

LESSON 4

GOD WHISPERS TO ELIJAH

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Can Speak to Us in Unexpected Ways

SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 19

GOD'S BIG STORY: Afraid for his life, Elijah runs into the wilderness where God cares for his needs. Then God tells Elijah to stand on the mountain, where He comes in the most unexpected way—a gentle whisper.

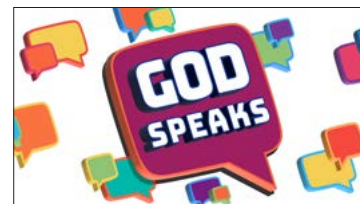
WORD OF WONDER: Come near to God, and he will come near to you. —James 4:8a

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Welcome Question: What is a creative way someone has gotten your attention?
- Curiosity Questions
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- God's Big Story
- Word of Wonder: James 4:8a
- Discussion Questions
- Game: Loud and Still
- LARGE GROUP
- Responding in Worship: Responding in Worship: Look, Listen and Praise



God Rescues Elem Spotify playlist

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

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WONDER TRUTH: God Can Speak to Us in Unexpected Ways

SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 19

WORD OF WONDER: James 4:8a

Have you ever been in a situation where the odds seemed stacked against you? When you felt like you'd given it all you had, and you wanted to throw in the towel? Despite those feelings, God's plans are greater than our discomforts, worries, disbeliefs, and fears.

I invite you to read 1 Kings 19, and as you read, note the places where you empathize with Elijah.

For me, it was Elijah's feeling of wanting to throw in the towel. We've all felt the weight of the day-to-day grind. How much sweeter, then, are the moments when we hear God say to us like He did to Elijah, "Get up" and "Go out" (1 Kings 19:7, 11)?

God doesn't count us out.

The fact that you're reading this right now shows that no matter what else you're facing in life, God's voice is still guiding you. He gets what you're going through, and He has not abandoned you.

The next time you kneel, sit, or lay down ... imagine the voice of God saying to you, "Get up." He's got you in this moment. And He's got you in the next. So be ready for God to speak in ways you'd never expect.

—**Andrae Jones**

Nextgen Pastor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Elijah was a prophet during the reign of Israel's King Ahab. As a great prophet, Elijah's life was full of dramatic moments—being fed by ravens, multiplying a widow's grain and oil, raising her son from the dead, and calling fire down from heaven.

WHAT?

After significant miracles and revelations from God, Elijah found himself tired and afraid. Fleeing for his life, he asked the God who had sustained him to take his life. In this moment of Elijah's weakness, God promised His presence, which came in an unexpected way.

WHERE?

Elijah mostly prophesied to the northern kingdom of Israel, condemning the idolatry of Baal under wicked King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. In his exhaustion, Elijah ran into the wilderness of the southern kingdom, where God spoke to him on Mount Sinai.

WHEN?

When King Ahab married Jezebel, he worshiped her god, Baal. Elijah prophesied during the reign of King Ahab, eventually defeating the prophets of Baal and proving God is the one true God. Queen Jezebel was so angry she sent word that she planned to kill Elijah.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Even when the northern kingdom of Israel was ruled by ungodly kings and God's people turned away from Him, God showed His love and faithfulness to the Israelites by sending prophets to share His message. After Elijah, God sent Elisha, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Micah to call His people back to Him.

LESSON 4 **EARLY ELEMENTARY**

Small Group

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

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Pre-Service Connection (15–20 min)

RESOURCES: whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils, board games or games

Games & Activities Guide

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have activities ready to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them! Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

As kids arrive ...

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

Introduce the Welcome Question and the following "I'm Curious" questions to engage kids. Say "**I'm curious..**" before each question and give kids an chance to think before answering each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

Consider having a whiteboard or poster for kids to write or draw answers to any of the questions:

- **Have you ever hoped God would speak directly to you in a voice you could hear out loud? What do you think God would say?**
- **What are some ways we speak to each other without using our voices?**



Small Group Begins

After the Opening Activity or game, Large Group Leader will begin small group time by reading the Welcome Question aloud and inviting everyone to open their Bibles and begin.

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bible, paper (1 sheet per kid)

WORD OF WONDER

Come near to God, and he will come near to you.

