

GATHERING TIME

optional but
highly recommended

If you use a gathering time each week, plan a way for the children to form groups as they arrive. Ask the shepherds for each group to sit in the same area of the gathering place each week. Each group should have a different color flag, sign, or carpet square for identification. Ask the shepherds to visit with the children as they arrive, making them welcome and reminding them to stay with the group.

If you do not have a Gathering Time, review the activities suggested for these times as possibilities for additional activities in your stations.

SETTING THE STAGE

Prepare the set for the presentation of the skit, "Elijah! This Is Your Life!"

1. Place a chair in the middle of the stage area.
2. Place a room-divider screen behind the chair, or hang a large single-colored sheet.
3. Use markers and posterboard to make a large sign that says "Elijah! This Is Your Life!" Hang the sign on the room divider.
4. Recruit people to play the various roles. Involve some of the talented adults and youth in your church who may welcome this chance to do something special with the children. You will need these characters:
 - **Host**, who will be the master of ceremonies
 - **Elijah**, whose life will be the topic of the skits
 - **the voice of God**, an offstage voice
 - **Raven**, whose only word is "Scraaaw"
 - **Widow**, an old woman
 - **Widow's Son**, who should be as tall or taller than Elijah
 - **Elisha**, who is a little younger than Elijah
 - **Malachi**, who wears a Bible-times costume
 - **Rabbi Levi**, who wears a black robe

Resources

- * *Elijah* MP3
- * *Elijah* lyrics and sheet music

Supplies

MP3 player
basket
chair
room-divider screen
or large white sheet
posterboard
markers
tape
microphone
megaphone
stuffed raven, large
black bird puppet,
or large picture of a
raven
large walking stick
black ministerial robe
Bible-time costumes
for Elijah, Widow,
Widow's Son,
Elisha, and Malachi

GATHERING ACTIVITIES

Each Week

Open by singing the children's favorite songs from the *Elijah* MP3. Pass a basket to take the offering; then present the "Elijah! This Is Your Life!" skit. Close with prayer.

Week 1

(The Host is holding a microphone and standing on stage next to an empty chair.)

Host: Welcome to "This Is Your Life!" where we celebrate the life of a person of God and find out how that person made a difference. Welcome one of the great prophets, Elijah!

(Elijah enters, bows, and sits in the chair.)

Host: Elijah, welcome to the show.

Elijah: Thank you, I am happy to be here.

Host: Well, we are glad you are here because, Elijah, *(shouting)* this is your life!

(The Host throws his arms open wide, but nothing happens. Elijah looks confused.)

Host *(shouting)*: I said, "Elijah, this is your life!"

(The Host again throws open his arms. Nothing happens. Elijah looks confused.)

Host *(clears throat and shouts louder)*: I said, "Elijah, this is your life!"

(Still, nothing. Elijah looks around, up, and under his chair. The Host claps three times.)

Host: Let's try this one last time. *(loud whisper)* Elijah, this is your life!

(Offstage, a soft blowing sound. Hint: Blow lightly through a megaphone. Then, have God whisper through the megaphone.)

God *(strong voice whispering)*: Elijah?

(Elijah looks up.)

Elijah: Yes, Lord.

God *(still in a loud whisper)*: Elijah, you were faithful to me. While others worshiped false

gods, you stayed loyal to me. Over the next few weeks, we will learn about your life. People from your life and beyond will come and talk about the difference you made.

Elijah: Thank you, Lord.

Host: Wow! It's not often that we get a visit from God! That's all the time we have, but join us next week for the continuation of "Elijah: This Is Your Life!"

(The Host escorts Elijah off the stage.)

Week 2

(The Host and Elijah are seated on stage. The person who is the voice of God is hidden behind the room-divider screen.)

Host: Welcome back to "This Is Your Life!" Once again, our guest is the prophet Elijah.

(The Host motions for the audience to applaud.)

Host *(speaking to Elijah)*: Normally, we invite family members and friends to tell us about your life, but since you are so special, God is here again this week. Take it away, God!

God *(speaking normally with megaphone)*:

Thank you. As the one who created you, I know your life well. You were born in Gilead, which is why people say you were from Tishbe. You grew and became wise in my ways. Many of my people worshiped false gods and gave thanks to them for all I did. I loved my people, and I wanted them to know how deeply I cared for them. So I called you to go to Ahab and remind him who truly creates the rain. You did as I asked, but then you were in danger. So I hid you. I sent ravens and then a poor widow to care for you. I know that it was not easy to be my prophet. When you came to see me on Mt. Sinai, you were ready to throw in the towel. I came to you in the stillness to remind you that, even in the lonely times, I am with you. When your life on earth ended, I sent a chariot to bring you straight to heaven. To this day, Elijah, people continue to learn

from you. Your life reminds them that the impossible is possible when people trust my ways instead of believing only in what they see. Thank you, Elijah, for being faithful.

