

GOD PROVIDED FOR ELIJAH IN MIRACULOUS WAYS

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: 1 KINGS 17



God was at work in the midst of a sinful generation.

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

God withheld rain – In 1 Kings 16, we discover that Ahab, who had become king of Israel, was a wicked king who served and worshipped Baal (a Canaanite fertility god who was thought to control the rain). God brought judgment to Israel. He showed the powerlessness of the idol Baal by withholding all dew and rain, except what came by the word of the Lord. The people of Israel cried out to Baal, but no rain came. Elijah delivered a prophetic rebuke from the Lord to Ahab and then left. Ahab had no opportunity to appeal to God through His prophet Elijah.

Elijah obeyed the word of the Lord and received water and food. God miraculously provided for him, even while the drought grew worse.

The faithful widow – A widow, deeply affected by the drought, was about to make her last meal and die of starvation. God sent Elijah to her. God told Elijah that He had commanded the widow to feed him. Elijah believed God and asked the poor woman to give him her last meal. He prophesied to her that she would not run out of food as long as the drought remained. The courageous woman did as Elijah asked. Then God provided food for the prophet, the widow, and her son for many days. For the entire period of the drought, neither the jar of flour nor the jug of oil ever emptied. All the while Israel received no rain from their false gods.

The widow's son was raised from the dead – Not only was God able to bring Elijah water from a flowing brook, food through ravens, and an endless supply of flour and oil, but God also demonstrated his power over life and death. God was fully able to do all the things that Baal could not do. God provided rain. God provided food. And most amazingly God provided life. When the widow's son died, Elijah cried out to the Lord and God raised the widow's son from the dead. One day a greater prophet would come who would also raise men from the dead.

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Where is Jesus?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

God, using the prophet, provided for the widow by multiplying her bread and oil. This is a picture of another prophet who would come and multiply bread for the multitudes. But besides providing the physical bread, Jesus Himself was the bread of life that will never run out! Jesus declared:

I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. (John 6:35)

ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

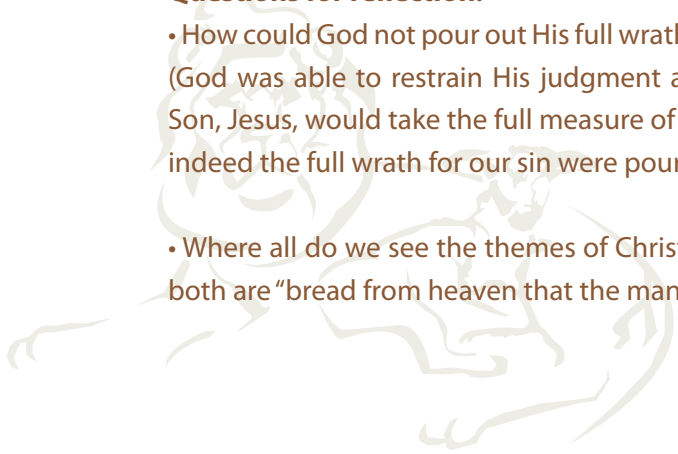
Bible Passage: Psalm 78:23-38

Connecting the passage to Christ:

This passage is a description of the people of Israel and their relationship with God. God is called their Rock and their Redeemer. These titles ultimately refer to Jesus who is our Rock and our Redeemer. God did not pour out the fullness of His wrath upon Israel. He showed mercy because of his purpose and because of what Christ would do when he came.

Questions for reflection:

- How could God not pour out His full wrath upon Israel for their disobedience in rejecting His provision? (God was able to restrain His judgment and wrath because He looked forward to the day when His Son, Jesus, would take the full measure of all punishment for sin. The full wrath for the sin of Israel and indeed the full wrath for our sin were poured upon Jesus.)
- Where all do we see the themes of Christ in this passage? (God is called our Rock and our Redeemer, both are "bread from heaven that the manna pointed forward to.)



