

Evicted, Escaped, and Eating with Birds: Adventures with Elijah

Following God is not always easy...we have the great privilege and blessing of living in a time and country that are not too threatening for Christians, but this certainly has not always been the case. In the Bible, we see many instances of people suffering for serving God and obeying His instructions. Elijah was an “outlaw” if ever there was one...he went against the grain of some wicked rulers and had to run away from society because of them. In Elijah we see perseverance, faith, and trust; and we see those attributes rewarded by God.

Lesson focus: God wants us to honor Him first and foremost; He promises to reward our faithfulness with positive results, but poor choices will lead to negative consequences.

Passage: 1 Kings 17 (various verses)

Materials Needed: Small snacks (bread, crackers, gummi worms^o); oil; clothespins; paper bags; feathers (dark); google eyes; paper.

Lesson Opening:

Begin with a little “raven relay race” today in honor of the birds of the story. You might even go outside for it, if that works better (courtyard/playground) Have one or two children as “Elijah” (depending on how many total students you have) and the others as ravens (you might want to have two teams with an Elijah and ravens on each team). Have the Elijahs hide and explain to the ravens that they are to find and feed Elijah. Hand each raven a clothespin “beak” and show them a designated area where the snacks are set up. On signal, the ravens must run to the snack pile, retrieve a snack with the clothespin, and bring it back to Elijah. Try to see who gets the most the fastest!

Bible Lesson:

Have you ever done or said something that was not very popular? Did you get in trouble or have people angry at you? This is not such an unusual situation (perhaps share an anecdote). But did your words result in a death threat? That is what happened in today’s story...

Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe^{ba} in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word.”

-1 Kings 17:1

Now, in the days that Elijah lived, there were some very bad kings ruling. These men had done some very EVIL things that God did not like, and one of the most wicked was named Ahab. Ahab took over when Elijah was a prophet. God wanted to warn the king that his horrible deeds would not go unpunished, so He sent Elijah to tell that to Ahab. However, this did not make the king too happy, and he wanted to have Elijah captured and killed. So God sent His messenger away and promised to care for Him. Elijah went:

Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah:³ “Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. ⁴ You will drink from the brook, and I have directed the ravens to supply you with food there.”

⁵ So he did what the Lord had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. ⁶ The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook. -1 Kings 17:2-6

Now we do not necessarily know every detail, but notice how Elijah acted: he did not question or doubt God but left and followed instruction immediately and went out to an isolated area to hide. What happened to him then? God took care of Him. He used birds to supply Elijah’s needs. (Give each child a cracker to sample; maybe a small cup of water).

Explain that the story doesn’t end there. Eventually even that brook dried...what would Elijah do next???

Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. ⁸ Then the word of the Lord came to him: ⁹ “Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food.” -1 Kings 17:7-9

What do you do when you get hungry or thirsty? Usually we can ask our mom or dad to help provide when we need something. Well, Elijah had nothing, but God instructed him what to do. Elijah had to trust these strange directions and he followed...

So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, “Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?”¹¹ As she was going to get it, he called, “And bring me, please, a piece of bread.” -1 Kings 17:10-11

Again, we see Elijah following God’s instruction without question. He goes to the widow that God told him about and finds her just as promised. Her answer seems to throw a wrench in the plan, though...

“As surely as the Lord your God lives,” she replied, “I don’t have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”

¹³ Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. ¹⁴ For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: “The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the land.” (12-14)

Mention the importance of oil in Mediterranean culture, and how it was used to cook. Maybe let children try a drop or two of olive oil/vegetable oil.

God is about to do something truly amazing here. Not only is He taking care of Elijah; He is also using Elijah to help someone else in need! This widow had reached the end of her rope and was all out of hope. But Elijah knew that God always has a plan.

She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. ¹⁶For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah. (15-16)

So God took care of Elijah, and the widow too! (Might go into the remainder of the story and curing the young boy who died...but that could be a little much all in one go). The Bible reminds us that He will always supply what we NEED.

