Preschool–Grade 6

Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: God's word is true. He keeps every word He speaks, He provides day by day, and He has power over death. Faith acts on His word before it sees the answer.
Bible passage: 1 Kings 17:8–24. Students read it out loud themselves.
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)* and "And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah." *1 Kings 17:16 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read 1 Kings 17 and Luke 4:25–26. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: Agree or Disagree (5–10 minutes)

Name one side of the room "agree" and the other "disagree." Read each statement, and students walk to the side they choose: 1) It's hard to give when you only have a little. 2) If I trust God, I'll never be afraid. 3) God usually gives us everything at once. 4) Seeing a miracle would make me believe forever. Ask a few students on each side why they chose it. Say: "1 Kings 17 speaks to every one of these."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: 1 Kings 17:8–16. Students take turns, a few verses each. Old words in this passage:

- **Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon** (17:9): a town in the land of Sidon, outside Israel
- **sustain thee** (17:9): feed and take care of you; **fetch** (17:10): go and get
- **a morsel of bread** (17:11): a small piece of bread
- **As the LORD thy God liveth** (17:12): a solemn promise: "as surely as your God lives"
- **meal** (17:12): flour; **cruse** (17:12): a small jar; **dress it** (17:12): cook it
- **thereof** (17:13): from it; **waste** and **fail** (17:14): run out and run dry
- **according to the saying of Elijah** (17:15): just as Elijah said

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Read out loud: 1 Kings 17:17–24. Old words in this passage:

- **the mistress of the house** (17:17): the woman who owned the house; **so sore** (17:17): so bad
- **What have I to do with thee** (17:18): "why have you come to me?"; **call my sin to remembrance**: remind me of my sin
- **out of her bosom** (17:19): out of her arms; **a loft, where he abode** (17:19): the upstairs room where he stayed
- **sojourn** (17:20): live for a while as a guest
- **revived** (17:22): came back to life; **liveth** (17:23): is alive

Teach the key moment. Write 1 Kings 17:16 and 17:24 side by side on the board. Say: "Look at both. In verse 16 the meal and oil last 'according to the word of the LORD.' The widow had acted on that word before she saw anything (17:15). But when her son died, she asked, 'art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?' (17:18). Then, in verse 24, after God raised her son, she says, 'Now by this I know.' God was patient with her. Jesus Himself told this story in Luke 4:25–26: there were many widows in Israel, but Elijah (Elias) was sent to this one, in Sarepta, outside Israel. God's care reaches people no one expects."

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Elijah asked her to make his cake *first* (17:13). Why would God's word ask her to give before she saw the answer?
2. The meal and oil lasted "many days" (17:15), but the Bible never says the barrel was full. What does daily provision teach us?
3. Her faith was tested twice: hunger, then her son's death. Why do you think she spoke to Elijah that way (17:18)?
4. Elijah didn't argue with her. He said, "Give me thy son," and took it to God (17:19–21). What can we learn from how he answered?
5. "Now by this I know" (17:24). Have you seen something that made you more sure God's word is true?
6. Jesus pointed to this widow in Luke 4:25–26. Why do you think He chose a woman from outside Israel as His example?

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4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words: **by this** means because of this; **thou art** means you are; **the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth** means the words God gives you to speak are true; **wasted not** means did not run out; **fail** means run dry; **which he spake by Elijah** means which God spoke through Elijah.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say 1 Kings 17:24 this week; keep working on 1 Kings 17:16 next week too.

5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "God kept His word to the widow, and He raised her son. Every word God speaks is true, including the gospel. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, 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.

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6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. What is my "handful of meal": something small I have that I could give God first?
2. Where do I need to trust God for today, not for everything at once?
3. Write a short prayer thanking God for one promise in His Word that you know is true.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: give God something first: your time, your help, or your money. Thank Him at every meal for daily bread.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, the word of the LORD is truth. Thank You for providing for us day by day, and for having power over death. Help us act on Your word before we see the answer. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student is grieving: let them talk. Being afraid or sad is not a lack of faith. Don't guess about any person; let the parents know.

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