

Middle School Sunday School Lessons by



Year 3: Session 2 – Getting to Know Elijah the Prophet **Class 6: 2 Kings 2:1-14** – Elisha, Elijah, and the chariot of fire

CONCEPTS that will be covered in the lesson

- Perseverance – Elisha is not dissuaded by Elijah or the other prophets – nor is he afraid to ask for too big of a thing. And because he perseveres, he stays with Elijah all the way and receives double Elijah’s spirit
- Why to persevere – As we’ve seen in both the Samuel stories and the Elijah stories, just because you have a relationship with God does not mean things are going to be easy for you. In fact, we see that things can be very difficult. But, if we don’t give up on God, if we keep seeking God and being in relationship with God, even while others mock us and tell us to give it up, then what we experience is an increase of God’s spirit that we can then share with others. And if we keep persevering, then a pretty significant increase in understanding of God in the up and coming generations will take place.
- This story is a precursor to the ascension story

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Movie clip (from Despicable Me)
- TV and way to play the movie clip
- Warheads candy -- a very sour candy that eventually turns sweet (these are not easy-to-find candies. I finally found some to buy at Walmart. Be sure to buy the hard candies (not the chewy kind). Plan for at least two pieces per person in the class.
- Optional: A camera to film the students’ faces as they eat the warheads.

THE LESSON

OPENING PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION

- Here’s the opening question for today’s class. One of the teachers will ask the question and then to give you some time to think of an answer, the teacher will answer first.
- Once the teacher answers the question, we’ll go around the circle.
- When it’s your turn, start with your name and then answer the question to the best of your ability.
- Here’s this week’s question: *Would you rather receive one million dollars right this minute or 1 penny that is doubled every day for 30 days (i.e. first day is one penny, second day is two pennies, third day is four pennies, fourth day is 8 pennies, etc).*

- [Once everyone has given their answer, share with the class the total amount of money they would've received at the end of each week if they had chosen the doubling of a penny: On day 7 = \$0.64 On day 14 = \$81.92 On day 21 = 10,485.76 On day 28 = 1,342,177.28 On the 30th day, you would receive a total of: **\$5,368,709.12**]

TRANSITION to Video Clip

- So today, we're going to talk about perseverance.
- Perseverance is when you keep doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving possible success.
- In today's video clip from the movie, "Despicable Me," we're going to watch the main character, "Gru" try and break into his arch-nemesis fortress to try and steal the shrink-ray.
- Let's see if Gru knows the meaning of perseverance.

WATCH Video Clip

ASK

- Was Gru able to break in and steal the shrink ray? (No)
- Did he try very hard? (he definitely tried a number of different ways)
- At the end of the clip, was he ready to give up? (No, not at all)
- So would you say Gru was persevering? (Yes)

TRANSITION TO SCRIPTURE STORY

- In our previous lesson, we saw that Elijah didn't have much perseverance in him.
- Things were going badly for him (the Israelites weren't listening to him, there were no other prophets like him, the queen wanted him dead) and he wanted to give up.
- But while praying in the silence, Elijah hears that he is to go and call a student by the name of Elisha
- Elisha does indeed become Elijah's student. And for at least four years, Elisha goes where Elijah goes and does what Elijah does (just like the disciples do with Jesus).
- Today's story is about Elisha and Elijah saying goodbye to each other.
- Let's see what happens.

READ 2 Kings 2:1-14 *(recommend class reads it out loud; one person per verse)*

1 Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. **2** Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. **3** The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?" And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent." **4** Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here; for the Lord has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. **5** The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know; be silent." **6** Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. **7** Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. **8** Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground. **9** When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you." Elisha said, "Please let me inherit a

double share of your spirit." **10** He responded, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not." **11** As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. **12** Elisha kept watching and crying out, "Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. **13** He picked up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. **14** He took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, "Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" When he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over.

ASK (*answers are in parenthesis*)

- So what happened? (Elijah is trying to die alone; other prophets try to dissuade Elisha from sticking with Elijah, but Elisha sticks with Elijah. Three times this happens. Then Elisha says he wants double Elijah's spirit. Elijah says, if you see me go, then this might happen. In other words, persevere, Elisha, persevere. Elisha does and sees Elijah get taken away by a chariot of fire/whirlwind. The Elisha smacks a river and it separates as a sign that yes indeed, Elisha has double Elijah's spirit)
- Why do you think Elisha might be tempted to NOT stick with Elijah? (Because both Elijah and other people were telling him not to; but also because when someone is old and sick and dying, that's not where power is, that's not where excitement is happening and it can be downright scary)
- Verse 12, what does Elisha call Elijah? (Father)
- And then, also in verse 12, what does Elisha do? (Tears his clothes and yells)
- Why do you think he does this? (Because he cares about Elijah and is upset)
- What does Elisha receive for persevering with / sticking with Elijah? (he receives double Elijah's spirit)
- What do you think it means to "receive double Elijah's spirit?" (Accept guesses – "answer" in TELL section)

TELL

- So one way to think about this "doubling of the spirit" is to think about what it means to truly be someone's student.
- For Elisha, this means he has learned everything that Elijah knew/had learned about God.
- So you take all of that understanding and put it into someone who is much younger, and still has a lifetime to live, but now has all of this extra understanding from someone much older and wiser and it's like the essence of who Elisha is has been doubled.
- Elisha is not longer just some 20-something prophet.
- He's a 20-something prophet who has learned everything that Elijah -- the old-school, hard-nosed prophet -- knew.
- And, then, if you think about the penny question from the beginning of class, just imagine if Elisha did the same thing and eventually teaches a student everything HE knows to the student.
- Then it's like that student would be receiving even more, right? And just imagine if that student had a student and so on?
- **Note:** Although this doesn't happen with Elisha's students (it's unclear why), it DOES happen with Jesus' students. They receive the Holy Spirit after Jesus ascends and then they go on to have many of their own students who go on to have their own students...2000 years later and then there's us and the church because of this passing on of God's Holy Spirit. Well...that's how it's *supposed* to work.

TRANSITION TO ACTIVITY

- So let's look a little more at perseverance by doing the following activity.
- I'm passing out a "warhead" candy to everyone.
- Once everyone has a warhead candy, we're going to unwrap it.
- Once everyone has unwrapped their candy, we're going to eat our warheads.

- We'll put the Warhead in our mouths at the same time and then we'll try to see who can last 30 seconds.
- Ready?
- Set?
- Go!

DO ACTIVITY of Eating Warhead Candy

ASK

- What was your experience when you first put the candy in your mouth?
- What words would you use to describe the experience? (Really sour! Painful! Explosive! Burning! Horrible!)
- So...would any of you like another Warhead?
- [Act surprised when they say "YES"]
- Why would you want another one after you just told me how horrible it was?
- Why do you want the really sour, painful, explosive, burning candy?
- [pass out more candy if students desire it]

TELL

- So it sounds like you are now understanding a little bit of what perseverance means.
- Even though the candy was really sour at first, after a little while, it became sweet and tasted better.
- The bad feelings at the beginning were worth the good feelings at the end.
- But you only know that because you actually made it to the end.
- The same is true when we're paying attention to God: Things will sometimes be harder, not easier for us.
- But if you hang in there, like we saw Elisha do in today's story, at the end of the story, we receive from God what we need to keep going and more.

CLOSING PRAYER