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SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

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

ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

THE AUTHOR OF LIFE

Supplies

several stethoscopes

Use this exercise to help the children appreciate the amazing and simple fact of life. No one controls life but God.

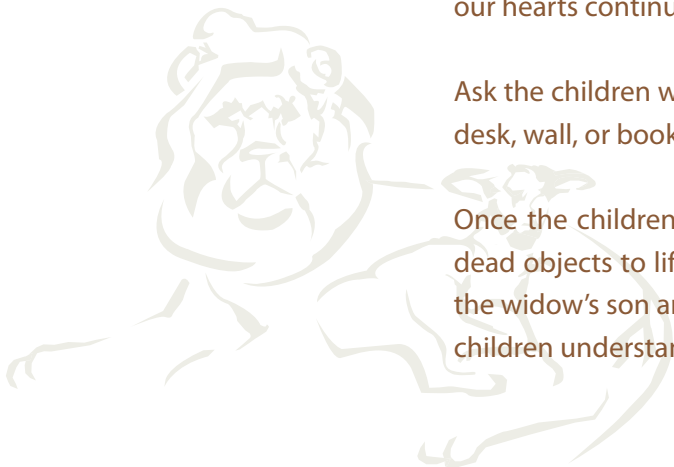
Have the children take turns listening to their hearts. (Depending on the size of the class you may need more than one stethoscope. Ask some of the nurses or doctors in your church for help with this activity.)

Then ask the class the following questions:

- How many of you need to tell your heart to beat or it will stop? (Of course no one tells their heart to beat.)
- Who controls your heartbeat? (God controls our heartbeats and commands that our hearts continue or stop.)

Ask the children with the stethoscopes to listen to several inanimate objects like a desk, wall, or book. Ask them to pronounce whether the objects are dead or alive.

Once the children indicate the objects are dead, ask the volunteers to bring the dead objects to life. After their objections, read to them the story of Elijah raising the widow's son and talk about God's unique power to give and take life. Help the children understand just how much control God has over our lives.



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MAN MADE IDOLS

Supplies

- a brick-sized rock
- a similar-sized block of wood
- an empty jar
- an empty jug
- a batch of brownies cut into enough small squares that each person in the class can have one

This activity is to help the children see the absurdity of trusting an idol instead of the living God.

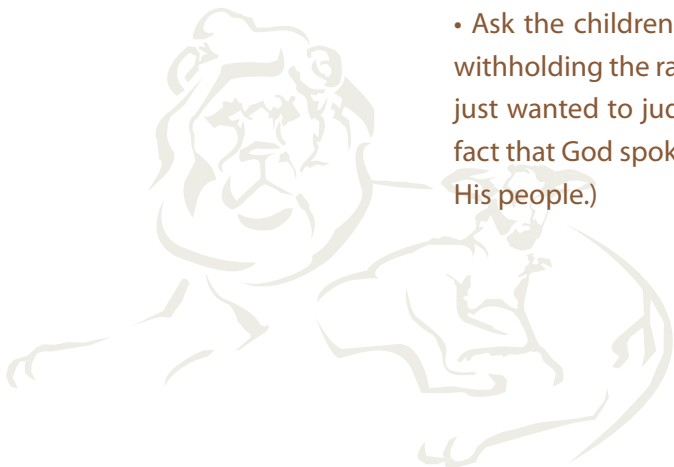
Ask for a volunteer to come to the front of the class. Explain to the volunteer that you need help: you are out of flour and oil and would like to make a batch of brownies. Tell the volunteer that you will provide everything needed to obtain flour and oil.

When your volunteer consents to help you, pull out the stone and block of wood and tell them to get started. Ask when you can expect to have the oil and flour. They are likely to look confused, so explain that they should ask the stone or the wood or both for oil and flour.

