

Children Sunday School Lesson

“A Still Small Voice”

The Calling of Elijah
(1 Kings 19:1-20)

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Purpose:

- 1) To recognize the power of stillness and quietness as God calls Elijah
- 2) To learn how we might listen to God

Focal Passage:

Elijah Hears God (1 Kings 19:11-13)

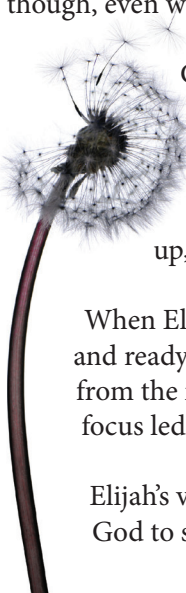
Memory Verse:

“Love the Lord your God, listen to his voice.” Deuteronomy 30:20a (NIV)

Bible Background for Leader:

Read 1 Kings 19:1–20. This is some story! Elijah is running for his life from Jezebel, who has vowed to kill him just like the other prophets. He feels threatened enough to withdraw, alone, a day's journey away from his servant. He feels so alone and tired and afraid that he prays that God would allow him to die right where he sits. Have you ever felt that way? If you have, what have you done to move forward from that place? What has God done to move you?

When Elijah lay down to sleep, he was more likely escaping his circumstances than taking physical rest. He was, in effect, choosing to shut out the reality of his situation. He was saying, “I'm done.” God made sure that Elijah was taken care of, though, even when he couldn't take care of himself.



God sent an angel to bring food and water to Elijah. Elijah's response is interesting. He didn't say, “Whoa, an angel!” or “Wow! I was hungry and thirsty! Thanks!” There was no acknowledgement of God's presence or care for him. This lack of response is probably what prompted the angel's second visit, and the statement, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.” We are often like Elijah. When we simply can't, or won't, continue the task that God has placed before us, God somehow manages to cover us, lift us up, and care for us until our strength and clarity of mind to return.

When Elijah had traveled for 40 days and nights, and had reached Horeb, “the mountain of God,” he was open to and ready for a fresh encounter with God. He had to move far away from the distractions of his regular life, far away from the misery into which he had fallen. He had to be focused and ready to hear the voice of God. His sharper focus led him to the top of Horeb.

Elijah's visit to the top of Horeb was probably not what he expected. Our own visits to the remote places to wait for God to speak are often not what we expect, either. We would expect to experience God's presence in the mighty

a still small voice
1 Kings 19:11-13



places and in the mighty things. But a still small whisper? Not so much! The simple act of having to listen more intently, to tune out the sounds that crowd out the gentleness of a whisper, THAT is what God required of Elijah. That is what God wants of us, too. Do we wait with quiet anticipation? Do we want so badly to hear what God says that we are willing to turn off the TV, the iPod, the radio, our own conversation? How else may we hear that still small voice?

As you guide the children, remind them that there are many distractions in our lives, like those listed above. Remind them, too, that they have the ability to choose to be quiet sometimes. Encourage them that this quietness helps them in many ways; quietness is especially helpful for learning how to pray and hear God's "voice" as He guides our thoughts and actions.

Preparing the Learning Space:

1. Prepare the large group area by placing a tan sheet (in a space about the size of a sleeping bag) on the floor under a potted tree. Have two small loaves (the size of a small submarine roll) and two pint canning jars full of water nearby.
2. Provide Bibles for students.
3. Arrange the lego listening activity at one table, crossword activity at one table, and Elijah puzzle activity at another table.
4. Write the memory verse on 9" x 12" colored paper; display at child's eye level.
5. Write the theme of today's Bible study, as well as the purposes of today's Bible study, on 9" x 12" colored paper or marking board; display at child's eye level.
6. Secure (look in Bible story book or picture file at church house) and photocopy a Bible picture of Elijah. You may be able to locate Bible pictures of various parts of today's Bible story; if so, use these Bible pictures. Cut the photocopy of Bible picture into 16 pieces; attach adhesive magnets to backs of puzzle pieces. Use on cookie sheet.

