Jesus because they wanted more bread. Why do you think people come to Jesus today?
   Is it okay to start there?
4. What's something that promises to fill you up but ends up being "mostly air"?
   How do you know when something is mostly air?
5. Jesus said, "Whoever comes to me will not be hungry." What do you think it looks like to "come to" Jesus on a normal Tuesday?
6. Bread is something you need every day. What would change if you thought of Jesus as an everyday thing instead of an emergency thing?

TAKE IT HOME

7. What's one hunger you want to bring to Jesus this week?
8. If someone asked you tonight, "Who is Jesus to you?", what's one honest sentence you could say?

LEADER NOTE *Silence is okay. Count to seven in your head before rephrasing. If no one answers, answer it yourself briefly and honestly, then ask again. If a student says "I'm not sure who Jesus is," thank them. That's exactly the question this series is for.*

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

Joys & Concerns

10 min

Purpose: Students practice praying *for each other*, not just hearing about prayer. It's often the moment new students realize this group actually cares about them. Tonight it fits the theme: we bring our real hungers to Jesus, and we don't have to bring them alone.

HOW IT WORKS

1. Sit in a circle if you can. Explain the response: when someone shares, they end with **"I lift up ___ to God."** Everyone responds together: **"Lord, hear our prayer."**
2. Start with **joys** (things to thank God for), then move to **concerns** (things we're worried about or carrying).
3. The leader goes first to model it, with one joy and one concern.
4. Anyone can share, or pass. "Unspoken" requests are welcome, too.
5. Jot down what's shared (first names only) so you can pray for each one in the Pastoral Prayer.

LEADER SCRIPT

> **SAY**
>
> "Tonight we talked about being hungry, and about Jesus being the bread that actually fills us. Let's bring what we're carrying to him together. What's something good that filled you up this week? Or something heavy, for you, your family, or a friend?"
>
> "When you share, end with 'I lift up ___ to God.' And all of us will say together, 'Lord, hear our prayer.' Let's practice. I lift up this group to God…" *(All: "Lord, hear our prayer.")*
>
> "I'll go first. My joy is ___. I lift up ___ to God. My concern is ___. I lift up ___ to God."

Joy starters (if students are stuck)

- A good meal or a fun night with family
- A friend who showed up for me
- My team had a great practice
- Someone I love got good news

Concern starters

- Feeling empty or stressed lately
- A grandparent or relative who is sick
- A friend who's going through something
- "I have an unspoken request."

VARIATIONS

- **Small group (4–6):** Go around the circle so everyone gets a turn, and everyone is allowed to pass.
- **Big group (12+):** "Popcorn" style: anyone shares when ready. Cap it at about 8 minutes.
- **Written version:** Students write joys and concerns on slips of paper. The leader reads them (no names) and the group responds.

LEADER NOTE *Say once at the start: "What's shared here stays here, unless someone's safety is at risk." If a student shares something serious, thank them, pray, and follow up privately afterward (see the Care Note).*

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

Pastoral Prayer

3–5 min

Pray this over the group. The **[bracketed]** lines are where you name the joys and concerns students just shared.

Jesus, Bread of Life,

Thank you for the good things you've given us this week. *[Name the joys shared: "Thank you for Maya's great weekend with her grandma, for Chris's team winning..."]* Every good gift comes from you.

And we bring you the things we're carrying. *[Name the concerns: "Be with Ethan's dad while he's in the hospital. Give Sophia peace about her test on Friday..."]* And for the things that stayed in our hearts tonight and weren't spoken out loud, you already know them. Hold them too.

You fed a hungry crowd with one boy's lunch, and you said, "I am the bread of life." Some of us are hungry tonight in ways nobody can see: to be noticed, to fit in, to feel like we're enough. So much of what we fill up on turns out to be mostly air. Thank you that you don't just give us bread. You are the bread. When we feel empty this week, help us come to you first. Help anyone new tonight feel at home at this table.

In Jesus' name, amen.

SEND-OFF

"Take your student pages home: a five-day devotional and a tracker for your one step. Keep I AM Card #1 where you'll see it; next week you get Card #2. Next time Jesus says 'I am' again, for when life feels dark: **'The Light of the World.'** And every week we'll keep asking: **who is Jesus to me?** See you then."

Next Week Follow-Up: Open Week 2 by asking students to look at their One Step tracker. "How many days did you come to the bread? What helped? What got in the way?" Celebrate any progress. Then: "Who still has I AM Card #1? Hold it up." Have extra Week 1 cards ready.

Care Note for Leaders

Hunger can touch real needs. Watch for a student who may not have enough food at home, who talks about eating or their body in a worried way, or who feels empty or hopeless most of the time. Students with doubts or another faith background are welcome: invite questions, never pressure.

- **Stay calm and thank them** for telling you. Don't handle this alone.
- **Don't promise to keep secrets** if someone's safety is at risk.
- **Follow your church's safety policy** and tell your lead pastor the same day.
- **Connect them to trained help:** parents or guardians, a school counselor, or a licensed counselor. In the U.S., anyone can call or text **988** (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) any time.

You're not a counselor. Listen well, take it seriously, and connect them to the right people.

