

STORYTELLING STATION

STATION FOCUS

Elijah, a prophet of God, trusted God even when all things seemed impossible things seemed impossible. We can trust God too, and have hope.

SCRIPTURES

1 Kings 17:1-16; 19:8-13

Psalm 46:10; Proverbs 3:5-6 (GNT)

STATION OBJECTIVES

Children will

- * hear the story of the prophet Elijah;
- * learn a definition of the term *prophet* and be able to locate stories about the prophet Elijah in the books of 1 and 2 Kings;
- * hear examples of how Elijah trusted God and discover ways they can trust God in their lives;
- * learn about some of the unlikely ways God cared for and provided for Elijah and recognize and be able to discuss ways God cares for and provides for them;
- * discover ways that Elijah heard and talked to God and talk about ways they can listen for God and talk to God in their lives.

STATION SET UP

Make a paper banner large enough for each group to add their own thoughts throughout the unit. Write “Prophets Speak the Truth About God” across the top of the banner paper. Under the heading write “I’m a servant of the living Lord, the God of Israel. (1 Kings 17:1, CEV).” Then, write “Elijah, the Prophet” to indicate that these are Elijah’s words.

Resources

pages 3–8

Supplies

large piece of banner
paper
markers
masking tape or
adhesive putty

STORY

Use tape or adhesive putty to hang the banner on the wall where children can easily reach it.

As children enter each week, invite the children to add their own truths about God to the wall hanging.

Photocopy the Main Idea, Objectives, Bible References, Bible Story, Bible Background, Check Your Facts, About the Children, and Shepherd Tips for each leader and shepherd (pages 3–8).

Resources

Bible
Bible concordance
book of quotations or
www.brainyquote.com

Note

Resources and websites are constantly changing. Check www.powerxpress.com for updates that may help you in planning.

Resources

Bible
(*THE MESSAGE*)

WANT TO DO MORE?

Use a Bible and Bible concordance to find statements from other prophets, such as Isaiah or Jeremiah. Add some of these verses to the banner. Include the name of each prophet.

Search a book of quotations or www.brainyquote.com for quotes about God from more contemporary prophets such as Mother Theresa or Martin Luther King, Jr. Add these proclamations to the banner.

SAFETY CHECK

- The church should be a place of security—a place where children can count on things and people being reliable.
- Shepherds should know the whereabouts of every child in the shepherd’s group, and they should know where to reach parents in case of an emergency.
- Make sure the room is large enough for the activities selected, with furniture safely pushed out of the way for drama activities.

BIBLE STORY (5–10 minutes)

Help the children locate 1 Kings 17 and 19 in their Bibles.

Then, read the stories of Elijah to the children from *THE MESSAGE*. For the stories of Elijah and the ravens and Elijah and the widow, begin on page 599 at the beginning of Chapter 17 and stop after the first full paragraph on page 600. The story of Elijah on Mt. Sinai (Horeb) starts with the third paragraph of Chapter 19, the line on page 603 where it reads, “Suddenly an angel shook him awake” Read to the end of the seventh paragraph on page 604, which ends “and after the fire, a gentle and quiet whisper” (1 Kings 19:5-12, *Message*).

Ask: Who was Elijah? What does it mean to be a prophet? (*A prophet is a person who speaks the truth about God.*) How did Elijah know what God wanted him to do? How did God care for Elijah? How did God sound when Elijah was on the mountain? What do the stories of Elijah teach us about God?

Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. Remember the Lord in everything you do, and he will show you the right way. (Proverbs 3:5-6, GNT)

Say the Scripture verse (printed in the burst) with the children?

ACTIVITY OPTIONS

Choose from the suggested activities as your time and the children's interests allow.

For All Ages

Widow, Tell Me the Story

Sit with the children in a circle on the floor. Review the story of Elijah and the widow from 1 Kings 17:8-16.

Give the beachball to a child in the circle and say, "Widow, tell me the story." The child tells the story of Elijah and the widow from the perspective of the widow.

The child then passes the ball to another child, and says, "Elijah, tell me the story." That child tells the story from the perspective of Elijah, and then passes the ball to another child.

Continue passing the ball around the circle until every child has had a chance to tell the story from the perspective of one of the characters in the story (widow, child, Elijah). You could also add a neighbor or God.

