

LESSON 4

GOD WHISPERS TO ELIJAH

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Can Speak to Us**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

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.

Activity: Shout and Whisper

Greet the kids warmly and welcome them to church.

Hello, and welcome to church! Today we're going to learn that God can speak to us. We'll hear about a time when someone in the Bible heard some loud things and then something quiet. Can you get quiet and then loud? Let's do it. Invite the kids to whisper a phrase such as "God can speak to us," or they can simply say their names. Then invite them to shout the phrase loudly. **When I put my hands to my mouth like I'm shouting, you can shout the phrase. When I put my finger to my lips like I'm being quiet, you can whisper the phrase.** Alternate putting your hands cupped around your mouth and your finger to your lips and encourage the kids to say the phrase.

Do you like to listen to someone shouting or whispering? Was it more fun to shout or whisper? Allow the kids to respond. **We'll learn today that God speaks, and we can listen to Him!**

Activity: What Sound Does It Make?

In our story today, we're going to hear about different sounds someone heard as he was listening for God to speak to him. We'll learn that God speaks to us too! Do you like to listen? Allow the kids to respond. **It's OK if it's hard to listen sometimes. We can listen for different sounds. God speaks, and it's not always the way we'd expect.**

Let's play a game to see how you listen and know different sounds!

If you have younger kids, make all of the animal sounds yourself. If you have older kids, call them up one at a time and whisper an animal sound to make. Encourage the other kids to guess the animal that makes that sound. To make it easier, you could call out the animal and encourage all the kids as a group to make each animal sound.

Use the following animals:

- Pig
- Chicken
- Cow
- Horse
- Dog
- Donkey
- Owl
- Frog
- Bumble bee
- Turkey
- Cat
- Monkey
- Snake
- Elephant
- Fox

Does anyone know what sounds a fox makes? I'm not sure either! Does anyone know what sound God makes or how He talks to us? He speaks in different ways. We'll learn more about it today.

Our Wonder Truth today is **GOD CAN SPEAK TO US.**

Encourage the kids to do the following motions while you repeat the Wonder Truth. Older toddlers can say the words with you as they do the motions.

GOD—*Point up.*

CAN SPEAK—*Hold your hands to your mouth.*

TO US—*Point to yourself.*

Prayer and Blessing

Let's pray and talk to God. When I say, "listen," put your hands at your ears.

God, we thank You that You speak to us. Help us listen (hands at ears) to You and hear from You. We love You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

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

Activity: Wind, Fire, Earthquake, Whisper

In our story today, Elijah saw and heard big and loud things. What were they? Allow the kids to respond. **Elijah saw and heard a loud whooshing wind, a big crackling fire, and shaky, loud earthquake. Was God in any of those things? No! How did God speak to Elijah?** Allow the kids to respond. **God spoke to Elijah in a gentle, quiet whisper.**

God speaks to us too. It might not be how we expect. It might not be a loud booming voice. It might be through a sunset, or through a Bible verse, or story from the Bible. It might be through a parent or leader at church, or through prayer or worship. We can listen to God, and we can talk with God!

Let's do an activity to remember what Elijah saw. When I say "wind," you can blow as much air as you can to sound like wind. Pause to let the kids do it. When I say, "fire," you can wiggle your arms and your whole body like a wiggling, crackling flame of fire. Pause to let the kids do it.

When I say, "earthquake," you can stomp and jump and move your body as much as you can, like a shaky earthquake. Pause to let the kids do it. Then, when I say, "whisper," you can quietly whisper, "God can speak to us." Pause to let the kids do it.

Call out *wind*, *fire*, *earthquake*, and *whisper*, and *invite* the kids to do the actions with each word.