



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Session 8: I Am the Bread

Suggested Week of Use: January 22, 2023

Core Passage: John 6:26-40

News Story Summary

A food pantry in Virginia Beach, Virginia, exclusively serves active-duty military members and their families. The shelves of Patriot's Pantry are stocked with everything you would expect to find in any grocery store. Laura Baxter, of the Armed Services YMCA of Hampton Roads, said, "We have a lot of families that were two income families, and now they're one income families. All of a sudden, things cost more." The need for this service started during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, by the end of 2022, the need for assistance for military families had doubled. Research reveals that one out of every six military and veteran families experience food insecurity, and this area of coastal Virginia is among the regions hit hardest by the problem. Pantry workers say they feel a deep responsibility to support military families, especially the families of those who are deployed.

For more about this story, search "Patriot's Pantry Virginia."

Focus Attention

To supplement **FOCUS ATTENTION**, explain that the problem of food insecurity is a worldwide problem. Say: *Thankfully, many organizations are committed to providing food for so many different people and segments of population.* Encourage adults to share ways they have been involved in feeding the hungry in your community. Share the story of Patriot's Pantry as a unique provider of food to families that many might not think about. Call for reactions to the story. Explain that providing for people's physical needs, including hunger, often opens door for spiritual conversations. Ask: *How can a person's needs—especially for food—keep them from the spiritual food that only Jesus can provide?* Share that in today's session, Jesus used the illustration of physical food to highlight a deeper hunger that everyone experiences.

Summarize and Challenge

To supplement **SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE**, ask: *What are a couple of meals that you find truly satisfying?* Discuss what it might be like to not have access to that food. Discuss how the military families who take advantage of Patriot's Pantry might feel if they couldn't access the food they need to satisfy the hunger of their families. Ask: *How does the spiritual food that Jesus offers differ from the physical food we crave? How does belief in Jesus satisfy a person's spiritual hunger?* Discuss responses and continue the activity as written.