

# Living the Word:

## Teaching Youth God's Story

Narrative Lectionary, Year 3

### The Widow of Zarephath: God Provides 1 Kings 17:1-16 [17-24]

Lesson #3-8

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#### Writers

Gloria Allhiser  
Brett Carter  
Nance Keyes  
Kari Osmek  
Beth Priest

#### Editors

Cynthia Fairman Paulson  
Rev. Dr. Daphne Burt

#### Curriculum Design

Rev. Sarah Nye

#### Layout

Nance Keyes

#### Publisher

Gregory Rawn

#### Illustrator

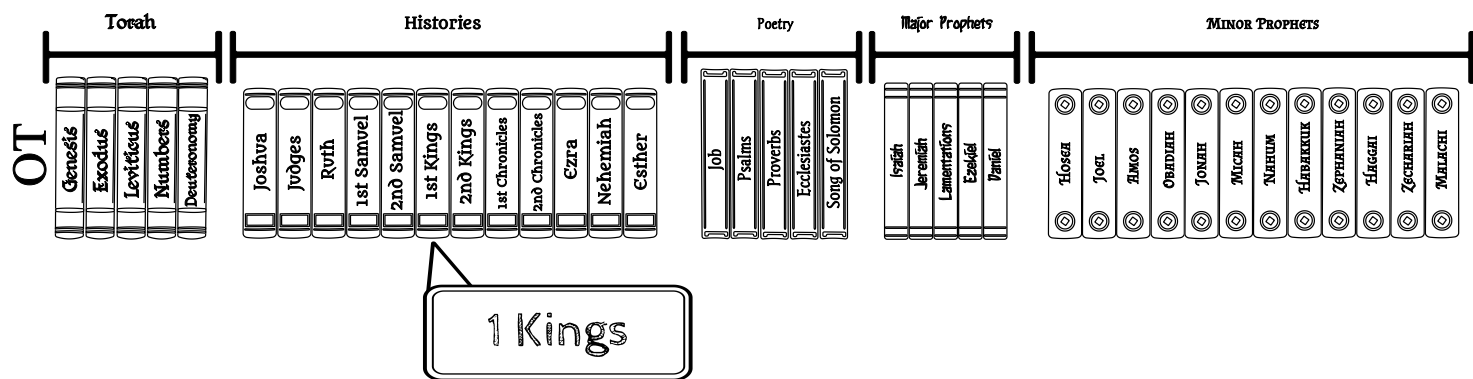
Rev. Tom Pairan

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# The Widow of Zarephath: God Provides

1 Kings 17:1-16 [17-24]

*Just when it seems like there is no chance for survival, God reaches out in miraculous and unexpected ways to a prophet, a widow, and her son.*

## Story Connections

God's covenant with David speaks of him creating a new temple for the Ark to rest. In return, God shows power, protection and love by promising David a new house. As was the pattern, the people drew near and worshipped God only to later turn their backs on God. During a drought that occurs to make clear that there is one true God, God shows power, protection, love, and provision to the house of the widow of Zarephath. The widow of Zarephath experienced God through the miracle of oil and meal lasting throughout the drought.

## Lesson @ A Glance

#3-8: The Widow of Zarephath:  
God Provides  
1 Kings 17:1-16 [17-24]

**The Point:** In difficult situations, God provided for Elijah, the widow, and her son, and God promises us the same provisions when we fall on desperate times.

**Making Connections:** God Sightings

**Spiritual Practice Emphasis:** Service

**Bible Nuts and Bolts:** Historical Timelines



## Story Summary

### The Widow of Zarephath: God Provides

Elijah the prophet spread God's message that it was not going to rain. God led Elijah to a brook where he could find water to drink. God also sent ravens with bread and meat. When the brook dried up, God sent Elijah to a widow in Zarephath. Elijah told her to use her limited resources to make him a small cake. God then kept filling her jars of meal and oil until the drought ended. The woman's son became ill to the point of death. Elijah cried out to God for help, and the child was brought back to life.

## The Point

In difficult situations, God provided for Elijah, the widow, and her son, and God promises us the same provisions when we fall on desperate times. In times when it seems like there is no way to get through a trying situation, we are tempted to complain, withdraw, or give up; however, we can see from today's passage that God will provide.

The jar of meal was not emptied, neither did the jug of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah.  
1 Kings 17:16

## Bible Nuts & Bolts: Historical Timelines

The historical timelines in Bibles are often overlooked, yet they can be helpful in understanding biblical passages, especially their relationship with each other and their historical contexts. (Timelines can also be found on the Internet and in other Bible resources.). When we know about the leadership during a particular time, or what happened before that time period, what takes place in a particular passage of Scripture is put in context and becomes easier to understand. Without that information, we might misinterpret Scripture.