Preparing the Learning Activities:

Introductory Activities (10 min.)—

1. Lego listening activity (provide legos, timer, and one copy of each set of directions; *see page 6*)
2. Listening crossword (copy crossword, provide pencils; *see page 7*)
3. Bible Book Race (write the name of each book of the Old Testament on a separate index card; provide Bibles; children will race to see who can put the books in order more quickly)
4. Bible puzzle(s) of Elijah

Bible Study (Large Group) (20 min.)—

1. Prepare to tell the story in your own words. You may find it helpful to read the story several times and write the story out in your own words.
2. Learn the memory verse (provide 15 fist-sized rocks with one word of the memory verse on each rock – you may put a piece of masking tape on the rocks to write on so you may use the rocks again)
3. Review the story (provide a small beanbag to pass during the review)
4. Prayer time (guided prayer)

Bible Learning Activities (20 min.)—

1. Drama (act out story with costumes): Encourage noises for wind, earthquake, and fire; provide costumes, large sheet of poster board, sheets of crisp cellophane bag wrap. Consider asking one of the children to videotape the drama presentation.
2. Art (scrap book or poster): Provide sheets of 9" x 12" white construction paper, folded in half, to make into a book; provide sheets of 9" x 12" construction paper in pale colors, to make triptych posters; provide pencils, washable markers, colored pencils, scrap pieces of construction paper, scissors, and glue. Children may work alone or with partners to create the book or triptych.
3. "Who Is Elijah" Game (provide unlined white 3" x 5" index cards, Bibles, Bible dictionaries, pencils)

Closing Activities (5 min.)—

Allow children to share what they've done in their learning activities.

The Learning Session:

Step 1—Greet children as they arrive. Briefly explain the introductory activities you've provided, and guide them to choose one in which to participate. Interact with the children as they work and learn. Give a "3 Minute Warning" before large group time to aid the transition.

When it's time for large group, clap your hands loudly four times to get their attention. When they respond, whisper, "It's time to come to large group. Join me, please!" Have the children sit on the floor adjacent to the area where you have placed the "bed" under the tree.

Step 2—Open your Bible to 1 Kings 19; place the open Bible on your lap; tell the story from memory, if possible:

A long time ago, God used people called prophets to tell other people what God wanted them to know and do. There were many people who didn't like prophets very much. One of these people was a queen named Jezebel. Jezebel worshiped a false god called Baal (pronounced "bail"). When God's prophets refused to worship Baal, Jezebel chased them, trying to hurt or kill them.

One of the prophets that Jezebel was chasing was named Elijah. Elijah was a man who loved God and wanted to do all the things God wanted him to do. But Elijah knew how mean Jezebel was and that she wanted to hurt or kill him. He was so afraid; he ran away to hide. He ran to a town called Beersheba, where he left his servant behind and kept on running.

Elijah ran away to a lonely place where there were no other people. He sat down on the ground under a tree (move to sit under the tree) and said, "I want to just lay right here and never get up." And so he lay down and went to sleep.

While he was sleeping, an angel from God came to him and said, "You need to eat and drink. You've got a long trip and your body's not ready to travel." The angel left a cake of bread to eat and a jar of water to drink for Elijah. Two times the angel came to Elijah. Each time, Elijah ate and drank and rested.

After he had rested, Elijah got up and traveled for 40 days and 40 nights, until he reached the mountain Horeb, which is called the mountain of God. Elijah went into a cave and spent the night there. As he was sleeping, Elijah heard God calling him. God told Elijah, "Go stand on the mountain and wait for me."

Elijah did what God said. While he was waiting, a strong wind came, tore the mountain apart, and broke the rocks. But Elijah didn't see or hear God. After that, a huge earthquake came. Still, Elijah didn't see or hear God. After the earthquake, a fire came. Still, Elijah didn't see or hear God.

(soften your voice, not quite to a whisper) After the fire, though, came a quiet, gentle *(now whisper)* whisper. Elijah knew that now he was hearing God. He covered up his face and went to stand at the edge of the cave. He covered his face because he knew God was too beautiful to look at. As he stood there listening, God asked him, *(again in a whisper)* "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Elijah told God all the things that were making him afraid. God helped Elijah not be afraid anymore.

