



LESSON PLAN

Scripture Texts:

1 Kings 18:17-40

Mark 9:42-48

Session Theme:

Faith

a. Welcome to Class

Teachers should arrive in the classroom well in advance of class. Welcome students as they enter, and inquire about their week. Pass out name tags and record attendance on a classroom chart.

b. Icebreaker: "Answer Me!"

Play a game with the class where they have to answer you before a certain amount of time passes. To play, call out a number and a category (for example, "Six animals!") and immediately start counting to ten. The class must name six different animals before you reach the number ten. Each time, switch the category and the number of things you want them to list within that category. If they succeed, they get a point. If not, you do.

In this game, I was looking to you to answer me when I called something out. Luckily, for the most part, you were able to do it! But in today's Bible story, some religious leaders were trying to get an imaginary god to answer them when they called out. What happened? Let's start our lesson and find out!

c. Opening Prayer

Faithful God, you hear us when we call. Help us to be patient, and to turn to you rather than the false idols of our own time. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

d. SEED Video or Song (Optional)

The teacher may introduce the lesson by playing the video clip from the SEED website. This time may also include an opening song or two, using a commercial Sunday School music CD.

Song suggestions for this lesson:

- "I Will Call Upon the Lord" (kids' song)
- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" (hymn)

e. Brief Bible Background

Read together the introduction to the lessons for the day, and briefly summarize the context and setting:

- Today's Lesson is from the Old Testament
- Scripture Section: Division

Because of disputes in the royal house, God's people were split into a Northern Kingdom (Israel) and a Southern Kingdom (Judah). It was a bad time, with much false worship and idolatry.

f. Communicate the Bible Story

Always keep in mind that the main purpose of Sunday School is to put people in contact with Bible stories. Use a version that is appropriate to the age level.

Upper Elementary: Read the Bible Story and Rhyme

Youth/Adults: Read the Scripture text from the Bible

For Upper and Lower Elementary, use the Storyteller questions to help the students think about the events of the story.

g. Complete the Worksheet(s)

Continue with the handout sheets appropriate to the age level of the students in class:

Upper Elementary: Worksheet and Drama

Youth: Bible Study (Maps, Timelines, Questions)

Adult: Bible Study Sheet (Introduction and Discussion)

h. Craft and Activity Time

If there is time after covering the Bible story, the class may move to craft and activity time, described on the following page. (Do not let the activity time supersede the actual time spent on the Scripture lesson.)

i. Summarize and Review

Before ending class, briefly summarize the day's lesson one last time. If you have not already done so, introduce the Theme Word for the week, providing the definition, and asking how the lesson connects to that theme.

Youth/Adult: Discuss "Reflection for the Week Ahead"

j. Closing Prayer

Close the session in prayer before dismissal:

Upper Elementary: Practice a prayer from memory (e.g., the Lord's Prayer, Luther's Morning Prayer, etc.)

Youth/Adult: Use the ADTRC Prayer format

Bible Study Leader's Guide

The following is a discussion and answer guide for the Youth and Adult Bible Study sheets. For all leaders, it can serve to provide some background on the Bible lesson.

Discuss: 1 Kings 18:17-40

- At this time King Ahab and Queen Jezebel ruled in Israel. According to verses 17-18, what had they done that was so wrong?

King Ahab and Queen Jezebel are notorious examples of faithless rulers. They had abused their positions for personal gain, but, more egregiously, had abandoned God's commandments and worshiped false gods (the Baals). This was something that would bring the Lord's anger upon them and upon the people of Israel who followed them.

- What did Elijah decide to do about this problem? Who did he want to come meet him? Where did they go?

Elijah proposed a public contest and display, trusting that God would reveal his power and put the idolaters to shame. Elijah asked all Israel, as well as 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah, to meet him on Mount Carmel. There, he told people they had to decide. Would they worship the idol Baal or the one true God?

- What challenge did Elijah give to the prophets of Baal? What did they do to try to get their god's attention?

The challenge was to see which god would answer the prayer of his people. Elijah challenged them to ask their gods to light afire the wood beneath an offering. The prophets of Baal called out, danced around the altar, and even cut themselves to shed their blood. But even after hours of calling on Baal, nothing happened.

- In what two places does the word "limp" or "limping" appear in this text? What might the Bible be implying about the worship of false gods?

In verse 21, Elijah refers to the people "limping between two opinions." They were hobbled by trying to worship two different gods at the same time. They were not walking (living) right.

Later, Scripture describes the ceremonies of the prophets of Baal as "limping" around the altar (v. 26). The implication is that theirs was a crippled faith, and that they were stumbling and making fools of themselves.

- When it was Elijah's turn, what did he do? Why do you think Elijah repeated his action three times? What point was he making?

Elijah built an altar in the Lord's name. Then, he had four jars of water poured over the wood beneath his offering — to drench the wood and make it obviously unburnable. To prove his point, he repeated this three times — until there was standing water pooling around the altar. No mere human could ignite that brazier.

