



OVERVIEW SECTION

How to Read This Lesson Plan

The **Overview Section** is the foundation of this lesson plan. The questions and activities for the class that you will be teaching on Sunday morning have been based (sometimes loosely) upon what you read in this section. The **Overview Section** is composed of five components (each component is underlined in the lesson plan):

How to Read This Lesson Plan (defines all components of the lesson plan)

Purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation (a reminder of why we do this)

Scripture(s) for the Session (a reminder that the scripture is to be read in every class)

Key Verses & Theology (background for teachers to ponder)

Themes to Focus on from the Scripture (the ideas that the session's lessons are based on)

The actual lesson is found in the second section, **The Sunday Morning Experience Section**. Think of this section as the step-by-step instruction guide to your Sunday morning teaching experience. There are four components to this section (again, each component is underlined in the actual lesson plan):

Preparation (including supplies needed)

Classroom Statement (a brief explanation of what will be taught/happening in the classroom)

Step-by-step process of the lesson (including the scripture to be read)

Suggested variations for age groups (Self-explanatory but not always applicable)

We encourage you to read the rest of this **Overview Section** before reading the **Sunday Morning Experience Section**.

Purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation:

The purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation is, with God's help and in community, to hear and interact with the stories of our faith tradition, to pray, worship and play together, and to equip and support the building of relationships with God and with each other.

Scripture(s) for the Session: 1 Kings 19:1-3; 9-16

Please READ this aloud in every class you teach. The actual words to the scripture can be found in **The Sunday Morning Experience Section: Step-by-Step process of the lesson**. When reading to the class, please read it from the lesson plan (not an actual Bible) as the wording of the scripture has been modified to help clarify some language issues.

Key Verses & Theology: These are provided to help the teachers think about and build a framework for understanding the story to help in answering some of the questions that the students might raise in class.

11 The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by."

Elijah has done some impressive things. His latest impressive thing happened just previous to this story. He had had a showdown with King Ahab and the Baal prophets. Elijah won that showdown which humiliated the King. Queen Jezebel who wasn't there, once she hears what happened, demands that Elijah be killed. Elijah, who was brave and full of vigor during the showdown, is now afraid and depressed, running for his life. God has a lesson for him, though. In order for Elijah to learn this particular lesson, though, God tells Elijah to stand outside the cave that Elijah is hiding in.

13 Then in the silence came a still small voice to Elijah. Before the silence there are big things happening. Fire and earthquakes and a powerful wind. But in these big, chaotic things, Elijah does not hear God. But once it is still, then Elijah can hear God. The point of the lesson that Elijah is learning is that God is not in the big, chaotic things. If Elijah just pays attention to the loud stuff, then he's not paying attention to God. God is teaching Elijah that when he's in the chaos, Elijah is to seek God. And to help Elijah better hear God's direction, it is good to find some quiet.

15 Then the Lord said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. 16 Also you shall anoint Jehu as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha as prophet in your place. Now that God has Elijah's attention, what does God direct Elijah to do? First, there is preparation for the future (the anointing of the next kings) and second, God provides Elijah with a student and companion, Elisha (in order for Elisha to take Elijah's place, he will have to train with Elijah in an apprentice-like way). When we pay attention to the chaos, we can be confused, lost and frozen in place. Our response might be like Elijah's, to hide due to our fear. But when we pay attention to God, by being quiet, by being still, then instead of feeling confused or lost or frozen, we will be better able to hear God's direction toward the next step(s) we are to take.

Themes to Focus on from the Scripture: Themes are provided to help teachers understand the teaching of the *session* (not necessarily the class). Sometimes an activity in one class may not match up with any of the themes.

Storms – In life we experience many sorts of storms. In many different sorts of ways. We experience weather-related storms, like thunderstorms and snowstorms. We experience family storms: Confluences of personalities that try to out-do or out-think or out-drink or overwhelm or intimidate or cut-down or tear away from. There are storms at work: emergencies and missed deadlines and forgotten meetings. In politics, in the news, on freeways, between countries there are storms of selfishness, conflict, mayhem, poverty, and scarcity. And if we focus our attention on these storms, like Elijah focused on the storm of Queen Jezebel, we will lose our way, we will forget about God's power and we will despair, we will flee, we will hide.

Listening – We internalize what we most pay attention to. In the classroom, we tell our students, “If I’m talking, I need you to be listening to me. If you’re talking while I’m talking, then I know you’re not listening. So if you are talking, stop now.” We say that because we know that even when there’s a tangible, loud person right in front of the student, there are many things that can distract that student, including their own minds and mouths. We also say these things because we have instructions for the students to follow and so they need to hear our words, not their own words. Listening takes considerable work. What we choose to intentionally listen to, also takes considerable work. To pry our attention away from the car wreck and keep driving so that we don’t become car wreck #2 can be a challenge, but we can do it because we want to internalize order, not internalize another chaotic car accident and that’s the same principle that God calls us to do: To keep our eyes, our ears, our attention on God, not on the accidents and chaos.