## Spiritual Practice: Service

God provides for us, and in our desire to live a godly life, we can model God's love in providing for others. The widow gave of the little she had to provide for Elijah, and her own needs were provided for in ways unimagined. We may not have the means to provide material goods, but service to others is more than handing people gifts. The widow also provided Elijah with a place to stay. We can provide companionship, comfort, a listening ear, a ride, and more. Elijah offered prayer for the widow's son—another way we can be of service to others.

### For Your Reflection:

1. When has God met your needs in an unlikely way?
2. When has God used you to meet the needs of someone else?
3. When have you felt that God did not provide for you?
4. How will you guide youth who have deep needs that they think God does not notice?

Overview, Objectives, and Materials You'll Need

# Core Elements

*Short on time?*  
Items marked +  
can be adjusted to be done with  
what you probably already  
have in your pocket or  
classroom.

## +Into the Story

10 min.

› Water in bottles or cups

*H<sub>2</sub>O*

*Guess what it would be like not to have water.*

## +Learning the Story

20 min.

› Bibles  
› Paper  
› Pens or pencils

*The Widow of Zarephath: God Provides*

*Present biblical examples of God's provision.*

## Living the Story

15 min.

› Towels  
› Pitcher  
› Pails, large bowls, or shallow foot  
tubs  
› Lukewarm water

*Foot washing*

*Serve through foot washing.*

## +Sending the Story

5 min.

› Table cloth  
› Place setting (plate, silverware,  
drinking glass, bowl, napkin)

# Extending the Learning:

<b>Hands On</b> <i>Origami Ravens</i> <i>Fold origami ravens.</i>	10 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Origami paper</li> <li>› Video player</li> <li>› Pens or pencils</li> </ul>
<b>Mixed Media</b> <i>Bird Watchers</i> <i>Watch birds on the web.</i>	20 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Bible</li> <li>› Internet connected device(s)</li> <li>› Paper</li> <li>› Pens or pencils</li> </ul>
<b>+The Competitive Edge</b> <i>Filled to Overflowing</i> <i>Provide full cups for teammates.</i>	20 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Bibles</li> <li>› Small paper cups</li> <li>› Water</li> <li>› Buckets or large bowls</li> <li>› Pitcher of water</li> <li>› Optional: tarp</li> </ul>
<b>Simply Serving</b> <i>Provisions</i> <i>Determine a service project.</i>	20 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Video player</li> <li>› White board, flip chart, or chalk board</li> <li>› Marker or chalk</li> </ul>
<b>+Worship Connection</b> <i>Orchestra</i> <i>Worship with water.</i>	15 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Glass drinking glasses</li> <li>› Teaspoons</li> <li>› Pitchers of water</li> </ul>

# Into the Story: H<sub>2</sub>O (10 minutes)

*Guess what it would be like not to have water.*

## DURING CLASS:

1. How much water do you drink a day? *[Answers will vary.]*
2. **There are different ideas about how much water a person needs each day, and we can get water from both food and drink, but on average, how much water do you think a person needs a day?**  
*[About 8 cups.]*
3. Distribute water bottles or serve cups of water for the youth to drink.
4. **Do you know how much of the human body consists of water?** *[50-70%].*
5. **Why does the human body need water?** *[Remove toxins, carry nutrients through the body, keep nose and mouth moist.]*
6. **What might happen to us if we ran out of water?** *[Answers will vary, dehydration, death.]*
7. **What other parts of our world depend on water?** *[Agriculture, animal life, industry, electricity.]*
8. **Describe our world if it were to slowly run out of water.** *[Answers will vary.]*
9. **Today we are going to see an interesting way that God provided during a drought.**

### Supplies:

› Water in water bottles  
or cups

# Learning the Story:

## *The Waiting is Over (20 minutes)*

*Present biblical examples of God's provision.*

### DURING CLASS:

#### Supplies:

- › Bible
- › Paper
- › Pens or pencils

1. Divide the class into small groups. Assign each group a part of today's reading:
  - Elijah's needs met (I Kings 17:1-7)
  - The widow's needs met (I Kings 17:8-16)
  - The son's needs met (I Kings 17:17-24)
2. **As a group, work together to read through the passage. Then determine how to present your passage to the class—you may choose to take turns reading the verses to us, you may choose to have one person read while the others act it out, or you can have a few talk about the need that was faced and some others talk about the provision.**
3. Give the youth time to work on this.
4. Each group shares its passage with the rest of the class.
5. Begin a discussion using the following questions: **What about God's provision amazed you? What part of God's provision did you guess in advance? If this were to happen in modern times, what do you think it would look like? What does this reading suggest to you about your personal needs now or in the future?** *[Accept all answers.]*

