

August 2, 2015  
Jesus, the Bread of Life

Teaching the Revised Common Lectionary  
**FEASTING** *on the* **WORD**  
CURRICULUM

Adult  
Resource Sheet 1

## Focus on John 6:24–35

### WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” Wayne A. Meeks  
So the people now piously ask Jesus, “What must we do to perform the works of God?” (v. 28). For the reader who has paid attention, however, the question signals one of those recurring themes that reverberate through this Gospel. The “works of God” are, on one level, the miraculous deeds that Jesus performs, equivalent to his “signs” (5:19–23). At a deeper level, they are the whole of his mission in the world, which he must “complete” (*telesthai*), ultimately on the cross (4:34; 5:36; 17:4; 19:30; cf. 14:9–12). For those who come to him, Jesus here defines “the work of God” as faith in himself, God’s envoy in the world (v. 29)—an astonishing claim.

### WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” Christopher Morse  
“Christ does not reply to the question put to him,” writes John Calvin, when we seek “in Christ something other than Christ himself.” Yet the questioning of Jesus, misdirected as it is, is not disregarded in this passage but used to disclose a more confounding truth. The very signs the crowds look for obscure what is already there for them of life-and-death significance. The demands they make are overtaken by the bread of life that they are given. The works they insistently ask about performing mistake the work God is performing of bringing them to life in faith.

### SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective,”  
O. Benjamin Sparks  
Perhaps the most startling place for us to end is where the text begins: “Rabbi,” the crowd asks Jesus, “when did you come here?” It is a play on words. On the surface they want to know when he came (geographically) to where they discovered him. But they also mean (even without knowing, as is typical of John) that they want to know when the Son of God came here to earth. He came from God, and he came to do the work of his Father, to give his life for the sake of the world, so that those who trust in him might receive everlasting life. Do we believe the good news—not caring whether believing brings us material prosperity or personal happiness—for that new, transformed life along the way?

### NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,”  
William H. Willimon  
“Faith,” as the word is used here, means more than clarity about the facts, belief in a set of propositions. Faith means encounter with a person, one who is “the way, and the truth, and the life” (14:6). The one who speaks to us in this peculiarly metaphorical way is the one who desires not only that we think about him but that we feed on him, ingest him, implying that we could starve to death without him.