Preschool–Grade 6

# Elisha and the Shunammite Woman

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

**Main point:** When life falls apart, run to God and hold on to Him; He hears prayer.
**Bible passage:** 2 Kings 4:8–37. Students read 2 Kings 4:8–17 and 4:25–37 out loud themselves.
**Memory verse:** "Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well." *2 Kings 4:26 (KJV)* and "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." *Psalm 56:3 (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 2 Kings 4:8–37 and Psalm 56:3. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

## 1. Opening game: Where Do You Run? (5–10 minutes)

Read each situation. Students call out the first place or person most kids would turn to. 1) You fail a big test. 2) Your best friend moves away. 3) Someone in your family is in the hospital. 4) You feel all alone at a new school. Write the answers on the board. Ask: *Where does God show up on this list? Is He first or last?* Say: "Today we meet a woman who knew exactly where to run on the worst day of her life."

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

**Read out loud: 2 Kings 4:8–17.** Students take turns, a few verses each. Old words in this passage:

- **a great woman** (4:8): an important woman; **constrained him** (4:8): urged him strongly
- **perceive** (4:9): can tell; **passeth by us continually** (4:9): comes by often
- **chamber** (4:10): a small room; **candlestick** (4:10): a stand for a little oil lamp
- **careful for us with all this care** (4:13): you have gone to all this trouble for us
- **captain of the host** (4:13): the commander of the army
- **I dwell among mine own people** (4:13): I live among my own family and need nothing
- **embrace a son** (4:16): hold a son in your arms; **handmaid** (4:16): a humble name she called herself


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**Tell the middle part in your own words:** When the child was grown, he went out to his father and the reapers. He said, "My head, my head," was carried to his mother, sat on her knees until noon, and died (4:18–20). She laid him on the bed of the man of God, shut the door, and asked her husband for a young man and an ass (a donkey). He asked why she would go when it was neither new moon nor sabbath, and she said, "It shall be well" (4:21–23). She told her servant to drive hard and not slow down (4:24).

**Read out loud: 2 Kings 4:25–37.** Old words in this passage:

- **yonder** (4:25): over there; **her soul is vexed** (4:27): she is in deep sorrow
- **Did I desire a son?** (4:28): she had not asked for him; she had said, "Do not deceive me" (4:16)
- **gird up thy loins** (4:29): tuck up your robe and get ready to run; **salute him not**: don't stop to greet anyone
- **As the LORD liveth** (4:30): a solemn promise; she meant it with all her heart
- **them twain** (4:33): the two of them; **waxed warm** (4:34): grew warm; **to and fro** (4:35): back and forth

## 3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. The woman built a room for Elisha and asked for nothing back (4:13). What does it look like to serve God's people without expecting a reward?
2. When Elisha promised a son, she said, "do not lie unto thine handmaid" (4:16). Why is it hard to hope when you've wanted something for a long time?
3. She told her husband and Gehazi, "It shall be well" and "It is well" (4:23, 4:26), but Elisha saw that her soul was vexed (4:27). Can a person be deeply sad and still trust God? How?
4. She said, "I will not leave thee" (4:30). Gehazi's quick try with the staff didn't wake the child (4:31). What can we learn from her not giving up?
5. Elisha shut the door and prayed (4:33). Where can you shut the door and pray?
6. Hebrews 11:35 says, "Women received their dead raised to life again." Hebrews 11 is a chapter about faith. How was this woman's story about faith?

## 4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words: in 2 Kings 4:26, **I pray thee** means please, and **is it well** means is everything all right. In Psalm 56:3, **what time** means whenever. Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say 2 Kings 4:26 this week; keep working on Psalm 56:3 next week too.


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

Say: "God gave this boy his life back, and that points us to the One who gives life forever. 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.*

## 6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

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

1. What is the hardest thing in my life right now?
2. Where do I usually run first when things go wrong? What would running to God first look like?
3. Write a short prayer telling God about it, and finish with Psalm 56:3: "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee."
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

**This week:** the next time something goes wrong, pray before you do anything else. Find one person who serves God (a pastor, a teacher, a helper at church) and do something kind for them, like the Shunammite woman did.

## 7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You hear us when we pray. When life falls apart, help us run to You and hold on to You. Help us serve Your people with a willing heart. Thank You for loving us and making a way to save us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

**If a student is grieving someone who died:** listen, and tell them it is all right to be sad. God cares. Don't guess about any person, and let the student's parents know.

**Left out on purpose:** the Bible tells in more detail how Elisha lay upon the child (2 Kings 4:34). If students read verse 34 themselves, keep it simple: Elisha prayed unto the LORD and stretched himself upon the child, and God gave the child life (4:33–35). The Bible doesn't name the boy's sickness, so don't guess what it was.


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