# Living the Story: Foot Washing (15 minutes)

*Serve through foot washing.*

## DURING CLASS:

### Supplies:

- › Towels
- › Pitcher
- › Pails, large bowls, or shallow foot tubs
- › Lukewarm water

1. **Foot washing is a humbling experience for all who participate. It is humbling to let someone else wash our feet. It is humbling to wash someone else's feet. When we wash another person's feet, we are expressing that we love one another, that we are willing to serve one another, and that we can put our own comfort aside to meet the needs of another person. If you have not done this before, you might feel a little silly, or you might feel a little self-conscious. That's okay!**
2. Ask a volunteer to read John 13:1-9.
3. **Try to focus on giving and receiving an act of service as we experience a foot washing. Imagine Jesus washing your feet.**
4. Ask a volunteer to allow you to demonstrate washing another's feet. Ask the volunteer to remove shoes and socks. Pour water in a container and gently and quickly wash and dry the youth's feet. While washing the feet say, "As a servant of God, I share God's love with you."
5. It is probably best to have girls wash girls' feet and boys wash boys' feet. Ask the youth to wash each other's feet, following your example, including your words.
6. After the foot washing, ask the youth to share their thoughts about the experience.
7. Ask: **What are we willing to do in service for others?** *[Answers will vary.]*



# Hands On: Origami Ravens (10 minutes)

*Fold origami ravens.*

## BEFORE CLASS:

1. If you have time, you might want to watch the video and make a raven to show as an example. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nO74L5rpZZA>.
2. Locate the video and pause it, so it is ready to play.

### Supplies:

- › Origami paper
- › Video player
- › Pens

## DURING CLASS:

1. Distribute origami paper.
2. Play the 07:21 minute video for the youth to follow along and fold their paper: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nO74L5rpZZA>
3. After the ravens are made, ask the youth to write “God Provides” somewhere on the bird.
4. **Use this raven as a reminder that God will meet your needs.**

# Mixed Media: Bird Watchers (20 minutes)

*Watch birds on the web.*

## BEFORE CLASS:

1. Download the lyrics to “*How Great is our God*” by Chris Tomlin from the Internet. Make a copy of the lyrics for each student.

### Supplies

- › Bible
- › Internet-connected device(s)
- › Paper
- › Pens or pencils

## DURING CLASS:

1. Divide the youth into groups and send them on a bird watching excursion.
2. Explain: **by accessing the internet via cell phones, tablets, or computer, you will search and find as many different kinds of birds as you can and keep a list of them all.**
3. You may present all of the steps at once, or introduce one step at a time as the groups follow the steps.
4. **First, search for the bird “Raven”. When you read about the raven, make note of why you think God may have chosen the raven as the bird to bring food to Elijah.**
5. **Then add to your list of birds. For starters, look up exotic birds, small birds, large birds, mountain birds, or water birds. We will see which group can come up with the longest list of birds, especially birds that you have never seen before.**
6. **Lastly, search for sparrow.**
7. Ask a volunteer to read Matthew 10:29. **What connection can you make between God’s care and provision for Elijah and the widow, God’s care and provision for the sparrow, and God’s care and provision for you?** *[Answers will vary.]*
8. **Not only does God provide for us, but God watches out over all of creation. God uses us to help meet the needs of creation, and God uses creation to help meet our needs.**

# The Competitive Edge:

## *Filled to Overflowing (20 minutes)*

*Provide full cups for teammates.*

### BEFORE CLASS:

1. If playing this indoors, clear an area and use tarp to protect the floor from getting wet and slippery or from getting the carpet wet. Secure the tarp with tape or furniture.
2. Read the steps below, so you will be comfortable explaining the game to the youth.