Host: Wow! This is a first. You were some prophet. Is there anything you want to add before we sign off today?

Elijah: I just want to borrow a word from Proverbs. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. Remember the Lord in everything you do, and the Lord will show you the right way." (*Proverbs 3:5-6, GNT*)

Host: Remember: Trust in the Lord.

Week 3

(The Host and Elijah are onstage. Raven is behind the room-divider screen with a stuffed toy raven, a large black bird puppet, or a large picture of a raven.)

Host: Welcome again to "This Is Your Life!" Our special guest is the prophet, Elijah.

(Audience applauds. Elijah nods and waves.)

Host *(motioning toward the screen):* Elijah, do you remember this voice?

(The Raven makes a deep guttural bird noise, like "Scraaaw.")

Elijah *(smiling):* It's my old friend, Raven.

(Raven holds the stuffed bird, puppet, or raven picture over top of the room divider.)

Host: That's right, Elijah. It is one of the ravens that fed you in the wilderness.

Raven *(as if saying yes):* Scraaaw.

Elijah: I remember. I had just told Ahab that God—not Baal—was the only one who could make the rain. I said, "Ahab, only God, the Creator of all, can bring the rain. To prove my point no rain will fall until I ask God to bring it. There won't even be dew on the ground." Needless to say, Ahab was more than a little miffed at me. So, God told me to head to the wilderness and hide. There, the ravens brought me meat and bread

twice a day, and I invited them to drink from the water of the nearby creek. I became quite fond of my dear raven friends.

Raven *(in an awe-shucks sort of way):* Scraaaw.

Host: If it hadn't been for God sending the ravens, you would never have survived in the wilderness, would you?

Elijah: No, I wouldn't have. Thank you, my dear friend, Raven.

Raven: *(in the meter of "you are welcome")* Scraaaw, Scraaaw, Scraaaw, Scraaaw.

Host: Well, it's time to leave the roost again and fly on to another week of learning. Join us next week for another edition of *(shouting)* "Elijah! This Is Your Life!"

Week 4

(The Host is on stage by an empty chair. Elijah is offstage. The Widow is behind the screen.)

Host: Welcome back to "This Is Your Life!" Once again, we are joined by that great man of God, the prophet Elijah.

(Elijah enters and sits in chair.)

Host: Okay, Elijah, do you recognize this voice?

Widow: *(hidden behind the screen):* Elijah, many years ago, you came to me seeking food and shelter. I didn't think I had anything to give, but you showed me how giving the little I had could bring me great blessings.

Elijah: Is that you, dear Widow?

(The Widow steps out and hugs Elijah.)

Widow *(excited):* Yes, Elijah. It's me!

Widow: Before you came to Zarephath, months without rain had proved that Baal was powerless—nothing more than a statue on a shelf. I had heard about your God, the Lord of Israel. I prayed, hoping something would happen. Then you arrived. You asked me for food, and I swore on the name of your God that I had none to give. But you insisted. You said God would take care of me.

Elijah: You thought I was a little crazy then.

Elijah

Widow (*laughing*): Yes, I did. But I finally gave in. Perhaps, I thought, God had heard my prayer. I used the flour and oil I had saved for my family's last meal, and I made you some bread. You ate the bread and told me to look in the oil jar and the container of flour. They were overflowing! I was amazed!

Elijah: I will never forget the look on your face.

Widow: Elijah, you saved my life! More than that, you saved the life of my son time and again. I will always be in your debt, Elijah.

Elijah: No, dear widow, it was God who saved you and your son. I just did what God said. Besides, you were the one who gave up all you had to someone you didn't even know.

Widow (*teary*): Thank you, Elijah. Thank you for letting me play a part in your life.

Host (*sniffing*): That is so wonderful!

(The Host looks at the audience and quickly regains composure.)

Host (*clears throat*): I think we will let Elijah and the widow catch up. Until next time, remember: Follow God wherever you go!

Week 5

(The Host and Elijah are onstage. The Widow's Son is behind the screen.)

Host: It is time once again for "Elijah! This Is Your Life!" (*Softly*) Elijah, this next voice has changed quite a bit since you heard him last.

Widow's Son (*deep voice*): Elijah, I am no longer the young boy you once knew.

Elijah (*looking confused*): Young boy?

Widow's Son: Yes, when you first met me, I was young and very sick. I had little, and sometimes nothing, to eat. After you came, there was plenty of food. Once when I was very sick you healed me.

Elijah (*smiling knowingly*): The Widow's Son!

(The Widow's Son comes out. Elijah looks surprised.)