Power – Storms have power. The power to destroy. And if we watch the storms, then we give the storms even greater power, by giving them our attention and our energy. But God is greater and more powerful than the storms and the chaos they represent. The faith stories/scripture tells us this over and over again. The creation story, Moses parting the Red Sea, the walls of Jericho tumbling down, Daniel in the Lion’s Den, Jesus calming the storm, Jesus walking on water, Jesus transforming water into wine, the resurrection of Jesus. God calls us to move through the storms. To create God’s Kingdom in the midst of the storm. To bring God’s order to the chaos. The sound and the fury of a storm might at first overwhelm us and even cause us to forget that a greater power exists. But the more we practice listening, the easier it is for us to remember the still, small voice that is within us, and available to us no matter how big and immediate the storm is outside of us.



THE SUNDAY MORNING EXPERIENCE SECTION

Preparation

- Print out this lesson plan and bring it with you on the Sunday Mornings you are teaching
- Arrive at pre-arranged time to join other teachers, shepherds and staff for an opening prayer.
- Supplies Needed: Dixie cups; blindfolds; yarn

Classroom Statement

This Movement and Games class consists of reading the Elijah and the Still, Small Voice story out loud; creating a “rainstorm;” playing a game similar to Simon Says that helps demonstrate the need for focus and listening skills and finally a type of obstacle course game that again helps to demonstrate how silence helps with listening.

Step-by-Step Process of Lesson

Shepherd comes in with students

SHEPHERD ASKS “Question of the Day.”

INTRODUCE yourself

Hi, my name is ____ and I want you call me (tell the students how they may address you).

PRAY Short and simple is perfect. For example:

God, thank you for this day and for each other. We need your help. Help us to learn about you this day. Amen.

TELL

- In the story we’re going to read, we’re going to hear about the prophet Elijah.
- Elijah lived about 800 years before Jesus did.
- Before the story we’re going to read happened, Elijah had had a competition with prophets of another religion
- With God’s help, Elijah won that competition very easily.
- But then, when Queen Jezebel heard about Elijah winning the competition, she became very upset. That’s where our story starts today.
- Today, we’ll be talking about listening and about what keeps us from being able to listen, so as you listen, listen for how Elijah listens to God and what makes it harder for him to hear God.

READ 1 Kings 19:1-3;9-16

1 King Ahab told his wife, Queen Jezebel, all that Elijah had done. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not kill you by this time tomorrow." 3 Then Elijah was afraid; he got up and fled for his life, and came to the town of Beer-sheba, which was in the country of Judah.

9 At that place he came to a cave, and spent the night there. Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 10 Elijah answered, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, also, to take away." 11 The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, and I will speak to you there." When Elijah heard this, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not heard in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not heard in the earthquake; 12 and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not heard in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. 13 Then in the silence came a still small voice to Elijah that said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 14 He answered, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, also, to take away." 15 Then the Lord said to him, "Go, return home. When you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. 16 Also you shall anoint Jehu as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha as your student to become a prophet and take your place later on."

ASK (answers in parentheses)

- What things kept Elijah from being able to hear God? (storms: a great wind; an earthquake, a fire)
- When could Elijah hear God the best? (after the storms)

TELL

- God was teaching Elijah about listening.
- Elijah was so busy paying attention to Queen Jezebel wanting to kill him, that he wasn't listening very well to God.
- So God showed Elijah that it's hard to hear God when we pay attention to loud, scary things (like storms, like threats from Queen Jezebel) instead of paying attention to God.

EXPLAIN

- So the first thing we're going to do today is create our own type of storm and then, we'll enjoy the silence that comes after it.
- So first, I need us to sit in a straight line (on the benches) facing me
- Next, what I'll do is make a motion and noise that I want you to make as well.
- But there's a catch!
- Do NOT make the motion and noise UNTIL I walk by you.
- So for example, I'll start by rubbing my palms together, and then as I walk down the line, and as I pass you, then you do what I'm doing.

- Then I'll come back to the start of the line and I'll do another motion, like snapping my fingers.
- You will keep rubbing your palms together UNTIL I come by, then you'll switch to snapping your fingers.
- There will be no talking as we do this.
- Any questions?

DO Rainstorm Activity (Note: This activity will work better for you if you memorize the actions and sequence)

The motions are, in order:

1. Rub palms together (rising wind)
2. Snap fingers (first drops of rain)
3. Pat hands on thighs (harder rain)
4. Pat hands on thighs & stomp feet on floor simultaneously (adding thunder to rain) (also say "Boom!" "Boom!" as you go down the line) (also, move down the line faster at this point than you did earlier in the activity)
5. Go back to patting hands on thighs (thunder moves on)
6. Snap fingers (rain is stopping)
7. Rub palms together (winds moving on)
8. Put hands out and apart (storm moves on)
9. When everyone is silent, rest in the silence for a few seconds before telling them "Well done" in a soft voice.