Elijah was a man that God asked special things of. God may not ask you or me to tell a lot of people about what He wants us to do. But God does want us to do one thing that Elijah did: LISTEN. Elijah had to go away from all the things that distracted him from listening to what God wanted to say. He had to get away from the people, the town, the noise—and just be quiet.

Say: "Let's talk about this story. I'll ask you some questions about what you just heard. After I ask a question, I'll toss a beanbag to someone—whoever catches the beanbag will have a chance to answer the question. After he/she answers, I'll ask another question and then he/she will toss the beanbag to a friend who can answer that question. (If there are too many children for everyone to have a turn, make sure to say that everyone might not get a turn to answer today).

Review questions:

1. Who was chasing Elijah?
2. What was the name of the false god Jezebel worshiped?
3. Why was Jezebel chasing Elijah?
4. What did the angel give to Elijah?
5. Why did the angel give these things to Elijah?
6. How long did Elijah walk after he had rested?
7. What is the name of the mountain Elijah went to?
8. What were the things that came before Elijah knew God was on the mountain?
9. What thing helped Elijah know that God was on the mountain?

“Let’s learn a Bible verse that helps us remember to listen to God. This verse is found in Deuteronomy, which is in the Old Testament.” Allow children time to locate the verse in their Bibles.

“Deuteronomy 30: 20a: It says, ‘Love the Lord your God, and listen to his voice.’ What do you think that verse means?” Accept the children’s responses to your question. “Might the verse mean, ‘Love God, listen to him, don’t forget what he wants you to do?’”

Place all rocks on floor, read verse together; as you learn the verse, remove a few at a time until children are saying the verse without any visual reminder.

Prayer Time—

Ask for any prayer concerns the children would like to share. Write the concerns on the marking board. Tell the children that you will lead them in a guided prayer today. This prayer will help them to be quiet and listen, as Elijah did. Ask them to sit quietly and listen for the cues in the prayer that will tell them what to do.

Prayer: “God, thank you for taking care of me. I will be quiet now and thank you for my family (*pause 5 seconds*). Please be with the prayer concerns we made today. I will be quiet now and think about our concerns (*pause 10 seconds*). Now I will be quiet and listen to the sounds of the world you made, God (*pause 10 seconds*). Help me this week to be quiet sometimes, and just listen to your world. Amen.”

Step 3: Moving to Learning Activities—Explain the learning activities that are available. Allow each child to choose activity he/she would like to participate in.

1. **Drama.** Create a script and act out the story of Elijah as he ran or as he hid on the mountain. Using poster board (or marking board), enlist assistance of 5th and 6th graders to list the various “acts” of the Bible story (drama) on the board, list the Bible persons involved in each “act,” and allow the children to decide who will assume the role of each Bible person. Children will need to decide if the drama will be told in the first person (from Elijah’s perspective) or in the third person (he, the angel, etc.); they will decide if they will speak or need a narrator to move them through the “acts” of the drama. Have fun!
2. **Art.** Create a scrapbook of Elijah’s encounter with God. If working alone, you might draw one part of the story, like Elijah on the mountain, or Elijah while he was resting. If you are working together, you could each draw a different part of the story. Create a triptych (three-paneled picture) of Elijah’s journey to the mountain to meet and listen to God.
3. **“Who Is Elijah” Game.** Using information gathered through Bible study/story, children will write a question concerning Elijah on one index card and answer to the question on another index card. Children scramble cards and play game like “Memory.”

Step 4: Closing Activities—

Allow children to share what they created during their learning activities.

Lego Listening Activity

An assortment of legos will be needed for this activity. Each pair of people will need one set of directions. One person will read the list of legos needed and the shape that needs to be made. They may read the list and the shape only once. The listener will have three minutes to complete their task.

Set 1:

- 8 yellow
- 6 blue
- 9 red
- 5 green
- 7 white

Make a pyramid.

When you are finished, you may switch directions with another group, and switch reader and listener.