Options: Repeat the activity, telling the story of Elijah and the ravens. (Use the characters of Elijah, a raven, God, and a traveler wandering along the Cherith Creek where Elijah was hiding. Tell the story of Elijah encountering God on Mt. Sinai. (Use the characters of Elijah, God, or the angel who fed Elijah on the way to Sinai.)

For All Ages

New Legends About Elijah

Read "About Elijah" and "A Journey With Elijah" (pages 78 and 79-80).

For Younger Children

Work together to create a story about Elijah visiting a child to offer help or to teach. Begin with "Recently, the prophet Elijah returned to earth to visit a young child." Invite each child to add a sentence to the story. Have an adult write down the story as the children tell it. Use several pages of paper to record the story, writing only a sentence or two on each page.

When the children have completed the story, divide the pages among the children and let them illustrate the story.

Have the children create a title for their story, then make a cover for the book. After the title write "A Legend About Elijah Written by (*name of the class*)."

Staple the cover and pages together in a book. Display the book where others can read it.

Resources

Bibles

Supplies

beach ball

Talk Tip

What did you learn by telling the story from a different viewpoint?

Resources

"About Elijah" (page 78)

"A Journey With Elijah" (pages 79-80)

Supplies

paper
colored pencils
stapler and staples

For Older Children

Give children the option of working individually or in small groups to create stories about Elijah visiting a child to offer help or to teach a lesson about how people should live with one another. Begin each story with “Recently, the prophet Elijah returned to visit a young child.”

Encourage them to write just a few sentences on each page. When they finish, they can use colored pencils to illustrate their stories.

Make cover pages for the stories. Include the title and “A Legend About Elijah Written by (name).” Staple the cover and pages together in a book.

Invite the children to read their stories to the rest of the group. Then display the books where others can read them.

Ask: Why do you think Elijah is known for helping the poor? What do you think Elijah was trying to teach in his time? What do you think is Elijah’s message for today? How can we share Elijah’s message with others?

Resources

Bibles

Supplies

(optional: video camera, TV, video player, Bible-times costumes)

Talk Tip

Ask the children how it felt to be each of the characters in their play.

Resources

Bibles

Horton Hears a Who by Dr. Seuss
(optional: *Horton Hears A Who* video)

For All Ages

Dramatize a Story

Tell one of these Bible stories in your own words, or read it from a children’s Bible.

- Elijah and the Ravens: 1 Kings 17:1-7
- Elijah and the Widow: 1 Kings 17:8-16
- Elijah with Jesus at the Transfiguration: Luke 9:28-36

Use one of these two methods to dramatize the story:

- the children act out the plot while someone reads the story;
- the children do an improvisational sketch with their own dialogue.

Option: Use Bible-times costumes. Video the skit and view it.

For Younger Children

Horton Hears a Who

Read 1 Kings 19:7-14 to the children.

Read *Horton Hears a Who* to the children. **Option:** Watch the video, which is about 25 minutes long.

Ask: How is *Horton Hears a Who* like the story from the Bible? Did people believe what Elijah said about God? How did people treat Elijah? Did the other creatures believe what Horton said about the Whos? How did the creatures treat Horton? Did the Whos believe the Doctor? When did the Whos realize they were wrong and the Doctor was right? What did they do? What do these stories teach us about believing in things we cannot see?

For Younger Children

Wanted: Prophets

Talk with the children about what a prophet did in Bible times.

Help the children make a “Wanted” poster for a modern-day prophet.”

Give each child a piece of posterboard. Have each child draw a picture of what he or she thinks a prophet might look like today. Then help them write a few descriptive words or sentences about how a modern-day prophet would act. Put the “Wanted” posters on display.

For Older Children

Journaling With Elijah

Review the Bible stories about Elijah (1 Kings 17:1-16 and 19:7-14) with the children. Read “A Journey With Elijah” (pages 79–80) to the children.

Give each child some paper and a pencil.

Tell the children to imagine that they are the rabbi in the story. Ask them to work in teams of two to write a four-day journal from the perspective of the rabbi.

1. They will begin with a prologue telling what the rabbi already knew about Elijah.
2. Then they will write four journal entries telling what happened each day.
3. They will finish with an epilogue in which the rabbi reflects on what was learned.

