

1 Kings 19

Aim of lesson

To show that God revealed himself to Elijah, and reassured him when he most needed it.

Background study

Find a map showing the physical features of the land from Syria to Sinai. Look for illustrations of clothing and agricultural implements.

Suggested outline of lesson

Question the children about the thrilling events on Mount Carmel. Ask them which significant person was missing (Jezebel), giving them clues if necessary. Describe her violent reaction when Ahab related what had happened, and the murderous threat that she sent by messenger.

Elijah flees for his life

Even Elijah, the great prophet who was so sure of the authority of God, felt afraid. Children will readily understand fear of the threat of violence, and the desire to run away and hide to avoid being hurt. Having fled for his life to a lonely place deep in the bare and rocky countryside, Elijah felt depressed and very much alone. He felt that all his work was in vain as long as such a godless and wicked queen held power over the king and God's people. He could not face up to returning to the cities. Where could he go? What could he do? He just wanted to die.

However, although he felt so alone, he was soon shown that he was not alone. First an angel was sent to provide for his physical needs, and then to guide him where God wanted him to go. Discuss with the children the miraculous quality of the food that enabled Elijah to undertake a long and strenuous journey, presumably on foot, without having anything else to eat.

And after the fire came a gentle whisper

Using a map as a visual aid, show the distance he covered and the location of Mount Horeb. Perhaps the children will remember that this was the mountain, also called Sinai, where God spoke to Moses and gave him the laws. Here Elijah was to experience the presence and power of God, as Moses had done before him. Elijah heard God's questioning voice and freely admitted how downhearted he was. Quote in full verses 11 and 12, which are so clear and dramatic. Elaborate on the awe-inspiring evidence of God's power, which Elijah so closely witnessed, and the effect on his emotions that these fearful events caused. Was God, perhaps, teaching Elijah that a man of God need fear no human power, which is as nothing compared with his own omnipotence? All these events were manifestations of God's might, which Elijah had known and recognized before. He had witnessed such a revelation on Mount Carmel. It was only after the storm, the quaking and the fire had

ended that Elijah became aware of the nearness of God as he heard the quiet, meaningful voice. The same question was repeated and although Elijah gave the same reply, he was now ready to resume his work for God and to follow whatever instructions were given. We can learn from the fact that God sent Elijah back the way he had come. When we turn to God in need, it is likely that he will give us strength to cope with the situation, rather than taking it away from us. In setting Elijah his tasks God also reassured the prophet that his work would not be in vain and that, though many people would forsake God and be punished for it, there would always be the faithful - at this time seven thousand who would remain true to him.

How opportune it was, at this point, that God appointed Elisha to be a companion and successor for the lonely Elijah.

Relevance to the children's lives

Do you ever feel miserable and afraid when unkind people threaten to hurt you? Do you feel lonely and unable to tell anyone about it? Even Elijah needed help when he felt like that. You, too, should turn to someone you trust for help - a parent, an older brother or sister, or your teacher. You must not let people bully you. God also sees what is happening and will give you courage if you will talk to him about it.

Worksheets

Note the various translations:

- King James Version: a still small voice.
- New International Version: a gentle whisper.
- English Standard Version: the sound of a low whisper.
- New American Standard Bible: a sound of a gentle blowing.

The solution to the puzzle is:

E	A	R	T	H	Q	U	A	K	E
W	A		T	H	Q	U	A	R	E
W	A		D	H	Q	F	A	R	E
W	I		D	H	Q	F	I	R	E
W	I	N	D	H	Q	F	I	R	E
W	I	N	D			F	I	R	E
W	I	N	D		V	F	I	R	E
S	I	A	D		V	F	I	R	E
S	M	A	D		V	O	I	R	E
S	M	A	D	L	V	O	I	R	E
S	M	A	L	L	V	O	I	C	E

The good advice is 'God reassured Elijah because he thought he was the only good man left. We must remember that God will help us when we are lonely if we pray and ask him to'.

Prayer

Dear Lord God, please be with us when we are lonely and afraid, and give us courage to talk to someone about it. Amen.

Memory verse

"The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1).