

ELISHA AND THE WIDOW'S OIL

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: 2 KINGS 4:1-37

*Elisha's life and ministry point to Christ.***The STORY**

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

Elisha multiplied the oil – A woman, a wife of one of Elisha's students, was caught in a difficult place. Her husband died and, in order to pay her debt, her children were going to be taken into slavery. Elisha instructed the woman to collect jars and pour out what little oil she had. In a miracle reminiscent of Elijah's multiplication of the widow's oil and one that points forward to the miracles of Jesus multiplying the fish and loaves, Elisha helped the woman pay her debt.

Elisha healed the woman's bareness – The answer to whether or not Elisha had indeed inherited a double portion of Elijah's spirit was quickly answered. Here, Elisha prophesied that the barren woman would have a son. She responded in faith calling Elisha a "man of God." Elisha, in turn, did not draw attention to himself but to God.

Elisha raised the dead son – When the Shunammite's son suddenly became sick and died, she placed the boy's body on Elisha's bed and asked for help from the prophet. The woman did not leave Elisha's side until he came to see the boy. She demonstrated her trust in God in a declaration of faith to Elisha (2 Kings 4:30). Elisha went to the boy and, after praying to the Lord, laid on the lifeless boy twice until the boy was raised 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.

Elisha instructed the widow. When the woman followed the instructions in faith, God provided for her needs miraculously. Events like this in Elijah's and Elisha's lives show the power of God and are a window into the mercy and kindness of God, which finds its fullest expression in Jesus.

John 9:1-11 (ESV) : As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" [3] Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Having said these things, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some said, "It is he." Others said, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." So they said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed and received my sight."



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ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

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: Habakkuk 1:5-12

Connecting the passage to Christ:

Habakkuk 1:5 is quoted by Paul in Acts 13:41 as a warning against not believing in Jesus. The wonder the Lord would do is to bring salvation through Jesus Christ. Many hear this story as told in the Gospels but do not believe. Although the rest of this passage does not prophetically point to a future act of Christ, the language of Habakkuk's prayer (the prayers call God a "Rock and Holy One") is the same language used to describe Christ, see Acts 2:27 and 1 Corinthians 10:4.

Questions for reflection:

- How does Habakkuk's prayer to God point ahead to Christ? (Habakkuk uses the same names for Jesus that the Bible attributes to Christ.)
- How is Jesus the Holy One and the Rock? (Though Jesus came as a man, He did not sin in response to temptation. Therefore He is our Holy One who fulfills the law for us. Jesus is the solid rock upon which we stand and are not shaken and Jesus is the rock out of which we receive our spiritual drink.)

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.



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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?

FILL THE JARS

Supplies

a dozen jars of various sizes including one large jar (the larger the better)

Tell the story of the widow and act out the story as you go. Use a very small container to represent the oil the widow had and, as you act out the story, pour it into the larger jars.

Then ask the class the following questions:

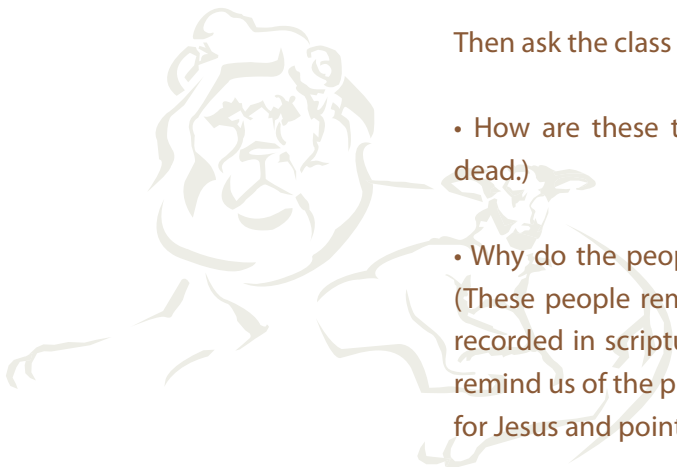
- Why do you think God used Elisha to help the widow? (The woman came to Elisha in faith knowing he was a "Man of God" and believing God would have mercy on her. Also, God has special compassion upon orphans and widows – those who cannot take care of themselves. Here we see a widow and children who lost their father, see also Psalm 146:9.)
- How does this miracle of Elisha point to Christ? (Jesus, on several occasions, multiplied bread and fish to feed a multitude. Here, Elisha is used by God to multiply the widow's oil so she can pay her debt.)

TWO STORIES OF RAISINGS

Read Elisha's account of the raising of the widow's son and Jesus raising of the widow's son in Luke 7:11-17.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- How are these two stories similar? (Two sons of widows are raised from the dead.)
- Why do the people call Jesus a great prophet after He raises the widow's son? (These people remember Elisha and the other great prophets whose stories are recorded in scripture. In a sense, they have it backwards. Jesus was not sent to remind us of the prophets of old, the prophets of old were sent to prepare the way for Jesus and point to Him! Jesus is the greater prophet!)



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BEAT THAT TESTIMONY!

Two teachers act out a chance meeting between two friends who have begun to read the Bible. The first began reading 2 Kings and the stories of Elisha. The other began reading Luke and the stories of Jesus.

The object is that they trade similar stories and try to best one another. In the end, when the man sharing about Jesus talks about His death and resurrection, the one sharing about Elisha realizes that all his stories are intended to point to Jesus.

Ask the person talking about Jesus to share the following verses: Luke 24:27, Acts 3:18, Acts 3:24, and Acts 10:43.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- Why was it foolish for these two characters to argue? (Since all the prophets are designed to point to Christ, Elisha's life was not intended to compete with Jesus' but to point to Jesus life and ministry. To pit them against one another is as pointless as teammates fighting.)
- How does the life of Elisha point to Christ? (Elisha demonstrates God's care for His sinful people and a willingness to care for them. It is this love that is ultimately expressed in the life of Christ. So, Elisha's life is a foreshadowing of the compassionate God who came to serve His people. Jesus demonstrated ultimate love and provision by taking our penalty for Himself on the cross.)

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 draw a scene from one of Elisha's miracles.



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FOR OLDER GRADES

Supplies:

various props to use in performing skits

Divide the class into four groups. Assign each group a skit to perform based on the following scriptures. The groups must also tell how their stories point to Christ. Although not exactly similar, the first two point to Jesus' power to multiply the fishes and loaves. The healing of Naaman is much like Jesus' healing of the lepers and the ax head floating defies material properties much like Jesus walking on water.

1. The multiplication of the widow's oil (2 Kings 4:1-7)
2. The deadly stew (2 Kings 4:38-44)
3. The healing of Naaman (2 Kings 5:1-14)
4. The ax head recovered (2 Kings 6:1-7)

It is no wonder that some people called Jesus a great prophet, see Luke 7:16. Elisha's life and ministry foreshadow that of Jesus.

Ask the class how some of the other stories from Elisha's life also point to Christ.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Miracles – The word miracle comes from the latin word miraculum which means to evoke wonder. So a miracle is something so amazing that it evokes wonder in us. The word is used to describe something that goes beyond the normal course of nature. Sometimes these acts are also called signs or wonders. Miracles are signs of God's power at work, and wonders because, as the word indicates, they are wonderful to behold. These acts are not explainable naturally. Creating out of nothing, commanding the wind and the waves, and restoring life through resurrection are only explicable if we understand God's powerful activity behind them. Belief in the miraculous is a key component of Christianity, especially since Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit to a virgin and rose from the dead. To deny the miraculous is to deny Christ.

