



God Sends Elijah to Help

Goal: To recognize God's provision through acts of kindness.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In 1 Kings 17:8-16

God told the prophet Elijah to go to Zarephath where he would find a widow God had instructed to take care of him. He found the widow, who gave him water and food (vv. 10-11).

The widow was desperately poor and had "only a handful of flour in a jar and a bit of oil in a bottle" (v. 12; CEB). She was getting ready to prepare the last meal for herself and her son.

But Elijah spoke hope and grace. He asked the widow to make a loaf of bread for him, and afterward she and her son would be able to eat. Then Elijah announced: "This is what Israel's God, the LORD, says: The jar of flour won't decrease and the bottle of oil won't run out until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth" (v. 14, CEB). The widow shared what she had and the household "ate for many days" (v. 15, CEB). The gracious promise came true: "The jar of flour didn't decrease nor did the bottle of oil run out, just as the LORD spoke through Elijah" (v. 16, CEB).

God cared for Elijah and the widow. Both were grateful to God for feeding them when they were hungry.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

This story is rich in images and actions that introduce the children to one of God's prophets who was helped by a woman. In some ways, Elijah was a refugee, going to a new place where he knew no one. It is like other stories in the Old Testament where God's people are miraculously fed. Children are aware of those whose lives are bounded by poverty and hunger, children who don't have the economic resources they have. They are aware of children who live without the assurance there will always be food to eat, clothes to wear, or a bed to sleep in. This story offers a great opportunity to talk about the realities of life, such as the experiences of refugees coming to our country who have nothing.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Read the chapters before this story so you are familiar with its context. The children may need help understanding about the famine because of the lack of rain. Everyone was suffering, just trying to survive. Recent storms around the world present the same kind of situation that children may know about. Children will be curious about the miracle of God giving flour and oil that never ran out. God provided for the widow, her son, and Elijah. Miracles happen today when we help others in need. Children can understand that we act in response to God's love by sharing.

*Dear God, make me an instrument of your peace.
Give me a heart for all of your children. Amen.*



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 9, 15, 23

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

audio stories (optional)
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

candle

cloth

olive oil

flour, salt, water

electric frying pan or
frying pan and stove

mixing bowl, fork,
measuring spoons,
measuring cup

small bowl

Responding

Celebrating

10 self-adhesive notes
per child

Offering

oil, ground cinnamon

Extra

copies of **Grace Notes**
(GN) 1

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule,” to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

“Celebrating God’s Grace” and “Offering God’s Grace” require more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing



Welcome each child with, “Grace and peace be with you, (Name.)” Prompt the children to respond, “And also with you.”

Invite the children to help set the scene and prepare the worship space. Provide a Bible, candle, cloth, a small bowl with a small amount of olive oil, and a bowl with a small amount of flour.

Ask some children to prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities. Suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing.

Move the group to the kitchen if possible. Ask them if they have ever been in a situation where they were very, very hungry. Be sensitive to the reality of the children who may, in fact, often go without meals. Talk a bit about how hunger feels, or how they imagine that it might feel.

Have the children mix one cup of flour, a pinch of salt, two teaspoons of olive oil, and enough water to make a sticky dough. Form the dough into enough balls for each person to have one and one extra. (Increase the recipe, as needed.) Flatten the dough balls. Make one extra bread for “Loving and Serving God.” As you prepare the dough, discuss times when the children have experienced God helping them.

Fry the dough in a small amount of oil. Set the cooked bread aside on a plate covered with paper towels to drain and cool.

Singing



Play “Thank You, Holy God”—**SCM 15**. Ask the children to think about movements for the song and sing it doing the actions.

Praying

Turn on the candle as a reminder that God is present among you. Ask the children to join you in this echo prayer:

God, help us to welcome others. /
Help us to be kind. /
Grant us grace to love all your children. /
Amen. /



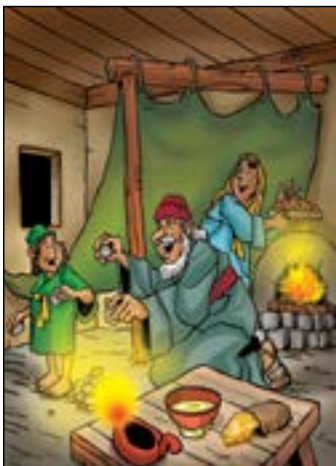
Preparing to Hear the Story

FA

Eat the cooled bread together. Save one bread for the “Loving and Serving God” closing. Talk a bit about how they taste, and how you might feel about eating this if you were very hungry.

Tell the children:

Elijah and King Ahab disagreed on many things. Elijah wanted the people to worship God. Ahab wanted the people to worship other gods. He did things that did not please God. Seeing all that Ahab did, God sent Elijah as a messenger, or prophet, to Ahab. Elijah told Ahab that God would send a drought upon the land because Ahab refused to change his ways. God knew that Elijah’s life was in danger because of the message he had delivered. So God sent him into the wilderness to live by a stream. Ravens brought food to Elijah. When the stream dried up, Elijah had to go somewhere else. Again, God provided. God told Elijah about a widow who would feed him. That’s where today’s story begins.