- How did God respond to Elijah's prayer? In addition to the wood on the altar, what else was affected?

After Elijah prayed to the Lord, "the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench" (v. 38). Not only was the wood lit on fire, but everything else was consumed as well!

- How did this affect the people of Israel? Is it necessary to see amazing feats like this to know that God is real? Why or why not?

Clearly, this miracle had a great impact on the witnesses. Elijah proved to the people of Israel who the true God was. No one could deny it.

There are times when God does this, giving signs to prove a point. But as Jesus said to Thomas, it is better not to need such signs. "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:28).

God wants us to believe in him for his own sake, trusting in his Word, without the need for signs. As is says in Hebrews 11:1, "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." True faith needs no signs.

- Read Mark 9:42-48. Why do you think fire is often used in Scripture to symbolize and carry out God's wrath? How is the Old Testament story of Elijah an effective example of what Jesus warns us of?

God takes sin very seriously. In these verses, Jesus refers to Hell (Gehenna) as "unquenchable fire." The valley of Hinnom was an literal burning garbage dump near Jerusalem, formerly a place where child-sacrifice was offered to idols (see Jeremiah 7:30-32). Jesus used this as a real-life object lesson of the eternal fire "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

Just as the fire from God consumed Elijah's offering, in the end, all wickedness will be consumed by fire. As John the Baptist said of Jesus: "His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:12).

Classroom Craft and Activity Page

Listed below are in-class activities and craft projects related to the theme for the day. Choose one of the following based on the age and capabilities of the students. (Never let the activity or craft time take precedence over the biblical story.)

Activity 1: Elijah's Altar Craft

Materials Needed:

- Small paper plates
- Clay (or play dough)
- Orange and yellow tissue paper
- Scissors
- Small, thin sticks or wooden toothpicks
- Glue
- Markers



Instructions:

Give each person a small paper plate and a good sized lump of clay (or play dough). Invite kids to divide their clay into 12 pieces and to form each piece into a stone shape.

Using the paper plate as a base, build a little "altar" out of the clay stones. Leave a small space in the center of the altar. This is where the tissue paper flames will go.

Next, have kids use scissors to cut two or three pieces (about 6 inches square) out of orange and yellow tissue paper. Take each piece and pinch the center of it. Twist the center, allowing the rest of the paper to fan out like flames. If desired, kids can use scissors to cut the edges of the tissue paper into more obvious flame shapes.

Push the twisted parts of the tissue paper down into the center of the altar. Use some of the clay stones to anchor the tissue paper in place and fan out the flames.

Give kids several small, thin sticks or wooden toothpicks. Help them break the sticks into little pieces. These will be the "kindling" for the top of their altar. Press the kindling sticks down on the top of the altar, around the outside of the tissue paper flames. If needed, use some glue to secure the kindling pieces in place.

Give kids blue markers or crayons and invite them to draw "water" in a trough around the altar. If desired, they could also write "Elijah's altar to God" around the perimeter of the plate, reminding them of today's Bible story.

Activity 2: "Wake, O Wake!" Game

Materials Needed:

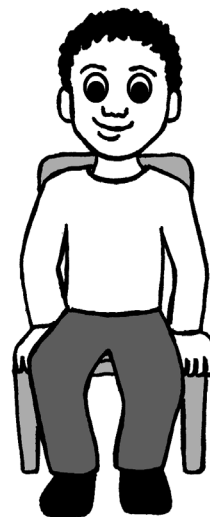
- Two chairs
- Timer

Instructions:

Place two chairs, facing each other, in the front of the room.

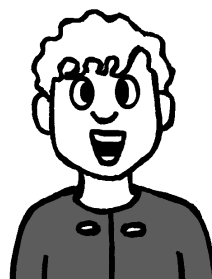
Divide kids into two teams — Team A and Team B.

Invite Team A to stand in a line, single file, on one side of the room, and Team B to do the same on the other side of the room.



To play the game, the first person in line for each team will come forward and sit in one of the chairs, facing each other. Set a timer for one minute (or less). On your command, the person from Team A will have until the timer sounds to make the person on Team B crack a smile. If the player from Team A succeeds, that team will get a point. If not, Team B will get a point.

Continue playing in this way until all of the people from Team A have had a chance to make all of the people from Team B smile or laugh. Then, play a second round, where the people from Team B will try to get the players from Team A to smile or laugh.



Whichever team has the most points at the end wins the game.

