

LESSON 63

Elijah & the Prophets of Baal

1 KINGS 18



BIBLE TRUTH

OUR GOD IS ABOVE ALL GODS

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. **OPENING REVIEW** **5 MIN**
Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
2. **BIBLE STORY** **10 MIN**
Read 1 Kings 18:1–40 from the Scriptures or read story 63, “Elijah and the Prophets of Baal,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
3. **OBJECT LESSON 1** **10 MIN**
Waver between Two Opinions
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ eight identical opaque plastic containers (foam cups with lids work well)
 - ✓ two sets of the following: six carrot sticks, one-half cup raisins, ten cheese crackers, and ten individually wrapped chocolate candies
4. **TEACHING/DISCUSSION** **10 MIN**
5. **OBJECT LESSON 2** **10 MIN**
God Covers Our Many Sins
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ worksheet
 - ✓ pens/pencils
6. **SWORD BIBLE MEMORY** **5 MIN**
7. **ACTIVITY TIME** **15 MIN**
Fire from Heaven
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ colored pencils, crayons, and paper
8. **CLOSING PRAYER** **5 MIN**
9. **BONUS OBJECT LESSON** **10 MIN**
Sticks Don’t Draw
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ one set of colored pencils
 - ✓ a second set of colored pencils, only these pencils are removed and replaced with one-quarter-inch wooden dowel rods cut to length and sharpened slightly (If using a pencil sharpener, stop before the dowel is cut to a sharp point. This will make the dowel rods less dangerous in the classroom.)
 - ✓ two sheets of drawing paper

TOTAL 80 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

There is a difference between God and other gods—Today's Bible passage presents a famous story from the Old Testament. God's people, rebelling once again, worship false gods who they believe control the weather. As a result, God has not allowed it to rain in Israel for three years. For all that time Elijah has been waiting for God to speak and hiding from Ahab the wicked king. Now God speaks and Elijah obeys.

Through Elijah, God is planning to end the drought. But first, God wants to demonstrate the clear difference between himself and the false god Baal. God arranges a kind of contest with himself and his prophet Elijah on one side and Baal and hundreds of his prophets on the other side.

Elijah calls upon God—Elijah sets up an altar of twelve stones representing the tribes of Israel at a time when the nation of Israel is divided. He has twelve jars of water poured over the wood of the sacrifice at a time when water is very precious. Most dramatically, Elijah challenges a false god—who is supposed to be able to control the weather—to bring lightning.

Elijah's prayer shows that he does all this for the sake of God's glory and so that Baal-worshipping Israelites might return to God. He prays, "Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back" (1 Kings 18:37).

God brings judgment and blessing—God judges the false prophets, and they are killed so that they can no longer lead God's people astray. Now that God has proven that he is all-powerful and Baal is nothing, he will send his people rain.

As we see Elijah praying over and over and sending his servant over and over to look for a rain cloud, we have a picture of the kind of faith we should all have. As we pray in faith for God to bring a promised blessing, we need to keep praying and believing, even when the blessing has not yet come.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Old Testament Prophet

The prophet of the Old Testament served as the mouthpiece of God to the people of Israel. God spoke to them, and they would convey his message to the people. The title of prophet indicates a function rather than an office. A person could be a king and a prophet like David or a priest and a prophet like Samuel. Jesus is the ultimate prophet because he brings God's word to all people. Not only is Jesus the ultimate prophet, he is also the King of kings and the eternal priest.

WHERE IS JESUS? _____

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read Matthew 27:49.

On Mount Carmel, God revealed himself through consuming the sacrifice offered by Elijah. This was an expression of his grace. Even though the people of Israel rejected him, he showed himself by accepting Elijah's sacrifice.

The sacrifice of the bull was another reminder before God that one day a sacrifice would be made to atone for all the sins of his people. Knowing Jesus' sacrifice would come, God poured out mercy and accepted Elijah's sacrifice that day.

When Jesus hung on the cross the people mocked him saying, "Let us see whether Elijah will come to save him" (Matthew 27:49). Little did the people know that all of Elijah's wonders were meant to point to Jesus.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read 1 Kings 18:1–40 from the Scriptures or read story 63, "Elijah and the Prophets of Baal," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 **10 MIN**

Waver between Two Opinions

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ eight identical opaque plastic containers (foam cups with lids work well)
- ✓ two sets of the following: six carrot sticks, one-half cup raisins, ten cheese crackers, and ten individually wrapped chocolate candies

Before class, put the food items into the eight cups, one type of food per cup.

