** BIBLE 101**

Unit 5: Messengers of God - Prophets

*Elijah and the Ravens*

**A Note to the Teacher:** Elijah is the very first prophet in the Biblical canon. The story of Elijah teaches us how God cares for God’s messengers, protecting them in any way necessary.

As students work through the lesson, help them to understand how it applies to their own lives. WE are prophets, in our own way, and God cares for and protects us as we share God’s love with the world.

**Gathering**

As students enter the space, gather them in a seated circle. Place two pictures in the center of the circle: one a people getting along, and another of people fighting. **Say, “Before we dive in to our lesson today, let’s take a look at these two pictures. Imagine that God is looking at them, too. Which one do you think would make God happy?”** Give students time to answer. **Ask, “Why did you pick that one?”**

**Say, “The story we are going to read happens at a time when people are fighting. Many of them are worshipping a god named Baal, a false god that they thought would make them rich. Everyone is only concerned about what is good for them, and how to have more. Even the king! King Ahab was the ruler of Israel, the land where God’s people live. He was very selfish, and was teaching the people of Israel to be selfish, too. How do you think God felt about this?”**

Give time for answers. You may prompt with “Sometimes we think about God as a parent, like a mom or a dad. How do you think your parents would feel if you were being selfish and greedy? What would they do or say to you?”

**Say, “God wasn’t happy about how things were going in Israel under King Ahab. It made him sad to see his people worshiping false gods, fighting, and being so selfish. So God sent a messenger to speak to the king. The messengers name was Elijah. The name Elijah means “My God is Jehovah.” Jehovah is one of the names we use for God. Isn’t that interesting – God sent a man named “My God is God” to speak to a king who was worshiping a false god named Baal. God works in mysterious ways!**

**God sent Elijah with a message for the king. He went to the king with a warning. Let’s read about it.”**

Open the Bible to 1 Kings 17. (You may want to pause here to mention that this story is in the Old Testament of the Bible. Does this happen before or after Jesus?)

*Read, or invite a volunteer to read, 1 Kings 17:1*

**Ask, “What does Elijah warn King Ahab is going to happen?”** Allow times for answers. **Say, “Elijah warns King Ahab that if he does not change his ways and stop worshipping Baal and thinking only of himself, a drought will come, and it will not rain for years.”**

Spend some time talking about a drought, and why it might be a problem.

**Say, “God knew that if God wanted people to change their ways, there was going to have to be something big to make them do it. So God sent a drought to kill off the food. God hoped that when people didn’t have all of the things they needed, let alone the things they wanted, they would stop worshiping Baal and remember who God really was.**

**But God also wanted to protect Elijah. After all, Elijah was a prophet, and he shared messages from God with the world. So he gave Elijah special instructions.”**

*Read, or invite a volunteer to read, 1 Kings 17:2-7.*

 **Ask, “How does God take care of Elijah during the drought?”** Give time for answers. **“Elijah did what God asked and shared God’s message with the world. Elijah was a prophet. And in turn, God protected Elijah, just like God cares for and protects us.”**

**Bread and Ravens**

Move the students to one side of the classroom, and divide them in to two even teams. (If there are an odd number of students, the teacher can play.) Set out two bowls of Easter grass (each filled with “bread”). On the opposite side of the room, hand a poster labeled with the days of the week and marked for breakfast and lunch

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Say, “For an entire week, God sent ravens morning and night to bring food to Elijah. God was using Elijah as a messenger, but that didn’t mean that God wanted Elijah to suffer. God cared for Elijah by making sure that he had enough to eat during the drought.**

**Each team has a basket of grass. In each basket there are also pieces of bread. We are going to play the part of the ravens today. I am going to give each team a “beak.” When it is your turn, you are going to use the beak to pick a piece of bread out of the basket. Then, run it across the room and hang it in a space to feed Elijah a meal. After you have fed him, run back and hand your beak to the next person on your team! Take turns until you have fed Elijah breakfast and lunch for a whole week, just like the ravens!”**

Give each team a set of tongs (for the youngest kids, explain that they can use their hands to put the bread into the beak).

Count to three and release the teams. If older classes wish, you can make it a race. For younger kids, make it about being sure that Elijah gets all of the food that he needs to survive the drought.

When everyone has finished feeding Elijah, bring the group back together to discuss what they have just done.

**Say, “You all make excellent ravens. It seems pretty unusual to think that God cared for Elijah by sending birds to carry him bits of bread every day, but God works in some pretty unusual ways sometimes. Can you think of any other times God did something unexpected?”** Give time for answers. Be sure to bring up the most important time: God became human to teach us how to live and love as God intended.

**Say, “God cares for our needs. Sometimes in ways that seem strange or that we do not understand, but God always cares for our needs.”**

**Paper Birds**

*This activity is designed to fill extra time.*

**Say, “To help us remember the story of Elijah and teach it to our families, we are going to make our own ravens.”**

Give each child a “bird body” and sheet of black construction paper. Help them to fold the construction paper like an accordion and feed it through the slit in the body to make the wings. Set out googly eyes, orange paper triangles (beaks and feet), and glue sticks.

**Closing**

When everyone has finished, have them work together to clean up the classroom.

Corrie arrives to teach music at 11:20am. At that time, students gather in a seated circle near the classroom couch. If time allows, have students help cleanup before heading to choir practice.