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

THE FULL SERIES

I AM · 7 Weeks

Each week stands alone, so new students can jump in any week. Taught in order, the seven weeks walk through the Gospel of John, where Jesus says "I am" seven times: bread, light, door, shepherd, resurrection, way, and vine. The question every week: *Who is Jesus to me?*

#	WEEK	TEXT
1	**The Bread of Life** Jesus satisfies	John 6:25–35
2	**The Light of the World** Jesus shows the way in the dark	John 8:12 and John 9:1–7
3	**The Door** Jesus is the way in	John 10:7–10
4	**The Good Shepherd** Jesus knows and protects	John 10:11–18
5	**The Resurrection and the Life** Jesus has power over death	John 11:17–27
6	**The Way, the Truth, and the Life** Jesus is the way to the Father	John 14:1–7
7	**The True Vine** Stay connected to Jesus	John 15:1–8

Every week includes

- 45 / 60 / 75-minute schedules
- Activity Menu with 4+ game options
- Word-for-word leader scripts
- Scripture (World English Bible) and one big idea
- Response activity + "One Step" challenge
- A new I AM Card to collect every week
- Tiered discussion questions
- Joys & Concerns prayer time
- Pastoral prayer with space for your group
- Student pages and 5-day devotional
- Next-week follow-up

Built for real youth groups

These weeks are written for a real Wednesday night group: 5 to 15 students, often with a new face or two, led by a pastor or volunteer with limited prep time. Games never single anyone out. Every activity has a small-group version. And every leader script can be read word for word when you're short on time.

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together. All rights reserved.
Purchasers may photocopy and share the student pages and leader guide for use within their own church or ministry.
Scripture quotations are from the World English Bible (public domain).

Name: _____ Date: _____

TONIGHT'S BIG IDEA

I am hungry for something. Jesus is the bread that actually satisfies.

THE STORY · JOHN 6:27, 35

"Don't work for the food which _____,

but for the food which _____ to eternal life."

"I am the _____ of life. Whoever comes to me will not be _____."

What the crowd **wanted**:

What Jesus **offered**:

MY HUNGERS

Private, just you and God. Check what you've been hungry for lately. Write what you usually fill it with, and circle how long it lasts. Then write **one** hunger on the empty plate.

I'M HUNGRY FOR…	WHAT I USUALLY FILL IT WITH	HOW LONG IT LASTS
☐ To be noticed		5 min · 1 day · 1 week · longer
☐ To fit in		5 min · 1 day · 1 week · longer
☐ To feel like I'm enough		5 min · 1 day · 1 week · longer
☐ A friend who really gets me		5 min · 1 day · 1 week · longer
☐ Peace in my head		5 min · 1 day · 1 week · longer
☐ To know I'm loved		5 min · 1 day · 1 week · longer
☐ _____		5 min · 1 day · 1 week · longer

MY PLATE

I AM · EXODUS 3:14

God said to Moses, "I AM _____ I AM." When Jesus says "I am," he echoes God's own name.

One hunger I want to bring to Jesus this week:

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

My One Step

MY ONE STEP THIS WEEK

Every _____ (morning / lunch / after school / bedtime)

I will come to Jesus, the bread of life, by _____

Example: "Every day at lunch, before I eat, I will read my I AM Card and pray one sentence."

MY WEEK TRACKER

Check each day you did your step.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

MY PRAYER LIST

Write down the joys and concerns people shared tonight (first names only) and keep praying this week.

JOYS: THANK YOU, GOD, FOR…	CONCERNS: PLEASE BE WITH…

MY I AM CARD · #1

✂ Cut out along the dashed line, fold in the middle, punch the circle, and add it to your ring or envelope. Collect all seven!

FRONT · I AM CARD #1 OF 7

I AM
the bread of life

"I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will not be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

JOHN 6:35

BACK · I AM CARD #1 OF 7

Jesus, you are my _____

when _____

_____

M☐ T☐ W☐ T☐ F☐ S☐ S☐

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together

5 Days with the Bread of Life

TAKE-HOME DEVOTIONAL · 5 MINUTES A DAY

Each day: read the verse, think about the question, write one honest sentence. That's it.

DAY 1 John 6:9 · One kid's lunch

Jesus fed thousands with five loaves and two fish that a boy was willing to hand over. What small thing could you hand to Jesus this week?

DAY 2 John 6:27 · Food that lasts

Jesus said not to work for "the food which perishes." What's something you've been working hard for that won't last?

DAY 3 Exodus 16:4 · Enough for today

God gave his people "a day's portion every day." What do you need from God just for today?

DAY 4 Isaiah 55:2 · Doesn't satisfy

God asks, "Why do you spend money for that which is not bread?" What do you keep going back to that leaves you empty?

DAY 5 John 6:35 · Never hungry

Jesus says, "Whoever comes to me will not be hungry." Finish this honestly: Jesus, to me you are…

A prayer you can pray this week

Jesus, I'm hungry for a lot of things, and I try to fill up on stuff that doesn't last. You said you are the bread of life. Fill me with you. When I feel empty, help me come to you first. Amen.

Next week · Week 2: **The Light of the World**

© 2026 Daham Next Generation Ministry Together