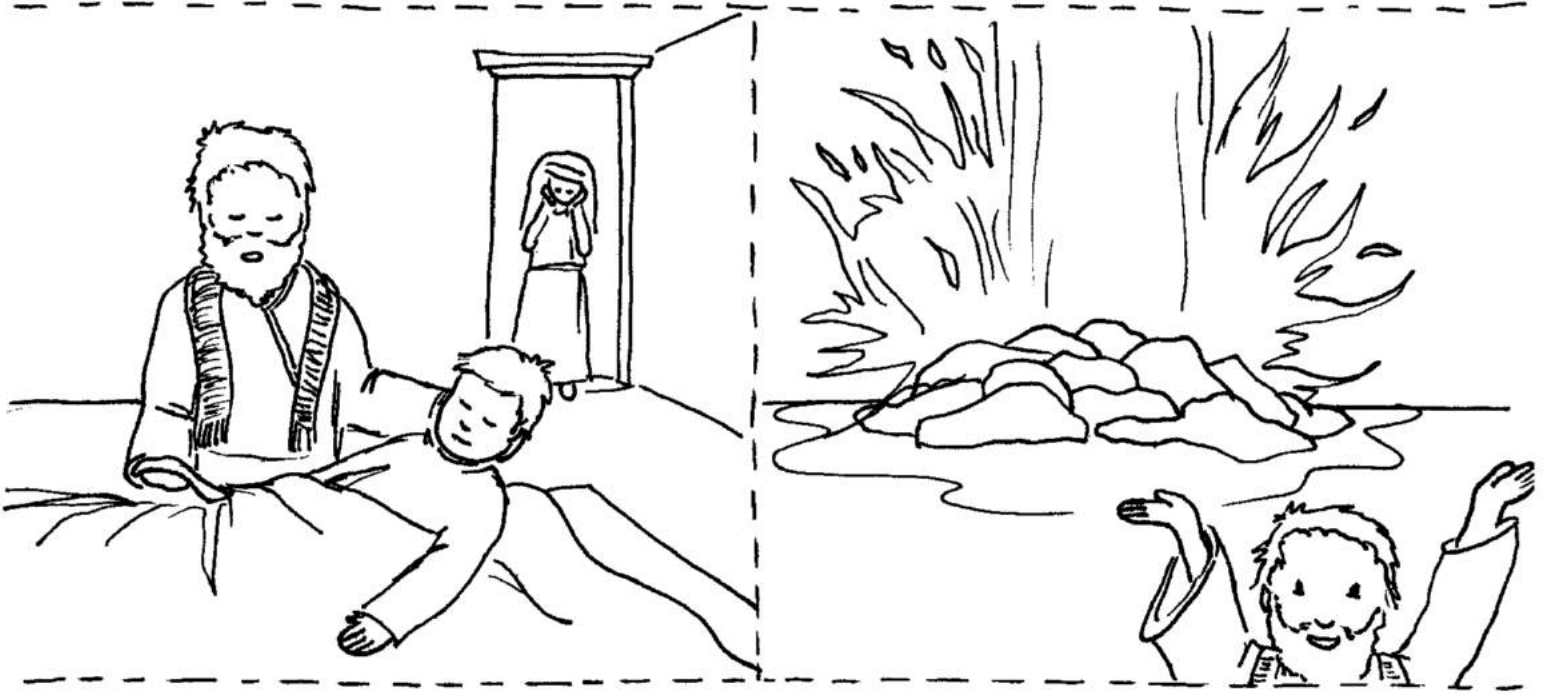
“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?” -Matthew 6:25

What do we **need** in this life? Toys? Games? Nice clothes? God has promised to give us what we need. If we follow God and want what He wants we can know that He will care for us, just as He did Elijah.

Craft: (If time...)