—James 4:8a

Our Word of Wonder for the God Speaks series is James 4:8a. Let's practice saying the Word of Wonder together.

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

- **COME NEAR**—Use your hands to make the “waving someone over to you” motion.
- **TO GOD**,—Point up with both hands.
- **AND HE WILL**—Bring both arms down to your sides slowly.
- **COME NEAR**—Bring arms together around yourself (big hug).
- **TO YOU**,—Point out at others with both hands.
- **JAMES 4:8a**— Hold your hands together as if opening a book.

Today we heard a story of how God spoke to Elijah in an unexpected way. How did God speak to Elijah? Allow the kids to respond. God did not speak through strong wind, the shaky earthquake, or the blazing fire. God spoke through the still, small voice of a whisper. God came near to Elijah and encouraged him when he was afraid. God comes near to us and speaks to us too. One way He speaks is through His Word, the Bible.

Let's practice saying the verse in a still, small voice of a whisper. Roll up your paper and whisper through the tube of paper as you say the verse quietly with me.

Encourage the kids to roll up their papers to make tubes (no need to tape them shut; the kids can simply hold them). Then invite the kids to repeat the verse after you by whispering through their tubes.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **How did Elijah feel before God came near to him? How do you think he felt after God came near to him and spoke to him?**
- **How do you feel after you have spent time hearing God's Word, the Bible, praying to God, or worshiping God?**

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible, Bible Story picture SG

Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme with motions each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

I open my Bible, and what do I see? (Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.)

God's big story, waiting for me! (Point to yourself.)

Let's start by reading part of God's big story from the book of 1 Kings 19 in the Bible. That's in the Old Testament, which is toward the beginning of the Bible, and includes the time before Jesus came to earth.

Read the God's Big Story Script below:

Today's story is about a man named Elijah. Can you say Elijah? Allow response. Elijah was one of God's helpers. He told people to love and follow God. But one day, a mean queen named Jezebel said she wanted to hurt Elijah because he followed God! Oh no! Make a scared face and pretend to run in place.

So Elijah ran far, far away into the desert. He was tired, hungry, and scared. He sat under a tree and said, 'God, I can't do this anymore!' But guess what? God still cared for Elijah! Place hand over heart.

While Elijah slept, an angel came and gave him yummy bread and water! Time eating and drinking.

God gave him food and strength to keep going. Elijah kept walking and walking until he found a quiet cave. Pretend to walk and hide in a cave.

Then something amazing happened! Elijah heard a BIG wind—whoosh! Have kids wave their arms and make wind noises.

But God wasn't in the wind. Then came a big earthquake—shake, shake, shake! Have kids shake their hands and bodies.

Then came a fire—whoa, that's hot! Wiggle fingers like flames.

But God wasn't in the fire either.

Then... Elijah heard something very, very small. Can you whisper? Have kids cup their ears and whisper.

It was a gentle whisper—God's voice! God wasn't loud or scary. He spoke softly to remind Elijah that He was still with him. Elijah wasn't alone—God was close the whole time!

Let's say this together: God is with me wherever I go!

Have kids repeat with hand motions: point up for God, arms open wide for with me, walk in place for wherever I go.

Discussion Questions

Gather the kids to sit in a circle.

In today's story, God spoke to Elijah through a still, small whisper. God speaks to us too! We can pay attention and listen for Him. Let's listen to each other's whispers and talk more about God's big story. I'll whisper a phrase into someone's ear, and that person will whisper it to the person next in the circle. We'll keep passing the whisper around the circle until I say, "Stop" and that person will say it aloud. It's OK if you say the phrase differently from how it started. Just listen closely and say out loud whatever you hear.

Use the following phrases and whisper them (one at a time) into someone's ear. Encourage the kids to pass the whisper around the circle. Say, "Stop" at various times and call on the kid who the whisper stopped on to say the phrase aloud and then answer a question from the list below. You can reuse the phrases.