#### Supplies:

- › Small paper cups
- › Water
- › Buckets or large bowls
- › Pitcher of water
- › Optional: tarp

### DURING CLASS:

1. **It was miraculous, the way God provided water and food for Elijah. In this game, you will work hard to provide water for your team.**
2. If weather permits, play this game outdoors.
3. Divide the youth into teams. The number of teams depends on the size of your group; up to ten per team will work well. Each team needs to choose a scout to monitor another team to ensure that the other team is saying and doing the steps completely. Any team caught missing a step has to start over.
4. Ask each team to line up across the cleared area, leaving as much space between teammates as is needed to stagger the whole team across the area.
5. Go to the beginning of each team's line, and fill the first person's cup with water.
6. When you say, "Provide" the teams will race to provide water to the last person in line and then all the way back to the pitcher. This is done by pouring water from cup-to-cup down the line and back. Note: a cup cannot be handed to another person. Water must be poured without spilling. When the water is poured, the youth pouring the water must say, "God provides." If caught not doing so, or if caught spilling water, the team has to start over from the beginning.
7. After the water has made its way back to the start, the team then has to pass I Kings 17:6 down and back. The youth can recite the entire verse, one to the next, or the youth can use their Bibles to read the verse one to the next, down and back.
8. After the verse has made it down and back, send the water down and back again.
9. Congratulate the winning team (the first team to complete all tasks) on providing for each other with Word and sustenance in difficult circumstances!

# Simply Serving: Provisions (20 minutes)

*Determine a service project.*

## DURING CLASS:

1. Begin by showing the following Joan of Arcadia video where Joan sees God in the lives of other people: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNMBTmAVrzo> “Joan & God (Joan of Arcadia) - You found me” (4:37)
2. **Have you ever seen God in the life of another person? What was that like?**
3. **What can we do as a service project this month, so that others can see God in the lives of the youth of our church?**
4. **Over the next four weeks we will work on this project.** Write the following on the board:
5. Week 1: Determine the service project. How can we share the message of God’s love through this project? Pray and ask God to use us.
6. Week 2: Work out the logistics, make lists and assign tasks; make flyers if needed
7. Week 3: Make preparations.
8. Week 4: Do the act of service.
9. **Today we learned about provisions. God provided for the Elijah and for the widow and her son. God provides for us. With Thanksgiving a month away, we might do something food-related, but what we do and how we go about it is up to you.**
10. Allow the youth time to brainstorm and narrow the scope of the project: what will be done and for whom it will be done. How will God shine through the youth in this project?
11. Spend time in prayer asking for God’s hand on the project and on them as they do this act of service. Ask the youth to list their concerns about the project and what they think will be the hardest parts of the project. Each one who is willing to pray aloud can pray for help with one of the items on that list.

### Supplies

- › Video player
- › White board, flip chart, or chalk board
- › Marker or chalk

# Worship Connection:

## Glass Orchestra (15 minutes)

*Worship with water.*

### BEFORE CLASS:

1. If you have not played glasses before, visit this web page to get a general idea of how this will work: [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_5104489\\_make-music-water-glasses.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_5104489_make-music-water-glasses.html).
2. Fill the glasses with different amounts of water, about 1/8 of a cup more per glass, so there will be many water levels and many sounds.

#### Supplies

- › Glass drinking glasses (the same size and shape)
- › Teaspoons
- › Pitchers of water

### DURING CLASS:

1. **God provided water for Elijah. God kept oil in a jar for the widow even though she used it each day. We are going to use glasses and water to worship God for being our provider.**
2. Show the youth how to play the glasses by holding the teaspoon loosely, gently tapping the teaspoon on the glass, and letting the teaspoon bounce off the glass.
3. Ask the youth to create their own tune or to choose a song they like and see if they can play it. This orchestra does not need to play to perfect pitch, but it does need to use the glass to worship God.
4. The youth are welcome to increase or decrease the water in their glasses.
5. The youth are welcome to add words about God as provider to their music.

# Sending the Story:

*(5 minutes)*

God provided for Elijah, the widow, and her son. Likewise, God promises to provide for us.

- **What needs did God provide for in today's story?**

*[Sustenance: bread and meat, water, oil, meal;  
protection: lodging, and life itself.]*

- **What did God use to deliver provisions?** *[A raven, a widow, a miracle, a prayer]*

- **What do the type of provisions and the methods of provision in today's story tell you about how God will meet your needs?** *[Answers will vary. God can meet my basic life needs; God can renew my life; God can use people to provide for other people's needs; God can perform miracles to meet our needs.]*

› Table cloth

› Place setting (plate, silverware, drinking glass, bowl, napkin)

## **Sending prayer:**

Put a tablecloth on a table and set the table with a place setting for one. Form a circle around the table. Pray for the hungry, asking God to provide for them:

**God, we know that you are the provider. We saw today that you provide what people need. We know you provide in different ways. We saw today that your provisions can go on and on. We pray for the hungry in our community. We pray for food on their plates. We pray for nourishment and strength from that food. We pray for their supply to go on and on. Thank you. Amen.**



## The Point

**In difficult situations, God provided for Elijah, the widow, and her son, and God promises us the same provisions when we fall on desperate times.** Today's story is important because in times when it seems like there is no way to get through a trying situation, we are tempted to complain, withdraw, or give up. This passage reminds us that God will provide.