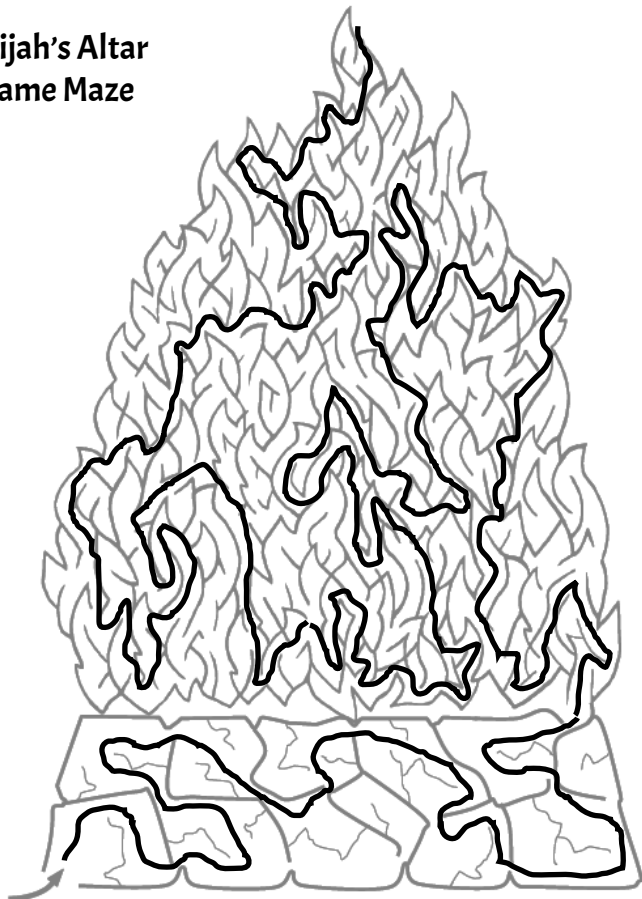
In today's story, the priests of Baal did everything they could to "wake" their gods, but nothing happened — there was no response. Just as in our game, it didn't matter how much the priests of Baal jumped up and down. Their false gods stayed silent and unmoving.

As Elijah showed the people, there is only one, true God. He doesn't require gymnastics or crazy antics to get him to hear our prayers and respond to us. He is real and all powerful — and he can be trusted. Put your faith in the Lord and in none other.

Worksheet Answer Key

Shown below are the answers and solution to the children's worksheet for this week's lesson:

Elijah's Altar Flame Maze



Elijah used 12 stones to build the altar
(representing the 12 tribes of Israel)

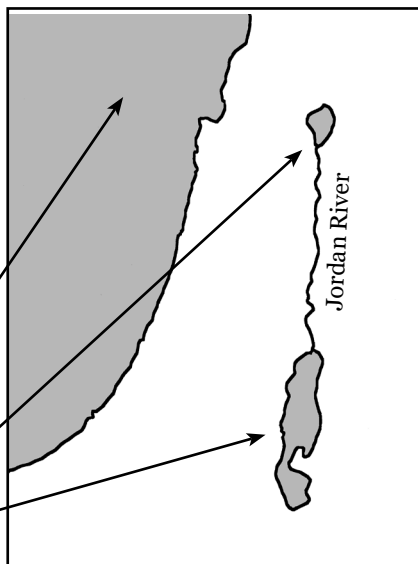
Bodies of Water in the Holy Land:

Bodies of water in the Holy Land used to be called by other names. Listed below are the modern-day designations:

The Great Sea = The Mediterranean Sea

The Sea of Chinnereth = The Sea of Galilee

The Sea of Salt = The Dead Sea



Vocabulary Word for the Week:

Teachers may want to introduce the theme word for the week to help expand students' biblical vocabulary:

Faith

trusting and believing in God

*We trust and believe in the one true God.
We have faith in him, for he will never lie to us
or lead us astray.*

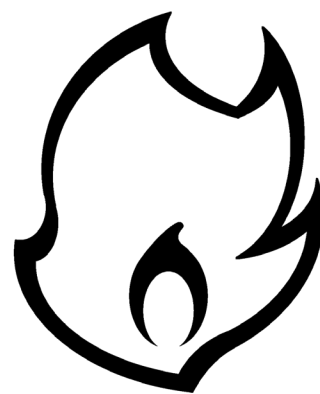
Reflection for the Week Ahead

In the history of the kings of Israel there were good kings and there were bad kings. King Ahab was a bad king who did what was evil in God's sight. He worshiped the false god Baal and encouraged God's people to do the same. He even built a special temple for the false god. The Lord was very angry at Ahab and sent his prophet Elijah to confront him.

We see in this story how God was able to make a water-soaked offering burn, whereas the prophets of Baal were unable to do anything. Even in our day, people often trust in things other than God to give them power or good luck.

Talk together about the things around us that are false gods. How many can you name? Do they have any real power? How do you know?

In what ways have you seen God's power in the world and in your own life? How do you know it was God and not simply a coincidence or other power source?



The Practice of Prayer

Write a prayer giving thanks to God for his amazing and wonderful power over the creation. Ask God to reveal his presence to you and to open your eyes to see his wondrous deeds.

Practice using the ADTRC Prayer Form: Address, Description, Thanks, Request, Conclusion.