Preschool–Grade 6

Elijah on Mount Carmel

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

Main point: The LORD is the one true God, and He doesn't share our hearts with anything else. Elijah stood alone, trusted God, and prayed simply, and God answered so that everyone would know Him.
Bible passage: 1 Kings 18. Students read 1 Kings 18:17–24 and 18:30–39 out loud themselves.
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)* and "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:" *Deuteronomy 6:4 (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 17–18 and Deuteronomy 6:4–5. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses.

1. Opening game: Halfway (5–10 minutes)

Ask: *Would you ride in a car with a driver who only stops at half the red lights? Eat at a place that only washes half its dishes? Fly with a pilot who only half follows the checklist?* Let students add their own. Then ask: *Is "halfway" ever good enough when it really matters? What about following God?* Say: "In today's story, God's people were trying to keep God and a false god at the same time. Elijah called it what it was."

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

Tell the beginning in your own words: Elijah had told King Ahab there would be no dew or rain (17:1). In the third year, with a sore famine in the land, God sent Elijah back to Ahab with a promise of rain (18:1–2). Ahab's wife, Jezebel (16:31), had been killing the LORD's prophets, but Obadiah, who was over Ahab's house and feared the LORD greatly, hid a hundred of them, fifty in a cave, and fed them bread and water (18:3–4). Elijah met Obadiah and sent him to tell Ahab, "Behold, Elijah is here" (18:7–16).

Read out loud: 1 Kings 18:17–24. Old words in this passage:

- **troubleth** (18:17): brings trouble on; **forsaken** (18:18): left; **Baalim**: the Baals, false gods
- **the prophets of the groves** (18:19): prophets of another false god, worshipped at places called groves
- **How long halt ye between two opinions?** (18:21): How long will you limp along, wobbling between two choices?
- **bullocks** (18:23): young bulls for an offering; **dress**: prepare
- **It is well spoken** (18:24): that's a fair test, we agree

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Tell the middle part in your own words: The prophets of Baal went first, because there were many of them. From morning until noon they cried, "O Baal, hear us," but there was no voice, and they leaped upon their altar (18:25–26). At noon Elijah mocked them: maybe their god was talking, or busy, or on a journey, or asleep and needed waking up (18:27). They cried louder and cut themselves with knives, as was their custom (18:28). Until the evening sacrifice there was "neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded" (18:29).
Teacher note: 18:28 says they cut themselves "till the blood gushed out." Mention it simply if students read ahead, without adding detail. Point out that a false god demanded pain and still gave nothing; the true God answered a short prayer.

Read out loud: 1 Kings 18:30–39. Old words in this passage:

- **repaired** (18:30): rebuilt, fixed
- **the tribes of the sons of Jacob … Israel shall be thy name** (18:31): Jacob's twelve sons became the twelve tribes; God renamed Jacob Israel
- **trench** (18:32): a ditch; **as great as would contain two measures of seed**: big enough to hold two measures, two large amounts, of seed
- **put the wood in order** (18:33): laid it out neatly; **burnt sacrifice**: an offering burned on the altar
- **the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice** (18:36): late afternoon, when the evening offering was made
- **consumed** (18:38): burned up; **licked up**: dried up completely

Tell the end: Elijah told the people to take the prophets of Baal, and they were put to death at the brook Kishon (18:40). Then Elijah went up to the top of Carmel, bowed down to the ground and put his face between his knees (18:42), and he prayed (James 5:18). 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 (18:41–45).
Teacher note: 18:40 is told plainly and briefly in the Bible. Don't add detail. Under the law God gave Israel, a prophet who led the people to serve other gods was to be put to death (Deuteronomy 13:1–5).

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Ahab called Elijah the troublemaker (18:17). Who was really troubling Israel, according to 18:18?
2. "How long halt ye between two opinions?" (18:21). Why do you think the people "answered him not a word"?
3. Elijah said, "I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD" (18:22). What does it take to stand alone for God?
4. Compare the prayers: hours of crying and cutting (18:26–29) and Elijah's short prayer (18:36–37). What does it say about who God is?
5. Elijah prayed "that this people may know" (18:37). How was this miracle about the people's hearts, not about Elijah winning?
6. The people fell on their faces and said, "The LORD, he is the God" (18:39). What would it look like for that to be true in your life?

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4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words: **fell on their faces** means they bowed down to the ground; **The LORD, he is the God** means the LORD alone is God; **Hear, O Israel** means listen, God's people. Deuteronomy 6:4 is what Israel had been told long before: the LORD is **one LORD**, one God and not many. On Carmel the people finally said it out loud. Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say 1 Kings 18:39 this week; keep working on Deuteronomy 6:4 next week too.

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

Say: "The people learned that the LORD is the one true God, and 'The LORD our God is one LORD' (Deuteronomy 6:4, KJV). 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, the one 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. Where am I "halting between two opinions," trying to follow God and something else at the same time?
2. When have I had to stand alone for what is right? What helped me, or what would help me next time?
3. Write a short, honest prayer like Elijah's (18:36–37), asking God to make Himself known in your life and in your family.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: pick one thing that pulls your heart away from God, and choose God over it every day this week. Pray a short prayer each time.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, You are the LORD, and You are the one true God. Forgive us for the times we go back and forth. Give us courage to stand for You, even alone, and teach us to pray simply and trust You to answer. Thank You for loving us and making a way to save us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student asks why Elijah mocked the prophets of Baal (18:27): the Bible records it honestly. Elijah was showing how empty it was to call on a god that couldn't hear. We don't make fun of people; we point them to the true God.
Left out on purpose: the full conversation with Obadiah (18:7–16) is told briefly. Students may read it and 1 Kings 17 on their own.

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