Ask volunteers to read their journals to the rest of the group.

For Older Children

A Prophet Needs...

Let the children work in teams of three or four to create a poster describing the characteristics of a prophet. Give these instructions:

1. Write “A Prophet Needs ...” at the top of the poster.
2. Draw a simple outline of a person underneath the title.
3. Draw lines to different parts of the body and label what a prophet would need to have in each area. For example, the line drawn to the eye might indicate that a prophet needs good vision to see God’s way even when others don’t.

Display the posters where others can see them.

Supplies

posterboard
markers

Talk Tip

Talk to the children about the wide variety of people God has used as prophets throughout history.

Resources

Bibles
“A Journey With
Elijah” (pages
78–80)

Supplies

paper
pencils

Supplies

posterboard
markers

Talk Tip

Encourage children to use their own words to explain what a prophet is and how a prophet should act.

CLOSING (5 minutes)

Say: God uses prophets to teach people about who God is, how God cares for us, and what God wants from us. The words of the prophets like Elijah have brought comfort to people in difficult times for many, many years.

Ask the children to say Psalm 46:10 after you: "Be still, and know that I am God."

Ask the children to be still as you read all of Psalm 46.

Ask: How could this Psalm remind people about God's love for us during difficult times? What can we do this week to help someone remember God's great love for us?

Close With Prayer: God, remind us everyday to be still and remember that you are God and that you will always be with us. Amen.

About Elijah

by Suzann Wade

Elijah was a prophet who lived sometime between 900 and 850 B.C., during the reign of King Ahab in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Elijah stood up for God when everyone else seemed to be turning away from God and doing wrong things. Elijah told Ahab that only God could bring the rain. God cared for Elijah, and while Elijah was in hiding, God used ravens and a poor, foreign widow to give food to the prophet. Throughout his life, Elijah taught the truth about God even when it was not popular.

At the end of his life on earth, the Bible says that Elijah was taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot (see 2 Kings 2:1-12). For this reason, many Jewish people believed that Elijah could go back and forth between heaven and earth whenever he chose.

The prophet Malachi wrote that God would send the prophet Elijah to the world to teach children and parents to love each other more (see Malachi 4:5-6).

At the Transfiguration, which we find in Luke 9:28-36, Elijah and Moses appeared with Jesus and talked to Jesus.

Beyond the Bible stories, many legends have been told about Elijah returning to earth. Some of these legends are older than the time of Jesus. In these legends, Elijah usually came to do one of three things:

- help someone in need;
- teach a lesson about loving one another; or
- announce the coming of the Messiah.

A Journey With Elijah

adapted by Suzann Wade

“A Journey With Elijah” is one of the oldest and most popular legends about Elijah. Elijah appeared to a rabbi one day and said, “Rabbi, you are invited to join me on a journey around the world where you will learn many things. However, as we travel, you may have questions about what you see. Stay silent about these things as long as you can. In the end, I will answer any question you ask. But as soon as I answer your questions, our time together will end.”

The rabbi was confused by the rules Elijah had given him, but how could anyone turn down the opportunity to learn from the great prophet Elijah? So, the rabbi joyfully agreed, and the two set out on their journey.

They traveled many miles in silence. The rabbi had many questions, but he remembered his promise and kept silent. After a long day’s journey, the pair came to the small farmhouse of a poor old couple. The couple saw the travelers coming and rushed out to greet them. They invited the pair to come inside for a hot meal and a good night’s rest. There was only meat enough for two people, so the couple gave all the meat to Elijah and the rabbi and kept only oats for themselves. There was only a single bed in the house, so when darkness came, the couple slept on the floor and let Elijah and the rabbi sleep in the bed.

In the morning, the couple gave Elijah and the rabbi extra servings of warm milk from their prize cow, the only real possession they had. The wife baked small cakes with the little flour they had and gave them to Elijah and the rabbi to eat while on their journey.

Elijah and the rabbi thanked the couple and left to resume their journey. As they passed the barnyard, the rabbi heard Elijah say, “May the couple’s cow die today.” The cow dropped dead.

The rabbi was horrified and cried out, “How could you curse that poor couple after they have just been so kind to us?”

