Preschool–Grade 6

Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: God's word is true. He provides what we need, He gives life, and we can trust Him even when we have only a little.
Bible passage: 1 Kings 17:8–24. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth." *1 Kings 17:24 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, paper and pencils, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: Promise Kept? (5–10 minutes)

Read short situations, and kids call out "kept" or "broken": 1) Mom said you could go to the park after lunch, and you went. 2) A friend said he'd save you a seat, but he gave it away. 3) Your teacher said there would be a test Friday, and there was. 4) Your brother said he'd share his snack, then ate it all. Ask: *How do you feel when someone keeps their word? When they don't?* Say: "Today we'll see a woman find out that God's word is always kept."

2. Bible story: The Word of the LORD Is Truth (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to 1 Kings 17. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

No rain. Elijah told King Ahab there would be no dew or rain "but according to my word" (1 Kings 17:1). God fed Elijah by ravens at a brook, until the brook dried up (17:6–7). **Look up 1 Kings 17:9.** God said, "Arise, get thee to **Zarephath**, which belongeth to **Zidon**." God had commanded a widow there to **sustain** him, which means feed and care for him.

A handful of meal. At the gate of the city, a widow was gathering sticks. Elijah asked for a little water, then for "a morsel of bread," a small piece (17:10–11). **Look up 1 Kings 17:12.** She had no cake, only "an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse." She was gathering two sticks to **dress** it, which means cook it, for herself and her son, and then they would die. Say: "**Meal** is flour. A **cruse** is a small jar. She thought this was their last meal."

Fear not. Look up 1 Kings 17:13–14. Elijah said, "Fear not," and asked her to make him a little cake first. God promised: the barrel of meal would not **waste** (run out), and the cruse of oil would not **fail** (run dry), until the day the LORD sent rain. She did what Elijah said, and "she, and he, and her house, did eat many days" (17:15). **Look up 1 Kings 17:16.** It happened "according to the word of the LORD."

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No breath left in him. Later, the woman's son fell sick, so sick "that there was no breath left in him" (17:17). He died. His mother asked Elijah if he had come to remind her of her sin (17:18). Elijah said, "Give me thy son" (17:19). He carried him up into a **loft**, an upstairs room where Elijah stayed, and laid him on his own bed. **Look up 1 Kings 17:20–21.** Elijah cried to the LORD, stretched himself upon the child three times, and prayed, "let this child's soul come into him again."

See, thy son liveth. Look up 1 Kings 17:22. "And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived." Elijah brought him down out of the chamber into the house and gave him to his mother: "See, thy son liveth" (17:23). **Look up 1 Kings 17:24.** She said, "Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth."

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. The widow had only a handful left, and Elijah asked her to feed him first (1 Kings 17:12–13). Why do you think that was hard? Why did she do it?
2. God kept the meal and oil going "many days" (17:15), not all at once. What does it mean to trust God for each day?
3. Even after the miracle of the meal and oil, when her son died the widow asked Elijah if he had come to call her sin to remembrance (17:18). Why do you think she said that?
4. What did Elijah do when the child died (17:19–21)? What can we do when something terrible happens?
5. The widow said, "the word of the LORD... is truth" (17:24). What is one promise of God you know is true?

Recall questions

1. What did the widow have left? *(A handful of meal in a barrel, a little oil in a cruse, 1 Kings 17:12)*
2. Where did Elijah carry the child? *(Up into a loft, to his own bed, 17:19)*
3. What did Elijah say when he brought the child down? *("See, thy son liveth," 17:23)*

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4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **by this** means because of what just happened; **thou art** means you are; **a man of God** means a man who serves God and speaks for Him; **the word of the LORD in thy mouth** means the words God gives you to speak; **is truth** means is true. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "God kept His word to the widow, and He gave her son life again. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.
This week: thank God for your food at every meal. When you are worried, find a promise in God's Word and trust it.

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6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. 1 Kings 17:1: Whom did Elijah tell there would be no dew nor rain? *(Ahab)*
2. 1 Kings 17:9: To what city did God send Elijah? *(Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon)*
3. 1 Kings 17:10: What was the widow doing at the gate of the city? *(Gathering sticks)*
4. 1 Kings 17:12: How many sticks was she gathering? *(Two)*
5. 1 Kings 17:14: How long would the meal and oil last? *(Until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth)*
6. 1 Kings 17:19: Where did Elijah lay the child? *(Upon his own bed, in the loft)*
7. 1 Kings 17:21: How many times did Elijah stretch himself upon the child? *(Three times)*
8. 1 Kings 17:22: Whose voice did the LORD hear? *(The voice of Elijah)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that the word of the LORD is truth. Thank You for giving us what we need every day, and that You give life. Help us trust You even when we have only a little. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child is sad about someone who died: let them talk, and say it is all right to be sad. God cares. Don't guess about any person; let the child's parents know.

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