Preschool–Grade 6

# Elijah on Mount Carmel

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

**Main point:** There is one true God, and we can't follow Him halfway. Elijah stood alone for the LORD, prayed a simple prayer, and God answered by fire.
**Bible passage:** 1 Kings 18. Read it before class.
**Memory verse:** "And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God." *1 Kings 18:39 (KJV)*
**You need:** a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
**Before class:** write the memory verse on the board. Draw a line down the middle of the floor with tape, or pick two walls: one is "Side A" and one is "Side B."

## 1. Opening game: Pick a Side (5–10 minutes)

Call out two choices, and kids run to the side they pick: pizza or tacos (A or B), summer or winter, cats or dogs. Then tell them to stand right on the middle line and try to pick both at once. Ask: *Can you stand on both sides at the same time? What happens if you never pick?* Say: "Today God's people were trying to follow God and a false god at the same time. Elijah asked them, 'How long will you go back and forth?'"

## 2. Bible story: The God That Answereth by Fire (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to 1 Kings 18. 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 had told King Ahab there would be no dew or rain (17:1). In the third year, there was a **sore famine**, a terrible shortage of food, in Samaria (18:1–2). God said, "Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth" (18:1). On the way, Elijah met Obadiah, who ran Ahab's house. Obadiah feared the LORD. When Queen Jezebel was killing the LORD's prophets, Obadiah hid a hundred of them in caves and fed them bread and water (18:3–4, 18:13).

**Two opinions.** Ahab called Elijah "he that troubleth Israel," the one who causes trouble (18:17). **Look up 1 Kings 18:18.** (**Forsaken** means left behind; **Baalim** means the Baals, false gods.) Elijah told Ahab to gather all Israel, the 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the groves to Mount Carmel (18:19). **Look up 1 Kings 18:21.** (**Halt** means limp, wobble back and forth; **opinions** are ideas.) The people said nothing.

**The test.** Elijah stood alone: one prophet of the LORD against 450 prophets of Baal (18:22). Each side would get a **bullock**, a young bull, cut it in pieces and lay it on wood, with no fire under it (18:23). **Look up 1 Kings 18:24.** The people agreed.


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**No answer.** The prophets of Baal **dressed**, got ready, their bullock and cried, "O Baal, hear us," from morning until noon. No voice, no answer. They leaped on their altar (18:26). At noon Elijah **mocked** them, made fun of them: "Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or **peradventure** (maybe) he sleepeth" (18:27). They cried louder and even hurt themselves, the way they did for Baal (18:28). They kept going until the time of the evening sacrifice, late in the afternoon, but there was "neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded," nobody paying attention at all (18:29).

**The altar of the LORD.** "Come near unto me," Elijah said. He **repaired**, fixed, the altar of the LORD that was broken down (18:30). **Look up 1 Kings 18:31.** Jacob's twelve sons became the twelve tribes of Israel. Elijah built the altar in the name of the LORD and dug a trench around it, big enough to hold two measures of seed (18:32). He laid the wood and the bullock on it. Then: four barrels of water, poured on the sacrifice and the wood, three times. The water ran round about the altar and filled the trench (18:33–35). That's twelve barrels in all!

**The prayer and the fire.** At the time of the evening sacrifice, Elijah came near and prayed. **Look up 1 Kings 18:36–37.** His prayer was short, and he asked that the people would know God and turn their hearts back to Him. **Look up 1 Kings 18:38.** (**Consumed** means burned up; **licked up** means dried up every drop.) **Look up 1 Kings 18:39.** Then Elijah went up to the top of Carmel and prayed again (18:42; James 5:18), and his servant looked toward the sea seven times. The seventh time, a little cloud like a man's hand came up, and then a great rain (18:42–45).

## 3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

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

1. The people "halted between two opinions" (18:21). What does it look like today to try to follow God and something else at the same time?
2. Elijah was one prophet against 450 (18:22). Where did his courage come from?
3. The prophets of Baal cried for hours. Elijah prayed a short prayer (18:36–37). What does that teach us about prayer?
4. Why do you think Elijah had the altar soaked with water three times (18:33–35)?
5. Elijah prayed "that this people may know that thou art the LORD God" (18:37). Who was his prayer really for?

**Recall questions**

1. How many prophets of Baal were there? *(Four hundred and fifty, 1 Kings 18:22)*
2. How many stones did Elijah take, and why? *(Twelve, for the twelve tribes of the sons of Jacob, 18:31)*
3. What did the fire of the LORD burn up? *(The sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the dust, and the water in the trench, 18:38)*


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

Explain the words: **saw it** means they saw the fire of the LORD fall; **fell on their faces** means they bowed down to the ground in worship; **The LORD, he is the God** means the LORD is the one true God, and no one else is. 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: "The people learned that the LORD is the one true God. The Bible says, 'Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD' (Deuteronomy 6:4, KJV). 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 the one 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:** when something tries to pull you away from God, choose Him, and pray a short, honest prayer like Elijah did.


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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 18:4: How many prophets did Obadiah hide in caves? *(A hundred; the KJV says "an hundred")*
2. 1 Kings 18:19: On what mountain did all Israel gather? *(Mount Carmel)*
3. 1 Kings 18:21: How many words did the people answer Elijah? *(Not a word)*
4. 1 Kings 18:26: From when until when did the prophets of Baal call on Baal? *(From morning even until noon)*
5. 1 Kings 18:32: What did Elijah dig around the altar? *(A trench)*
6. 1 Kings 18:33: How many barrels of water did Elijah ask for? *(Four)*
7. 1 Kings 18:43: How many times did Elijah's servant go to look toward the sea? *(Seven)*
8. 1 Kings 18:44: What was the little cloud like? *(A man's hand)*

## 7. Prayer

"Dear God, You are the one true God, and there is no other. Thank You that You hear us when we pray, even short, simple prayers. Give us courage like Elijah to follow You with our whole heart, even when we stand alone. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

**If a child asks how the prophets of Baal hurt themselves (18:28):** say it plainly and briefly: they cut themselves with knives, which is how they called on Baal. It didn't help, because Baal wasn't real. The LORD never asks people to hurt themselves.
**If a child asks what happened to the prophets of Baal (18:40):** answer simply and calmly. Elijah had the people take them down to the brook Kishon, and they were put to death there. They had led God's people away from Him to a false god, and God's law for Israel said such a prophet was to be put to death (Deuteronomy 13:5). Don't add detail.
**Left out on purpose:** most of Obadiah's talk with Elijah (18:7–16). Read 1 Kings 18 yourself before class.


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