

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 (NIV)

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.

Curiosity

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

Welcome Question

At your start time ...

Welcome each kid with a high-five and a smile. Warmly welcome all the kids and read the Welcome Question:

What is a creative way someone has gotten your attention? Invite several kids to share their answers.

For example, a teacher might sing a silly song to get his students' attention, or a parent might say her child's first, middle, and last name.

Wow! Those were some creative ways of getting your attention! Today in God's big story, we'll hear about how God got the attention of a man named Elijah in a creative and unexpected way. But first, it's time to be curious!

Curiosity Questions

I'm curious ...

- **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?**

Elementary Multisensory Activity: Speedy Sound Effect Drawings

Give each kid a sheet of paper and a coloring utensil. (Or give each kid a lap-size whiteboard, dry-erase marker, and eraser or paper towel to use as an eraser.)

Do you think you're better at seeing things or hearing things? Pause for kids to respond. **Sometimes knowing what something is based on how it sounds can be challenging! Let's do a fun activity to see how our hearing skills are!**

Explain that you will play eight different sound effects. After each one, you will give kids 10 seconds to create super speedy drawings of what they think it is. If kids are drawing on paper, encourage them to keep their drawings small so they can fit all eight drawings on the front and back of the same sheet

Alternatively, if you have a lot of younger kids in your group or kids with learning differences, print copies of the [Sound Effect Images Sheet](#) for each kid. After each sound effect plays, invite kids to point to the image that matches the sound.

Play the following sound effects one at a time. After each, give kids 10 seconds to draw a picture of what they think it is. (Use a timer or simply count down slowly from 10.) Invite kids to hold up their drawings. Then reveal the answer before moving on to the next sound effect:

Sound Effect 1: [Birds](#)

Sound Effect 2: [Ocean Waves](#)

Sound Effect 3: [Cat](#)

Sound Effect 4: [Fire](#)

Sound Effect 5: [Crowd Cheering](#)

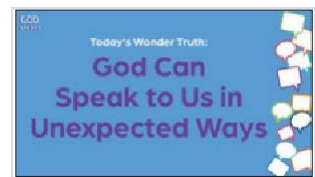
Sound Effect 6: [Rain](#)

Sound Effect 7: [Train](#)

Sound Effect 8: [Dog](#)

Make It Inclusive: If some kids in your group tend to become anxious when hurried, extend the 10-second drawing window or take the time limit away altogether.

Great job listening carefully and figuring out what each sound effect was! Today in God's big story, we'll learn about a man named Elijah who stood on a mountain and heard several very loud sounds and one very quiet one.



And like our Wonder Truth says, Elijah experienced that **GOD CAN SPEAK TO US IN UNEXPECTED WAYS.**

Preteen Multisensory Activity: Say What?

Allergy Caution: Be aware of any latex allergies or sensitivities among your kids and volunteers before doing this activity!

Ahead of time, mix board game letter tiles D, A, N, C, and E into a small container of sand. Place letter tiles L, I, K, and E into an empty, plastic, wide-neck beverage bottle and screw on the cap. Put tiles S, I, L, L, and Y into a balloon; then blow up the balloon and tie it closed. Print out or write on paper the letters M, O, N, K, E, Y, and S, and mix them up on a table. Also set out a lap-size whiteboard and a dry-erase marker.

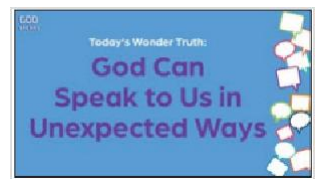
Let's work together in groups to discover a hidden message in some unexpected ways today. Once you've solved the message, your job is to follow the directions right away!

Help kids form four equal groups. Give one group the sand container. Give a second group the bottle. Give a third group the balloon. And the last group will sit at the table with the whiteboard and letters.

Each group has a word to unscramble. When I say, “Go,” your group will work together to find all the hidden letters and figure out the word. When you think you’ve got it, give me two thumbs up, and I’ll come over to check it out. When your group finishes, you can move on to help other groups. Remember, when we solve the hidden message, we will follow the directions right away!

Allow kids to work together to unscramble their words. Once all groups have figured out their words, encourage all the kids to work together to discover the whole secret message: Dance like silly monkeys. Once they figure it out, invite everyone to dance like silly monkeys. Consider playing upbeat music from the [God Speaks Elementary Spotify playlist](#) as kids dance. Then call everyone back together.