Widow's Son: That's right. It's me.

Elijah: Wow! Have you grown! Last time I saw you, you barely came up to my chest. Now, look at you. You are so tall!

(The Widow's Son shakes Elijah's hand.)

Widow's Son: It has been a long time. And I'm here because of you. You gave me the food and good health I needed, and now here I am, a man like you. None of it would have happened if you had not come to my mother's house that day.

Elijah (*nodding his head in thanksgiving*): The credit all belongs to God.

Widow's Son (*smiling*): Then thanks be to God!

Host (*loudly*): Wow! (*pause*) Unfortunately we are out of time. Take care until next time and remember: Thanks be to God!

Week 6

(Elijah sits onstage. The Host stands beside him. Elisha is hidden behind the screen.)

Host: Welcome once again to "Elijah! This Is Your Life!" Special guest, are you ready.

Elisha (*behind screen*): Ready? (*indignantly*) I was born ready! My call is to serve God and do God's will whenever I am called. So of course I am ready. The question is, are you ready to hear the truth of God proclaimed? I, God's prophet, am here to declare that the witness of Elijah has helped every prophet since, including me. We all simply try to follow in his footsteps. Of course, I literally followed in his footsteps since I was his chosen successor. But I don't want to boast. So, to answer your question, I am ready.

Host (*sighing*): Any guesses, Elijah?

Elijah: I would know his voice anywhere. It is Elisha, the prophet who learned beside me and continued to speak God's truth after me.

Host: OK, Elisha, come out. (*long pause where nothing happens*) Elisha, are you there?

Elisha: Yes.

Host: What are you waiting for?

Elisha: I only go where God calls me to go, and God hasn't called me to come out yet.

Host (to Elijah): Can you help me out here?

Elijah: Elisha! I, Elijah, the prophet of God, request your presence on the stage.

(Elisha enters proudly and embraces Elijah.)

Elisha (excited): Good to see you again, teacher. I hope you found my service satisfactory. After you left, I continued to teach about God's truth. I performed twice as many miracles, and I spoke to people and kings about the need to give up false idols.

Elijah: You did well. You have been a good and faithful servant to God.

Elisha: I couldn't have done it without you; you taught me everything. I just wish you could have stayed around a little longer.

Host (interrupting): Speaking of staying around a little longer, we do not have any more time for today. *(to the children)* Until next week, learn as much as you can about Elijah.

(The Host, Elijah, and Elisha wave goodbye.)

Week 7

(The Host and Elijah are onstage. Malachi and a rabbi are behind the screen.)

Host: Welcome back to "Elijah! This Is Your Life!" This week, we have two special guests.

(Malachi steps out, nods, and bows slightly toward Elijah.)

Malachi: Greetings, Elijah. I come as a fellow prophet in the name of God to remind you of the impact you had on the people of God well beyond your time. My name is Malachi. I lived many centuries after you, but your presence was still strong among the devoted people of God. Like in your time, many people in my time turned away from God. With God's guidance, I tried to show them that God still loved them. I assured them that one day God would once again send you to lead us. For so many years, your words and example have brought comfort to our people. Just ask my friend.

(The Rabbi walks out, nods, and bows slightly to Elijah. Elijah nods a greeting in return.)

Rabbi: I am Rabbi Levi. I am honored, great prophet, to meet you. For centuries rabbis have believed that you, Elijah, are the great prophet who returns to God's people to teach us about loving one another and caring for the poor. Just as you went to the poor, foreign widow for help, you call all God's people to reach out to everyone in need. That is why every year, at the Passover, a cup of wine is set on the table, the door is opened, and our children are taught that Elijah, and anyone else we meet in need, should always be welcomed. From you, many rabbis have learned to see the presence of the prophet in all people. You taught us to love others as God loves us. For that, the people of God will always celebrate your life.

Elijah (standing and bowing): Thank you, my friends. I am humbled by your praise, and I remind you both that it is not me, but God, who has taught you these wonderful lessons.

Host: It's time to go. Remember the teaching of Elijah. When you see a person in need, reach out to help in love. You never know: The one you help might be a great prophet of God.

Week 8

(The Host and Elijah are seated onstage.)

Host: Today, Elijah, our format will be different. Today we will hear from people from the present. We will ask the children to tell some of the things they have learned about you.

(The Host asks for volunteers to say what things they have learned about Elijah.)

Host: Thank you, Elijah, for this chance to learn more about you and the example you have set. Do you have any final thoughts?

Elijah: Yes, thank you. I chose to follow God's call even when it was hard. All of you can be prophets for God and share the truth about God with other people. Remember: God is always God, and God will always be there for you. Remember that and you will go far!

Host: Goodbye, everyone! Thanks for being here!