Suggest that the volunteer plead with the stone or jump up and down and call out to the stone. Play this up for about 10 minutes.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- Why couldn't _____ get flour and oil from the stone and the wood? (The stone and wood cannot make flour and oil.)
- Have stone or wood ever miraculously provided flour? (No.)
- Would it make a difference if we carved an image of Baal into the stone? (No, no difference at all. Though there might be a face carved into one end of the stone, it would make no difference.)
- Ask the children what message God was sending to Israel about their gods by withholding the rain. (God withheld the rain to help Israel turn back to God. If God just wanted to judge Israel it would not have been necessary to send Elijah. The fact that God spoke to Israel through Elijah is evidence that He has not abandoned His people.)



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THE KINDNESS OF GOD TO A WIDOW

Invite a widow from your church to share a testimony of how God provided for her in the midst of losing her husband. The testimony should share components of the Gospel.

Reference the special care God gives widows and take time in the class to pray for the person. Talk about God's desire to demonstrate His power over the power of idols like Baal and how God's mercy is such a unique quality.

PRAYER

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

IN CLASS PROJECT

The first and second grade children can use the preschool coloring sheet and questions. Have the older children work together as a team to recreate one of two scenes out of clay or dough, either the ravens providing for Elijah at the brook or the widow and the jar of flour and jug of oil. Different children can create different components to create a part of the scene. After they are through, talk about what the story reveals about who God is.



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FOR OLDER GRADES

Supplies:

provided worksheet and
pencils

- Have the children look up Matthew 6:25-34 and answer the following questions in writing; How did Elijah and the widow demonstrate trust in God to provide for them? (Elijah followed God's command to go into the wilderness where Elijah would have to depend on God for all his physical needs. The widow's faith to trust Elijah's word was evident in her willingness to give away the last of her food.)

Discuss as a class and draw out the various ways we struggle to believe God for our provision.

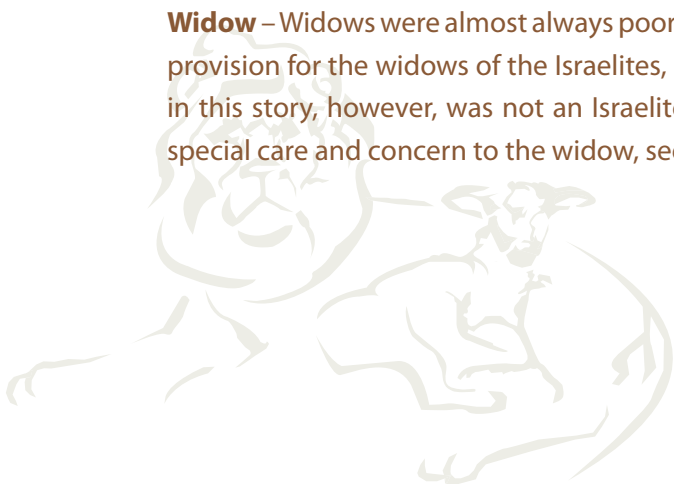
Help the children understand that we have even less excuse not to trust God, as we understand the full plan of God as He has provided in our salvation through Christ. If God was willing to give up His only Son, why should we doubt that He will give us everything we need?

- Compare the response of the widow with the response of the rich young ruler in Luke 18: 18-30. (The rich young ruler was unwilling to part with his wealth but the woman was willing to part with her last food.) Discuss with the students what reward the widow might receive from God in heaven for giving up her last meal.

Ask the children at what point in their lives it was most difficult to trust God.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Widow – Widows were almost always poor because ancient laws did not protect them. God made special provision for the widows of the Israelites, see Deuteronomy 14: 29, 16:11, 24:20, and 26:12. The widow in this story, however, was not an Israelite. God demonstrates His kindness and mercy by extending special care and concern to the widow, see Exodus 22:22 and Deuteronomy 10:17-18.



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WORKSHEET

Look up Matthew 6:25-34 and answer the following questions in writing:

How did Elijah and the widow demonstrate trust in God to provide for them?

Compare the response of the widow with the response of the rich young ruler in Luke 18:18-30.