Today’s story can be found in *Growing in God’s Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), www.pcusastore.com.

Hearing the Story

LD

Invite a child to find 1 Kings 17 in the Bible. Place the open Bible on the worship table. Read **SCM 9** or use the story audio. Use your voice and expressions to make the story engaging. Use a somber tone to express the desperation in the story and transition to a hopeful tone as God continues to provide enough. Conclude the reading by saying, “Word of wisdom, Word of grace,” and prompt the children to say, “Thanks be to God.”

Reflecting on God’s Grace

C

Talk about the story together. Invite the children to look at the story picture on **SCM 9** and describe the scene. Discuss:

- ▼ I wonder, “Do you think the widow’s food smelled like the bread we made today?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How did the widow feel when Elijah promised that she would have food for a long time to come?”
- ▼ I wonder, “Where do we see acts of kindness in the story?”
- ▼ I wonder, “Where do we see God’s grace?”

Singing

Give God an offering of music. Play and sing together “God Gives Us a Gift (Dios nos da un regalo)” —**SCM 23**. Note that the song is in English and Spanish. Take time to listen and enjoy the words in both languages.

Turn off the candle.



RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and for the time available.



Celebrating God's Grace

B MS

Remind the children that the widow and her son had plenty of flour and oil, even when they continued to share with Elijah. They continued to share and God continued to provide enough. Engage the children in conversation.

- ▼ Do you think it was difficult for the widow to make the decision to share for the first time? Why or why not?
- ▼ Do you think it was easier or harder each day for the woman to share her bread? Why?

Give each child ten self-adhesive notes and then give the following directions:

- ▼ The object of the game is to get rid of all your notes by sticking them on the arms of other people.
- ▼ As notes are stuck on your arms, remove them and stick them on someone else.
- ▼ The game will begin and end with the music.

Play “Our God, Fills Us with Love and Joy” during the game. Following the game, ask the children what similarities they found between the game and story. If not mentioned, comment that like the widow, the children kept giving away and having more.

Praying God's Grace

LD

Imagine together what the widow may have said to God in prayer each day as she prepared bread and never ran out of food.

Briefly review the first stanza of the song “For Health and Strength,” which talks about the blessings God gives us every day. Lead the children in saying or singing the song in a round.

For health and strength and daily food,
we praise your name, O God.

Ask the children to think about their blessings from God. Then suggest the children choose three of the blessings and create a prayer following the pattern of the song. Assure the children that it is fine if it does not fit the rhythm of the song. Invite each child to take a turn sharing their three blessings, and have all of the children respond, “We praise your name, O God.”

Search “For Health and Strength” on YouTube to hear the song.



Offering God's Grace

TD SD

Before the session, simmer 4 tablespoons of oil with 1 tablespoon of ground cinnamon for 3–5 minutes. Cool and put in an airtight container.

Tell the children that one way we remember God's grace is through the practice of anointing. Ask the children if they know what anointing is. Explain, if necessary, that in biblical times oil was used to anoint or mark someone as blessed by God. Recall that oil was replenished each day, giving the woman, her son, and Elijah the blessing of food.

Give each child a cotton ball and a zip-lock plastic bag. Invite them to dip their cotton ball in the oil mixture and place it in their plastic bag. Show them how to anoint another person by lightly touching the cotton ball with their finger and then gently touching the back of someone's hand making a cross. As they make the cross, suggest they say, "God takes care of you," or "God's grace is with you."

Invite the children to form a circle and take turns turning to the person on their left anointing them and blessing them. Encourage the children to ask congregants and family members if they may anoint and bless them.

T *Consider how much time your planned activities will take and adjust transition times according to the remaining time available.*

Gn 1 Solution:

God's Grace:
God provides for us.

Our Gratitude:
We therefore share with others.



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so that you can provide them with the link to www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads, where they can download coloring pages, *Grace Sightings*, audio stories, and songs (see p. vii).

Extra Activity

LD

Ask the children to share times when they felt that God gave them something when they really needed it. Talk together about their experiences of feeling God's presence in difficult times. Ask:

- In what ways do you offer thanks for gifts from God?

Hand out copies of **GN 1**. Invite the children to use the key to solve the puzzle.

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

FA

Invite the children to help clean up.

Invite the children to say one thing they will do this week to help someone else. Break the reserved bread you made in "Welcoming and Preparing" into enough pieces for each person. Share the bread as a symbol of commitment to helping others in the coming week, remembering that they have been anointed with God's blessing.

In closing, say to the entire group, "The grace of God be with you!" Invite the children to respond enthusiastically, "And also with you!"

