

Supplies: 2 styrofoam trays (one to cut, the other to hold the pie tin) [I went to the meat counter at the local supermarket and politely asked for two and received them free of charge]; a pie tin that will fit on the styrofoam tray;

Setup: Take one of the styrofoam trays and cut from it a piece in a shape and size that allows you to be able to tape it onto the top or bottom of the pie tin so that it will be the handle that you will use to pick up and drop the pie tin.

OPENING PRAYER

TELL

- For the opening question, I'm going to ask you a question and then we'll go around the circle and say our names and then our answer to the question.
- I'll ask the question and then I'll answer first, ok?
- The opening question uses the word, "focus." When you focus on something, that means you're really paying attention to only one thing.
- So with that in mind, here's the opening question: *What is something you are really good at focusing at?*

GO AROUND THE CIRCLE

- During this session, we're talking about the prophets and some of the first kings of Israel.
- All of these stories that we're hearing and talking about in this Session are from the Old Testament. That means these things happened well before Jesus was born.
- The last few weeks, we've talked about the first three kings of Israel: King Saul, King David and King Solomon.
- Today, we're going to read a story that takes place 150 years after David was king and about 800 years before Jesus is born.
- In this story, the king of Israel (King Ahab) isn't a good king. He doesn't pay attention to God and he's led the people of Israel away from God.
- So there's a prophet by the name of Elijah. And he is trying to get King Ahab and the people of Israel to pay attention to God.
- As I read the story, listen for the different things that the people in the story focus on.

READ 1 Kings 18:1;17-39

1 After many days the word of the Lord came to Elijah, in the third year of the drought, saying, "Go, present yourself to Ahab; I will send rain on the earth."

17 When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, "Is it you, you troubler of Israel?" 18 Elijah answered, "I have not troubled Israel; but you have, and your father's house, because you have not focused on the

commandments of the Lord and have instead focused on false gods. 19 Have all of Israel assemble for me at Mount Carmel, with the four hundred fifty prophets of Baal." (Baal is the name of one of the false gods) 20 So Ahab sent to all the Israelites, and assembled the prophets at Mount Carmel. 21 Elijah then came near to all the people, and said, "How long will you keep being divided with two different opinions? If the Lord is God, focus on him; but if Baal, then focus on him." 22 Then Elijah said to the people, "Let two bulls be given to us; let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it; I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it. 24 Then you call on the name of your god and I will call on the name of the Lord; the god who answers by fire is indeed God." All the people answered, "Well spoken!" 25 Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "You go first."

26 So the 450 Baal prophets took the bull that was given them, prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon, crying, "O Baal, answer us!" But there was no voice, and no answer. They limped about the altar that they had made. 27 At noon Elijah mocked them, saying, "Yell louder! Maybe your god has wandered away, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened." 28 Then they cried louder but there was no voice, no answer, and no response.

30 Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come closer to me"; and all the people came closer to him. 31 Elijah took twelve stones and built an altar in the name of the Lord. Then he made a trench around the altar. 33 He said, "Fill four jars with water and pour it on the altar." 34 Then he said, "Do it until the trench is filled with water." 36 Then Elijah said, "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your bidding. 37 Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back." 38 Then the fire of the Lord fell from the sky like lightning and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and the dust, and even licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 When all the people saw it, they fell on their knees and said, "The Lord indeed is God; the Lord indeed is God."

ASK

- What god did King Ahab focus on? (Baal)
- What did Elijah tell the people of Israel that they were doing wrong? [*Maybe reread verse 21 to help them answer this question*] (They were splitting their focus between Baal and God)
- At the end of the story, do you think the people of Israel will better focus their attention on God? (hopefully, but there's no guarantee)

TELL

- Sometimes when we aren't focusing on the right thing, something is needed to get our attention refocused. Often, something loud or flashy will do this.
- For example, if you were staring out the window right now, and I wanted to get your attention real quick, I might slap my hand against the table or drop a book on the floor – then you'd turn your head to see what was happening.
- This is what we see God and Elijah doing – trying to get the people of Israel's attention.
- And what was it that God did to get their attention? (sent fire from the sky)
- So today, our first activity is to make our own attention-getting little lightning machine.

DO “Very Tiny Lightning” Demonstration

TELL

- First, notice that I have taped some Styrofoam to this pie tin. These are my handles. When I move the pie tin, I'll always move it by holding on to the handles.
- Now, I'm going to take this Styrofoam tray and rub the bottom/flat-side really fast all over someone's hair. Who wants to volunteer their head and hair for this?
- Now that I've rubbed the tray on your hair, I'm going to place the Styrofoam tray on the table with the bottom-side (the side I rubbed on _____'s hair with) facing upwards.
- Now I'm going to take the pie tin (remember I'm only going to hold it by the handle) and I'm going to hold it about a foot above the Styrofoam tray...and I'm going to drop it onto the tray!
- Now very slowly, I'm going to touch the tip of my finger to the pie tin. [a tiny spark will happen - ZING!]
- Alright, anyone else want to get a little lightning zap? Just don't touch the Styrofoam tray as you do it.
- Now, if I pick up the pie tin using the handle and I touch the tin with my finger, ZING! It happens again!
- If I drop the pie tin back on the tray and touch it again, there's more sparks!
- We can do this for a pretty long time!
- (then do so for a few minutes; periodically you'll have to recharge the tray by rubbing it on someone's hair again)
- But after awhile, what starts to happen? It doesn't keep our attention anymore, does it? It starts to maybe get a little boring, doesn't it?
- And that's why the fire in the story isn't what the people are supposed to pay attention to.
- Instead, the lightning is simply there to get Israel's and their king's attention turned back to God.

EXPLAIN NEXT ACTIVITY

- Just like God tries to get the people's attention, there are distractions (people/things that are not God) that try to get the people's (our) attention. When we pay attention to more than one thing at a time, then we start to forget more and make more mistakes.
- We're going to do an activity now that demonstrates how difficult it sometimes can be to stay focused.
- We're going to play a game where I tell you to touch a body part.
- 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?

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 don't touch the body part until after I call out the NEXT body part.
- So I'll say, "Touch your nose" and you don'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 despite the distractions to remember what to do and when to do it)

TELL

- There's lots of different things we can focus on in life.
- This game helps us to see what happens when we try to focus on more than one thing at a time.
- We're designed so that when we seek God first, the other things in life line up more clearly.
- So like in the first round of the game, where our focus was on the first thing, that's how we want our on God to be.
- And if we do that, then God can help us to focus on the other things that come next.
- But often times, we instead focus on other things first, and then we start to get confused and lost like we did in the second and third round of the game.

CLOSING PRAYER

- Let's close in prayer. This is a repeat-after-me prayer.

Dear God, (Dear God)

Thank you for loving us (Thank you for loving us)

Help us to focus on you first (Help us to focus on you first)

So that we can better... (So that we can better...)

...do the other things in life... (do the other things in life)

...because of your help and guidance (Because of your help and guidance)

We pray these things in your name, (We pray these things in your name)

Amen (Amen)