Great work, everyone! That was an unexpected way to discover a message! Similarly, God spoke to His prophet Elijah in unexpected ways. I’m excited to discover this part of God’s big story together with you.



Today’s Wonder Truth is GOD CAN SPEAK TO US IN UNEXPECTED WAYS.

Declaring God’s Wonder

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

And when I follow Jesus, I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

You can speak to me in unexpected ways. (Kids repeat.)

Help me to hear Your voice! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)

Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.

Word of Wonder Activity

WORD OF WONDER

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

—James 4:8a (NIV)

Ahead of time, print one copy of the Word of Wonder Slips [NIV](#) for each small group on multiple colors of paper and cut out the strips (a different color for each small group). Before the activity, hide the verse strips throughout your space.

Everyone who follows Jesus is God's kid, and God loves speaking to His kids! Sometimes God speaks to us in unexpected ways, like how He spoke to Elijah in a quiet whisper. Let's say our Word of Wonder together and remember that we can be near to God!

Open your Bible to [James 4:8a](#). If possible, display the Word of Wonder Slide [NIV](#) or watch the [Elementary Word of Wonder Video](#). Read [James 4:8a](#) several times together.

Let's practice our Word of Wonder by going on a scavenger hunt! Each small group should be assigned one color of Word of Wonder Slips. Challenge your group to find all 12 of their slips. When kids have found all 11 words plus the reference, they can put the words in order. Once they have the whole verse in order, invite them to recite it a few times together.

Leader Tip: If some groups struggle to find all their Word of Wonder Slips, assist them by giving “hot or cold” clues as they look. *Hot* being closest to the slip, *cold* being far away.

Elementary Questions

- **What are some amazing things God did for Elijah before today's story even started?** (*God fed Elijah, a woman, and her child for days with just a small jar of oil and handful of flour; God made it rain when Elijah prayed for the famine to end; and God sent fire from heaven.*)
- **Why was Elijah scared in today's story?** (*A woman named Jezebel was trying to kill him, and Elijah felt alone.*)
- **Have you ever felt scared? Have you ever felt alone? Tell us about it.**
- **What were some of the things Elijah saw and heard on the mountain?** (*a strong wind, an earthquake, a large fire, and then a soft whisper*)
- **God told Elijah that there were seven thousand other people in Israel who were still following God. How do you think that made Elijah feel?**
- **What are ways God speaks to you or to people you know?**

We might expect God to speak to us or show up in big and loud ways—and sometimes He does! But God can also speak to us in ways we don't expect. Elijah's story can remind us that God can meet us in the quiet to speak to us. Let's pray now for our ears to hear God's voice.

Leader Tip: God speaks to His people in many different ways, some more unexpected than others! Help kids understand that as Jesus-followers, we might hear God's voice through reading His words in Scripture, through words spoken by people who love and follow God, and through ideas, thoughts, and even dreams. Yet no matter how God speaks, His words always align with who He is!

Preteen Questions

- **What are some amazing things God did for Elijah before this part of God's big story?** (*God fed Elijah, a woman, and her child for days with just a small jar of oil and handful of flour; God made it rain when Elijah prayed for the famine to end; and God sent fire from heaven.*)
- **Why was Elijah scared in today's story?** (*A woman named Jezebel was trying to kill him, and Elijah felt alone.*)
- **How do you think you would have felt if you were Elijah and Jezebel was threatening you? What do you think you would have done?**
- **How did God provide for Elijah while he was in the wilderness during today's story?** (*God provided an angel to care for Elijah, fresh bread, and water.*)
- **What were some of the things Elijah saw and heard on the mountain?** (*a strong wind, an earthquake, a large fire, and then a soft whisper*)
- **Which of those things may have seemed the most likely way for God to speak to Elijah? Which may have seemed the least likely way for God to speak to Elijah? Why?**
- **Imagine God spoke to you in a whisper. What message do you think He would have for you? What message might He have for others in our world today?**

We might expect God to speak to us or show up in big and loud ways—and sometimes He does! But God can also speak to us in ways we don't expect. Elijah's story can remind us that God can meet us in the quiet to speak to us. Let's pray now for ears to hear God's voice.