Elijah turned and stared at the rabbi. “God’s ways are not easily seen. Do you really want me to answer your question and bring our journey to an end, or do you want to stay quiet and keep on?” The rabbi was furious, but he still felt there was much he could learn from the prophet, so he kept silent and the two traveled on.

The next night, Elijah and the rabbi came to a large farmhouse where many livestock wandered in the yard. They knocked on the door. A well-dressed man opened the door, “What do you want?” he grumbled.

Elijah said, “Please sir, my friend and I are on a long journey, and we need a place to spend the night.”

The man growled under his breath. “Fine,” he snapped. “Lie down in the straw in the barn if you must.”

The man started to close the door, but Elijah stopped it with his hand. “Sir,” said Elijah, “may we also have a bit of water and some bread.”

The man froze. “There is water in the trough in the barn, and I just put the table scraps out for the goats. Go and help yourself.”

Elijah and the rabbi spent a restless night eating and sleeping among the animals. In the morning as they left, Elijah walked over to a crumbling wall on the man’s house and said, “Let this wall be fixed.” The wall was immediately repaired.

The rabbi stared. The man had been so rude to them and yet Elijah had blessed the man and fixed his wall. The rabbi started to question the prophet, but he remembered Elijah’s warning and remained quiet.

The next night, the pair found themselves in a village full of rude and unwelcoming people. No one seemed to have the time or the resources to share anything with two weary travelers. As Elijah and the rabbi left the town the next morning, the rabbi heard Elijah say, "May all the people in this town become great leaders."

Once again, the rabbi was angered and confused. He shook his head but said nothing, knowing that the journey would end if he did.

At the end of the fourth day, Elijah and the prophet once again found themselves in the middle of a town. The people of the town welcomed the pair warmly. Each family fixed the finest dish of bread or fruit or meat, and everyone brought the food together to have a great feast in honor of the travelers. Elijah and the rabbi ate until they could eat no more. That night, every family invited the travelers to spend the night with them. Elijah and the rabbi were given their choice of the finest beds in town.

The next morning, the rabbi was trying to fit the many cakes that women of the town had made for their journey into his bag when he saw Elijah coming. The rabbi, overwhelmed by the warmth and kindness that the town had shown to them, was anxious to hear the prophet's blessing upon the community. As Elijah approached, the rabbi heard him say, "May only one person among the many find a position of leadership in this town."

The rabbi could take it no longer. He exploded at the prophet, "Have you lost your mind? What kind of a sorry blessing is that? These people were so kind to us, and that is what you wish for them? I'm sorry, but I cannot stay silent any longer. For four days I have traveled with you, and I have not understood a single one of your blessings."

Elijah looked at the rabbi. "Are you sure you want me to answer? You know that it will mean the end of our journey?"

"Yes!" shouted the rabbi. "Please answer. I cannot take it anymore! Why did you wish

that only one person would be a leader in this town, but in the other town where everyone was so rude, you wished for them all to become leaders?"

Elijah smiled. "First you must understand that God's ways are sometimes hard for us to see. In the first town, the people were rude to us. I wished for them all to be leaders because when they all see themselves as leaders, the group argues and bickers all the time and nothing great can ever be done. In this town, where the people have been so kind, I prayed for them to have one strong leader who will bring them vision and help lead the town to do great things."

The rabbi nodded, he was beginning to understand. "But what about the wall of the rude farmer. Why did you fix his wall?"

Elijah said, "Buried under that crumbling wall was a treasure of silver and gold. If the man fixed the wall himself, he would have found the treasure. By fixing the wall, I made sure that the treasure will not be found."

The rabbi smiled slightly, and then stopped. "Okay, but what about the poor couple? Why did you kill their cow?"

Elijah chuckled. "Yes, that was perhaps the biggest blessing of all. You see, God had shown me before we arrived that the wife was going to die the day we left. As we left, I prayed that the woman would live and the cow would die instead."

Elijah looked at the rabbi, "Now, my friend, our journey must end. But before I send you home, remember what you have learned. Those who reach out to others with kindness find favor in God's sight. Those who are rude and full of hate lose in ways they will never know. And those of us who see both must remember that God's ways are often unseen and not easily understood. Remember what the Proverbs say: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. Remember the Lord in everything you do, and he will show you the right way."

With that, Elijah was gone.