## Story Connections

God's covenant with David speaks of him creating a new temple for the Ark to rest. In return, God shows power, protection and love by promising David a new house. As was the pattern, the people drew near and worshipped God only to later turn their backs on God. During a drought that occurred to make clear that there is one true God, God shows power, protection, love, and provision to the house of the widow of Zarephath. The widow of Zarephath experienced God through the miracle of oil and meal lasting throughout the drought.

## Story Summary

### The Widow of Zarephath: God Provides

Elijah the prophet spread God's message that it was not going to rain. God led Elijah to a brook where he could find water to drink. God also sent ravens with bread and meat. When the brook dried up, God sent Elijah to a widow in Zarephath. Elijah told her to use her limited resources to make him a small cake. God then kept filling her jars of meal and oil until the drought ended. When the woman's son became ill to the point of death Elijah cried out to God for help. The child was brought back to life.

## Spiritual Practice: Service

God provides for us, and in our desire to live a godly life, we can model God's love in providing for others. The widow gave of the little she had to provide for Elijah, and her own needs were provided for in ways unimagined. We may not have the means to provide material goods, but service to others is more than handing people gifts. The widow also provided Elijah with a place to stay. We can provide companionship, comfort, a listening ear, a ride, and more. Elijah offered prayer for the widow's son—another way we can be of service others.

## Last Week/Next Week

Last week, we saw that God showed God's power, protection and love by promising David a new house. Next week we hear about Jonah, a prophet whose job was to tell the people of Nineveh to turn towards God and repent. It is a story that also shares miraculous events using

## Bible Nuts and Bolts: Historical Timelines

The historical timelines in Bibles are often overlooked, yet they can be helpful in understanding biblical passages, especially their relationship with each other and their historical contexts. When we know about the leadership during a particular time, or what happened before that time period, what takes place in a particular passage of Scripture is put in context and becomes easier to understand. Without that information, we might misinterpret Scripture.

## Going Deeper

As you hear and study these stories each week, consider what God has to say to you and your family. What is God's message to us? Consider the following basic pattern as a way of forming family devotions:

- ✦ Light a candle to help you focus this time as "God time." Pray a simple prayer together.
- ✦ Take a moment to check in with each other; what are each person's "highs" and "lows" today?
- ✦ Read aloud from the Daily Bible Readings from below. Discuss the questions following each.
- ✦ End with a blessing, by simply tracing a cross on each other's forehead. The Lord's Prayer is a good way to end your devotion time. If you used a candle, extinguish it as a sign of the end of the devotions.

*Note: This is only a suggested pattern. It will vary with your household's context and patterns. What works best for you? First thing in the morning? Over breakfast? Bed time? Be creative and flexible with how you practice and keep your devotions!*

## Daily Bible Readings

### Sunday - Read 1 Kings 17:1-16 [17-24]

God provides in unique and timely ways.

- When has a need been met for you? Thank God.
- What needs do you feel go unmet? Ask for God to provide.

### Monday - Read 1 Kings 19:11-18

Elijah meets God in a way he least expects.

- How has God gotten your attention—through something big, in a still small voice, or in some other way? Explain.
- If God spoke to you in a way you could recognize, what would you want God to say to you?

### Tuesday - Read 2 Kings 2:1-12

Elijah ascends to Heaven and leaves Elisha behind.

- Who do you look up to the way Elisha looked up to Elijah? Explain.
- What are some fond memories you have of someone who has died?

### Wednesday - Read 2 Kings 4:1-7

Elisha and the widow's oil that pays her debt.

- What role do we have in the providing for or contributing to the provisions for those who need help?
- What doubts, if any, do you have about God providing for you the way God provided for the widow?

### Thursday - Read 2 Chronicles 34:1-7

The Torah is discovered after missing for a long time.

- What have you lost and later found, or lost and still have not found?
- Where do you put items that you never want to lose? Name a few of those items.

### Friday - Read 2 Chronicles 34:29-33

The covenant renewed and worship resumes.

- What type of worship do you prefer?
- What commands in the Bible do you try to follow the most?

### Saturday -

### Read 2 Chronicles 36:15-21

The fall of Jerusalem after mocking the messengers of God.

- What do you think is the biggest downfall of adults today, and what can we do about it?
- What do you think is the biggest downfall of youth today, and what can we do about it?