Small Group Prayer Time

Invite kids to share what's on their minds—both celebrations and concerns—and to pray for one another. Invite kids to embrace this time of silent prayer as an opportunity to ask God to speak to them, even if it's in a small whisper. If kids need more direction, they can write down things they'd hope for God to speak to them about.

Identity

Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.

Elementary Responding in Worship: Stress Ball Prayers

Allergy Caution: This activity calls for latex and possible food allergens!

** Optional: Instead of creating stress balls. Purchase Stress Balls for kids to write on.

During this activity, kids will create stress balls by filling balloons with one cup of flour or uncooked rice. If possible, write the words “God Speaks” on each balloon with permanent marker ahead of time.

The prophet Elijah saw God do many amazing things! He saw God raise a boy who had died, provide food in a miraculous way, and send fire from heaven. But even after experiencing God in these big and powerful ways, Elijah felt scared and lonely in today's part of God's big story. Elijah needed to be reminded that God was with him and that there were other people in Israel who loved and followed God. All of us feel scared and lonely sometimes, and like Elijah, all of us need to be reminded that we are not alone. God speaks to us too, and sometimes He speaks in unexpected ways! Let's make stress balls and spend some time talking with the God, who is with us when we feel scared and lonely

Give one balloon to each kid. Help them make stress balls by following the following steps. If possible, work with the flour and funnel at a table. If your group is large, use multiple funnels, and invite additional leaders to help kids.

1. Stretch the balloon by blowing it up and then letting the air out of it.
2. Pull the open end of the balloon over the end of the funnel.
3. Pour one cup of flour or rice into the funnel. Gently shake and tap the funnel to get the flour or rice to go down into the balloon. If the flour or rice gets stuck in the funnel, use a pen or pencil to push it through.
4. Once one cup of flour or rice is in the balloon, remove the funnel, and tie a knot to close the balloon.



Once everyone has finished making their stress balls, encourage kids to spread out and sit down with their stress balls in hand. Consider playing music from the [God Speaks Elementary Spotify playlist](#) in the background during this time. Invite kids to close their eyes as you lead them through a time of guided reflection and prayer:

When Elijah was scared, he cried out to God. And God took care of him.

When we're scared, we can pray to God too. He loves us and cares for us.

When do you feel scared? Pause for kids to think quietly. **Squeeze your stress ball as you tell God about it. Ask Him to help you when you feel scared.** Give kids about 20 seconds to pray quietly.

Elijah was worried, and God cared for him. When we're worried, we can tell God about it. He cares about us. What do you worry about? Pause for kids to think quietly. **Squeeze your stress ball as you tell God about it. Ask Him to help you when you feel worried.** Give kids about 20 seconds to pray quietly.

In today's story, Elijah was really hungry—so hungry he was upset. Have you ever been so hungry you were upset? Pause for kids to think quietly. **We can tell God about that too because He cares! Squeeze your stress ball as you tell God how you feel when you are hungry.** Give kids about 10 seconds to pray quietly.

Make It Inclusive: Be aware and sensitive of the fact that some kids in your group may experience food insecurity. If you think a child or family might not have access to adequate food, talk with a trusted leader to see what ministries in your church or community might come alongside them.

Elijah was lonely and felt alone. When we feel lonely, we can remember that God is with us, and we can talk with Him! When do you feel lonely? Squeeze your stress ball as you talk with God about it now. Give kids about 20 seconds to pray quietly.

God cared about Elijah and wanted to speak to him. God didn't speak in a loud way like Elijah may have expected. God spoke to Elijah in a whisper. God cares about each of us and wants to speak to us too. What do you think God is whispering to you today? Pause for kids to listen quietly as they hold/squeeze their stress balls. Encourage kids to take their stress balls home. When they feel scared or worried or alone, they can squeeze their stress balls and talk with God in prayer!

Preteen Responding in Worship: God Speaks Journals

The prophet Elijah saw God do many amazing things! He saw God raise a boy who had died, provide food in a miraculous way, and send fire from heaven. But even after experiencing God in these big and powerful ways, Elijah felt scared and alone in today's part of God's big story. Elijah needed to be reminded that God was with him and that there were other people in Israel who loved and followed God. All of us feel scared and lonely sometimes, and like Elijah, all of us need to be reminded that we are not alone. God speaks to us too, and sometimes He speaks in unexpected ways! Let's spend time drawing and journaling as we talk with the God who is with us when we are scared and lonely.