This exercise demonstrates indecision as an introduction to discussing Israel’s wavering between serving the Lord or idols (1 Kings 18:21).

Place the filled cups on a table in front of the class. Ask a volunteer to stand. Tell them that the exercise involves choosing a cup and eating what it contains whether or not you like it. Give the volunteer a chance to decline to participate. If they choose to decline, pick another volunteer and tell them that the cups contain common foods eaten everyday. Ask the volunteer to choose a cup.

After they make a choice, question the choice saying, “Are you sure you don’t want to choose one of the other cups?” Try to get them to change their mind and choose another cup. Then, gently shake each cup giving the volunteer another opportunity to pick a different cup. Allow the volunteer to shake the cups, with the condition that if they shake a cup, then they are committed to changing their current selection.

Once they have decided, open one of the cups they didn’t choose and ask if they would prefer the one you opened to the one they picked. Do this for each of the remaining cups.

Then ask for another volunteer. For this person, open the lids to all the cups to reveal the contents. Ask them to choose a cup. Then ask if they are sure of the one selected. The volunteer will likely choose the chocolate and refuse to give it up no matter how much you try to persuade otherwise.

Interview the first volunteer by asking them to describe what they were thinking as they faced the various choices. Ask the second volunteer if they experienced the same difficulty. They will likely say they had no difficulty.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- Why would it be hard to make up your mind if you were the first volunteer?
(Since you did not know what was in the cups, you would always wonder if something better was in one of the other cups.)

- What did the second volunteer have that the first did not?
(They had the truth of what was in the cups.)

- How did God’s consumption of Elijah’s offering help the people make their choice to follow God?
(When the prophets of Baal failed and then Elijah succeeded, it was like taking the lids off the cups. The choice became obvious to the people.)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN

God Covers Our Many Sins

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ worksheet
- ✓ pens/pencils

Pass out the worksheet and ask for volunteers to read the listed passages out loud to the class. Then have the children answer the questions on their own. Once the children have answered the questions, discuss their answers as a class.

Ask the children where others their age are most likely to be tempted to choose against God. (Some classic answers are being afraid to share their faith with friends or being afraid to worship God demonstratively. When we choose to hide our faith in God because we fear what others will think, we are actually denying God and choosing to serve ourselves instead of God.)

Talk to the children about the amazing grace afforded Israel in spite of their sin. Talk about how God’s mercy extends to us as well. Although occasional lapses in our faith are covered in God’s mercy in the cross, if we have no faith at all or if we have never surrendered our lives to Christ, we will receive judgment.

WORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the WORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 15 MIN

Fire from Heaven

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ colored pencils, crayons, and paper

Have the children draw a picture of the fire coming down from heaven to consume Elijah's offering.

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

Sticks Don't Draw

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ one set of colored pencils
- ✓ a second set of colored pencils, only these pencils are removed and replaced with one-quarter-inch wooden dowel rods cut to length and sharpened slightly (If using a pencil sharpener, stop before the dowel is cut to a sharp point. This will make the dowel rods less dangerous in the classroom.)
- ✓ two sheets of drawing paper

Tell the class that you are going to have a competition. Ask the class to pick the two best artists in class. Then divide the remainder of the class into two teams, one to root for the first artist and a second to root for the second artist.

Tell the two contestants, that when you say Go, they can begin drawing God's fire come down from heaven to consume Elijah's offering.

Say Go. Allow the exercise to continue until the artist with the colored pencils has drawn some fire. Then compare the two. Ask the class why the losing team never had a chance.

Then compare this object lesson to the Bible story. The reason the prophets of Baal never had a chance was that like the fake pencils, their god was a fake. Just as we can't expect a sharpened wooden stick to draw, so we should not think a false god can do anything.

LESSON 63—OBJECT LESSON 2 WORKSHEET

Joshua 24:15: “And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

1 Kings 18:21: “And Elijah came near to all the people and said, ‘How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.’ And the people did not answer him a word.”

Matthew 6:24: “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

Answer the following questions:

1. What lesson is Jesus teaching in the Matthew 6 passage?
2. How is Jesus’ teaching similar to what Joshua is saying in Joshua 24:15?
3. How is what Elijah said similar to what Joshua and Jesus are saying?
4. What lesson do you think God wants you to learn from these three Bible passages?