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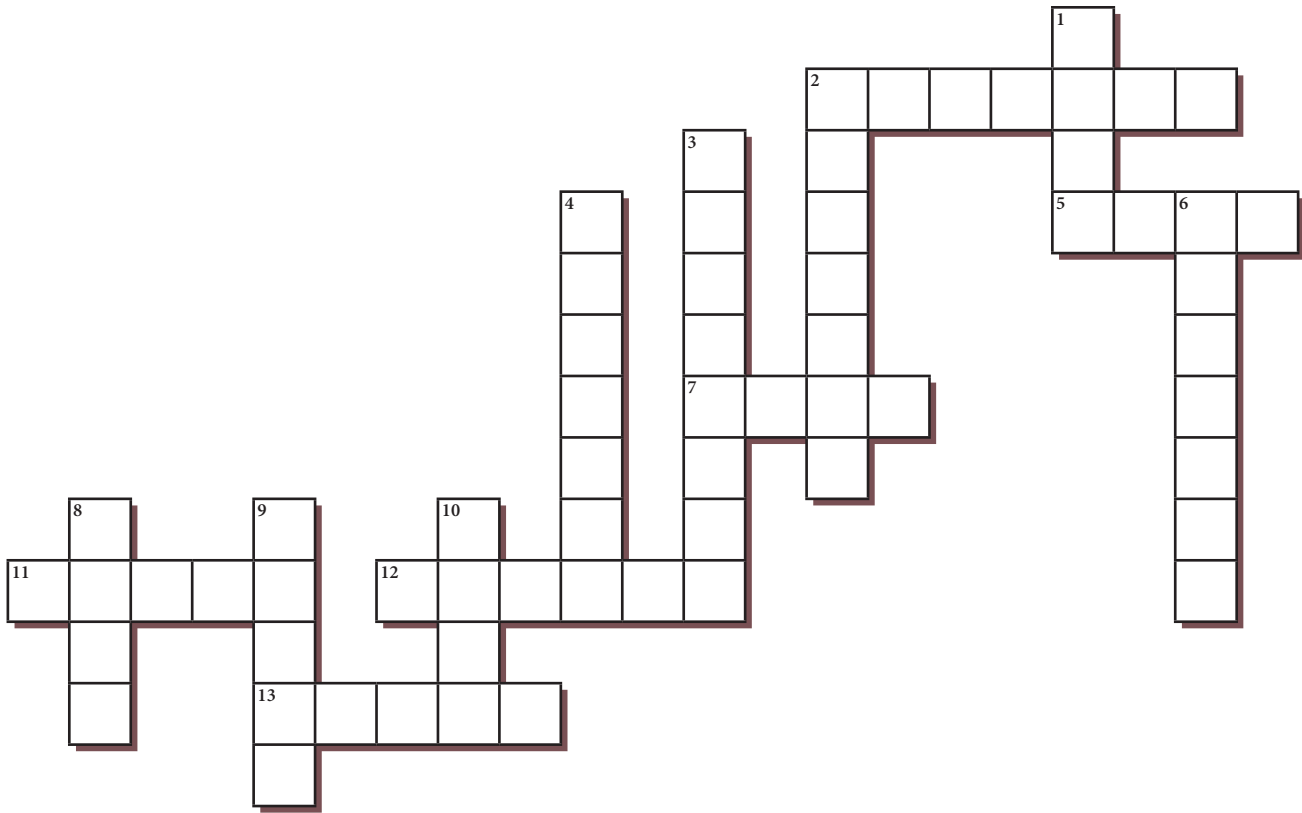
Set 2:

- 9 green
- 4 blue
- 10 yellow
- 7 red
- 6 white

Make a box that will hold something.

When you are finished, you may switch directions with another group, and switch reader and listener.

"Listen, Elijah!" Listening Crossword Puzzle



Across:

2. You use your feet to do this
5. They are used to hear
7. It gives us shade
11. You swim in it
12. It's what your mother says to do when she's talking
13. You see pictures of them with wings

Down:

1. ____ and seek
2. Talking very quietly
3. Some people climb these
4. A person who tells others what God wants them to know
6. What you might do if you are afraid of something
8. Bears sometimes live in these
9. It's good for a sandwich
10. Never play with this

Word Bank:

Ears	Whisper
Hide	Water
Earthquake	Listen
Bread	Run Away
Tree	Fire
Walking	Mountain
Prophet	Angel
Wind	Cave