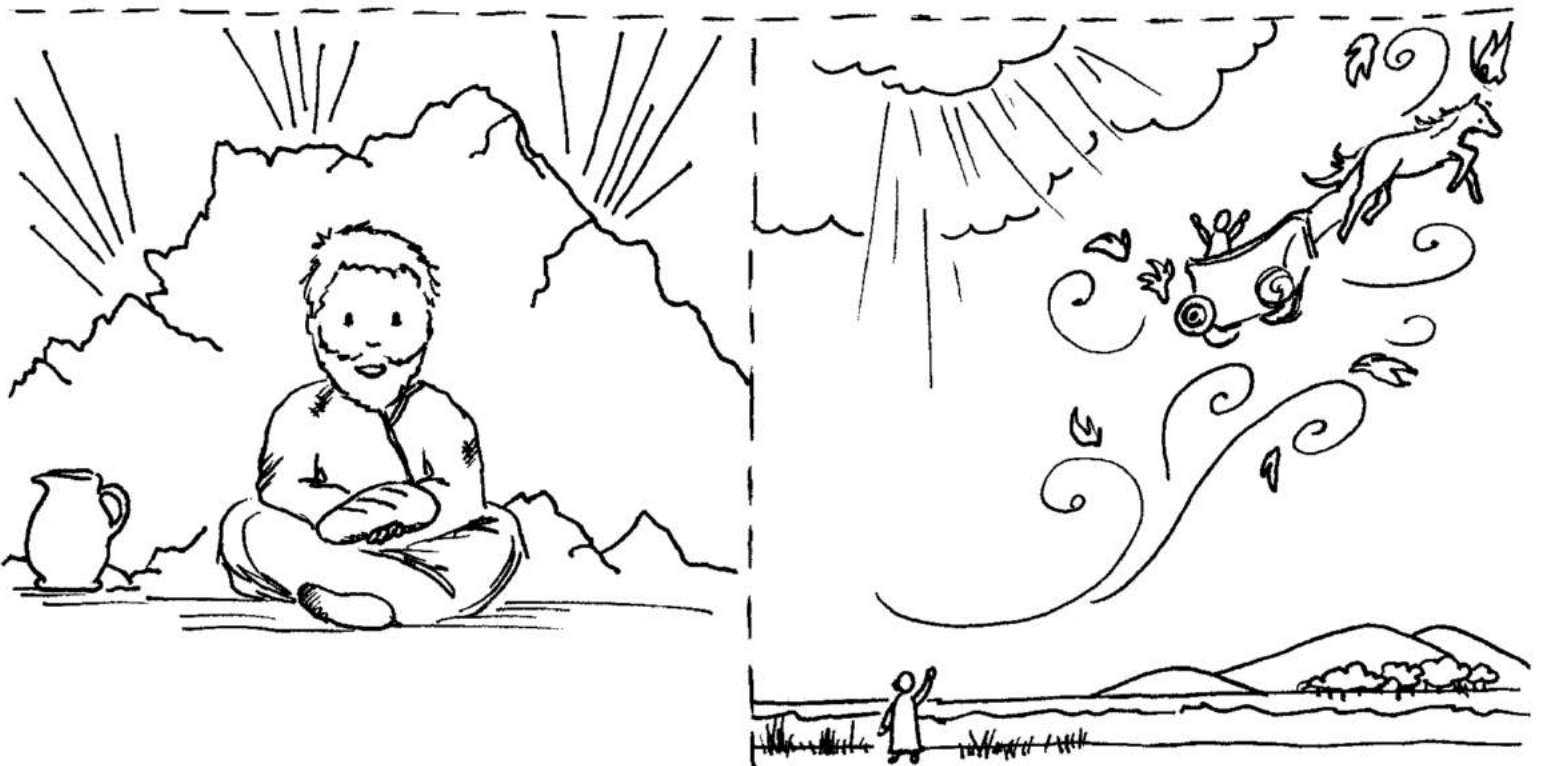
A raven full of needs...make a bird puppet that doubles as a prayer and gratitude bag. Using paper bags and materials, craft a bird puppet to remember the ravens in the story. Add eyes, feathers, and more as desired. On slips of paper, write things that might be desired or wanted, but also things that are genuine *needs*. Place these things inside the raven bag to remember that God will supply all that we need.

Close with prayer and reminder of God’s work in our lives. Ask God for wisdom and strength in making choices, and also for gratitude in what He has already granted. Ask God to help us honor Him in all that we say and do.



Elijah speaks God's truth...

1 Kings - 2 Kings



3.

Elijah is fed
by the Angel of
the Lord

4.

Elijah is taken
up to heaven.

1.

Elijah prays
for the widow's
son.

2.

Elijah prays.
The prophets of Baal
are defeated.

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