TELL

- When a storm passes, there's a peacefulness, a quiet on the other side of it.
- This is part of what Elijah experienced after the big storms went by.
- Maybe you've noticed that after you move around a lot, then you're better able to listen?
- That's what just happened for us. We made a big storm and then right after it we were quiet and listened well.
- However, the storms in the story are also distractions, distractions that kept Elijah from hearing God.

EXPLAIN

- We're going to do another activity now that demonstrates how difficult it can be sometimes to stay focused when there are distractions.
- We're going to play a game where I tell you to touch a part on your body.
- For instance, I'll say, touch your elbow.
- So you do that until I tell you the next thing to touch, like "Touch your ankle."
- Seems simple enough, right?
- So we're going to do this first round to see if you can do this.
- Are you ready?
- Here we go!

DO Listening Activity

Touch your nose
Touch your pinky finger
Touch your knee
Touch your ear
Touch your big toe
Touch your hip
Touch the top of your head
Touch your elbow
Touch your tongue
Touch your ankle
Touch your bellybutton
Touch your nose

- Easy enough, right?
- Ok, we're going to do that again, only this time, you won't touch the body part until after I call out the NEXT body part.
- So I'll say, "Touch your nose" and you won't do anything until I say "Touch your pinky finger" and then what would you touch? That's right! Your nose!
- And then when I say the next thing, that's when you touch your pinky finger and so on.
- When I get to the last body part to touch, I'll just say "Next" so that we can end the list correctly.
- Think you can do it? Here we go!

(use the same list)

- That was a little bit tougher than the first round, wasn't it?
- We're going to play the game one more time, only this time we're not going to touch the body part until TWO other body parts are called out.
- So for example, when I say touch your nose, you'll just stand there. Then I'll say "Touch your pinky finger" and you'll *still* just stand there. Then when I say "Touch your knee" what would you touch instead? That's right...your nose!
- When I get the end of the list, I'll just say Next and then Next
- Let's see how we do...Here we go!

(use the same list)

ASK

- Why was the last round harder than the first round? (because there were more things happening and you had to really stay focused to remember what to do and when to do it)

TELL

- This game helps us to see how it's easier to focus on God when there are not other things happening.

- So just like in the first round of the game, when there were no distractions, then we were able to listen more clearly.
- But often times, we have other things going on around us, and if we don't stay super-focused, then we start to get confused and lost like we did in the second and third round of the game.
- That's what happened to Elijah. He started to focus on the distractions and storms around him, instead of staying super-focused on God.
- But once God reminded Elijah to be still and listen, Elijah did that and was then able to hear what he was supposed to do next (get a student and anoint kings).

EXPLAIN Activity – Obstacle Course

- You'll see there's a start and finish line [one end of the room as start, the other end as the finish; use string to make the lines]
- In-between these two lines, I want you to each place 4 paper Dixie cups.
- Now we need to get partners.
- One partner stands at the finish line, the other stands at the start line. Do that now.
- Those who are the start line, I'm blindfolding you now.
- Once we start, the blindfolded partners will be guided across the room by their partner. However, the partners at the finish line may not leave **CROSS** the finish line. Y'all have to stay right there and talk your partner through the obstacle course.
- The goal is to get across the room without touching a Dixie cup.
- If you do step on a Dixie cup, then you are out.
- When you are out, you sit down right where you're at. And you and your partner cannot talk until the round is over.
- If no one crosses the finish line, then the team who gets the closest to the finish line wins.
- After first round, reverse roles.

DO Obstacle Course

ASK

- At the beginning of each round, was it loud?
- Was it hard to hear individual instructions?
- Could you even tell what your own partner was telling you? How?
- As the game progressed, did it get easier to listen?
- Why? (less people were talking because they had hit obstacles and were out of the game)
- Was there a reason that, as the person going through the minefield, that you just didn't wait until it was quieter?
- The point of the game was to go the farthest, not the fastest, so why were you in a hurry?

TELL

- When we hurry, we don't often hear each other very well.
- The same is true for when we're listening to God.
- Elijah was in a hurry to escape from Queen Jezebel. That kept him from hearing God right away. He had to first slow down.

- Also, listening to our partners in the game is a lot like how it was for Elijah listening to God.
- In the story, Elijah hears and sees a lot of big things (the storms; the queen trying to kill him), but once those things lose their loudness, then Elijah can hear God's voice better. The same is true for us, also.
- Listening to God is not easy. It's like learning to tie your shoes. It takes practice.
- The Good News for Today is the reminder that when we practice listening to God, it is good for us to be in a quiet place with few to no distractions.

CLEAN UP

Suggested Variations for age groups

Depending on the communication skills of your age group, the number of students in your class and the size of the classroom space, feel free to change the number of Dixie cups you use in "Obstacle Course."