- God knows me.
- God can speak to me.
- I can listen for God.
- God loves us.
- The Bible is God's Word.
- God can speak in unexpected ways.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Who was the prophet (or messenger of God) in today's story?** (*Elijah*)
- **What did Elijah see next to him when he woke up after the angel touched him?**
(*freshly baked bread and water*)
- **How did God speak to Elijah?** (*through a still, small whisper in a cave*)
- **How do you think Elijah felt when he saw and heard the strong wind, shaky earthquake, and blazing fire?**
- **How does God speak to us?** (*If kids need help, offer ideas such as: through His Word, the Bible; when we pray; through worship songs; through a pastor, parent, or leader.*)
- **Is it easy for you to be a good listener when people talk to you? What about when God speaks?**

Game: Loud and Still

We're going to play a game to help us remember God can speak to us! God can do anything. He could have talked to Elijah in a big earthquake. He can speak in loud and big ways or small and still ways. I'm going to turn my back to you so I can't see. You can talk, shout, dance, wiggle, move, skip, or jump all around the room while my back is turned. But when I turn back to face you, freeze and be completely still and quiet. I'll stay facing you for a few seconds. Try not to let me see anyone move or hear anyone when I'm turned around.

Continue several rounds of the game. You can give the kids specific things to do while your back is turned, such as dancing, skipping, singing, jumping, or crawling. For older kids, when you turn to face the kids, if you see or hear anyone, they can sit down and be "out" for the next round. You can let someone else take a turn as the one who turns around and faces the kids.

Head to Large Group!

Return and finish the rest of this guide before parents arrive.

Responding in Worship: Look, Listen and Praise

SUPPLIES: paper plates 2 per kid , uncooked beans small handful per kid , plastic Easter egg per kid , uncooked rice small handful per kid , 2 plastic spoons, stapler, tape, decorative tape or stickers, coloring utensils

Today we heard how God spoke to Elijah. There was a big wind—whoosh! (wave your arms) There was a shaking earthquake—shake, shake, shake! And there was a blazing fire—wiggle your fingers like flames! But was God in the big and loud things? Allow kids to respond.

That's right—no! God spoke to Elijah in a quiet, gentle whisper. God can still speak to us too! Sometimes we hear Him when we read the Bible, or when someone shows us love, or when we're praying or singing. Today, we're going to make musical instruments that help us remember we can listen for God in loud times and in quiet times.

Paper Plate Tambourine:

Give each child two paper plates and a handful of beans.

Leader: Put your beans on one plate. Now place the other plate on top and help me staple them together all around the edge. Great! Let's decorate them with crayons, markers, or stickers. This is your tambourine! It makes big, loud sounds—shake it like a storm!

Have kids shake and make noise.

Rice Egg Shaker:

Give each child a plastic egg, rice, and two spoons.

Leader: Now fill your egg with rice and close it up tight. Hold your egg between your two spoons and tape it all the way around. You just made a shaker! It makes a soft, quiet sound—like a whisper!

Have kids shake softly.

Leader: Both of these instruments remind us that we can praise God in lots of ways—when we're loud and excited or when we're calm and quiet.

Elijah listened for God on the mountain. Let's listen for God too! Everyone, grab your instrument and follow me. Lead kids to one spot in the room.

There was a great big wind! Was God in the wind? Children respond: o!

Let's pray together—repeat after me: God, put your hands together in praying hands.

help us look Hold your hands like binoculars around your eyes.

for You in unexpected places. Move your hands sweeping outward.

Way up high Reach your hands up to the sky.

or way down low, Reach your hands down and touch your toes.

speak, LORD! Hold your hands like megaphone over your mouth.

We're listening! Put your hands to your ears.

We're ready to go! March in place.

Now let's move to another place in the room!

Lead kids to a new spot and say:

Then there was a big earthquake! Was God in the earthquake?

Children respond: Ho!

Let's say our prayer again! Repeat the motions and prayer.

Next came a blazing fire! Was God in the fire? Children respond: Ho!

Let's pray again and move to a new place.

Finally, Elijah heard a gentle whisper. Was God in the whisper? Children respond: Yes! **That's right! God spoke to Elijah in a quiet voice. Let's play our quiet instruments and thank God that He speaks to us too.** Have kids shake or tap their instruments softly.

God is with us in every sound—when we shout and sing, and when we're still and quiet. We can listen for Him every day!