Give a [God Speaks Journal Sheet](#) to each kid along with writing and coloring utensils, and have them write their name on it. Encourage kids to spread out as you lead them through a time of guided prayer. Consider playing music from the [God Speaks Elementary Spotify playlist](#) in the background during this time.

When Elijah was scared, he cried out to God. And God took care of him. When we're scared, we can pray to God too. He loves us and cares for us. When do you feel scared? Pause for kids to think quietly. **Tell God about it in writing or by drawing a picture in the top left part of your journal page. Point to the top left quadrant on the God Speaks Journal Sheet.** Give kids about a minute to write, draw, and pray quietly.

Elijah was worried, and God cared for him. When we're worried, we can tell God about it. He cares about us. What do you worry about? Pause for kids to think quietly. **Write or draw your prayer to God in the top right part of your journal page as you tell Him about your worries. Point to the top right quadrant on the God Speaks Journal Sheet. Ask Him to help you when you feel worried.** Give kids about a minute to write, draw, and pray quietly.

In today's story, Elijah was really hungry—so hungry he was upset. Have you ever been so hungry you were upset? Pause for kids to think quietly. **We can tell God about that too because He cares for us! Write or draw your prayer to God in the bottom left part of your page as you tell Him how you feel when you are hungry.** Point to the bottom left quadrant on the God Speaks Journal Sheet. Give kids about a minute to write, draw, and pray quietly.

Make It Inclusive: Be aware and sensitive of the fact that some kids in your group may experience food insecurity. If you think a child or family might not have access to adequate food, talk with a trusted leader to see what ministries in your church or community might come alongside them.

Elijah was lonely and felt alone. When we feel lonely, we can remember that God is with us, and we can talk with Him! When do you feel lonely? Pause for kids to think quietly. **Write or draw your prayer to God in the bottom right part of your page as you tell Him about a time when you feel lonely.** Point to the bottom left quadrant on the God Speaks Journal Sheet. Give kids about a minute to write, draw, and pray quietly.

God cared about Elijah and wanted to speak to him. God didn't speak in a loud way like Elijah may have expected. God spoke to Elijah in a whisper. God cares about each of us and wants to speak to us too. What do you think God is whispering to you today? Pause for kids to listen quietly. If they would like, they can write or draw anywhere on their sheet what they sense God is whispering to them. After about 60 seconds of quiet listening time, invite those who would like to share to do so. Encourage kids to take their God Speaks Journal Sheets home and to continue writing and drawing as they talk and listen to God.

Leader Tip: Encourage kids to be open to different ways God might speak to them. For example, sometimes God speaks to us through Bible verses or stories, through an idea or thought in our minds, through the words of other Jesus-followers, or even through dreams and visions— pictures God gives us in our imaginations. Remind them that everything God says always matches with who He is!

Blessing Your Kids

Blessing: God never left Elijah, and God will never leave you. May your ears be open for God to speak a special word to your heart in an unexpected way. God loves you!

GAME 4: BLOWN AWAY

In this relay, teams will race to see who can move a table tennis ball across the room the fastest using only the air they blow through a straw.

Ahead of time, mark start and finish lines at opposite ends of the room using masking tape or cones.

Gather kids and help them form two equal teams. Give each kid a straw and give each team one table tennis ball. Invite each team to form a single file line behind the designated start line.

This is a relay race where you're each going to move your team's table tennis ball across the finish line using only the air you blow through your straw. Then you will pick up the ball, run it back to your team, set it on the ground, and tag the next person in line who will then do the same thing.

If you're physically able, demonstrate this by getting on your hands and knees and blowing through a straw to move a table tennis ball. Show kids where the finish line is. (If you're not able to demonstrate, invite a leader or older kid to do so.) **The first team to get through every person wins!**

Give kids a chance to ask questions, then say, "Go!" to start the race. After all the kids have had a turn and one team has won, gather everyone together.

Awesome job! It took a lot of breath to blow the table tennis ball across the room, didn't it? Your breath reminds me of the wind that God used to speak to Samuel in a gentle whisper. Sometimes God speaks loudly, and sometimes He speaks softly, like a gentle blowing breeze!