

Supplies: Plastic tablecloths (one for every 4 students); A roll of Velcro (with an adhesive backing); printed out pictures from the end of this lesson (a set of pictures for every two students); 1 pair of scissors for every student; crayons/coloring pencils; scotch tape (preferably 3 or 4 rolls to help with distribution of the tape)

Setup: Before class, you'll want to take the tablecloths and cut them into fourths. The sections need to be longer than wider. I cut the tablecloths by folding them in half and then using a large paper-cutter to cut on the fold. Then I'd take the section, fold it in half again and cut the fold again. You will also want to pre-cut 2 Velcro strips per student (in about 3 inch sections). Make copies, also, of the printed-out pictures from the end of this lesson plan.

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?
- Here's the opening question: *Who is your best friend? How long have you known him or her?*

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 (between 800 and 1000 years) Jesus was born.
- Last week, we talked about the prophet Elijah listening to God.
- Today, we're going to read a story about Elijah's death. Sort of. As you'll hear, he doesn't actually die.
- His student, and best friend, Elisha, is with him when it happens.

READ 2 Kings 2:1-15: The Chariot Of Fire

1 Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from the town of Gilgal. 2 Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; for the Lord has sent me as far as the town of Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. 4 Then Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the town of Jericho." But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. 6 Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan River." But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on 7 and they stood by the Jordan River. 8 Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water then parted to the one side and to the other so that the two of them crossed on dry

ground. 9 When they had crossed the river, 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 Elijah responded, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted to 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, "Teacher! Teacher! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" But when he could no longer see Elijah, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces in grief. 13 He then 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 crossed the Jordan River on dry land.

ASK

- Did you count how many times Elijah tried to get Elisha to go away? (three)
- Elisha says in response, "As the Lord lives, and you yourself live, I will not leave you." Why do you think Elisha is not going to leave Elijah? (cuz he loves him; cuz they're best buddies).
- What does Elisha want from Elijah? (v 10: a double share of his spirit)
- What does Elijah leave behind? (his mantle)
- Do you know what a "mantle" is? (it's like a cloak, wraps around the shoulders)
- If you saw your best friend be taken away, and they left one thing, would you pick it up and keep it?

TELL

- Sometimes we think that things that belonged to powerful people somehow absorb these people's power and that if we own those things, then we'll have some of that power, too.
- This story is not about the mantle absorbing Elijah's power, even though it seems like God and God's power travels with the mantle.
- Instead, the mantle is a reminder to Elisha of Elijah and all the things Elijah taught him. And the most important things that Elijah taught Elisha was how to be in relationship with God.
- It is that relationship with God that gave Elijah his power, and it will give Elisha his power as well.
- These are some of the ways that we strengthen our relationship with God:
 - Praying (speaking to God and listening to God)
 - Reading and being familiar with the Bible/Faith/Jesus stories
 - Worshiping God together
- So today, we're going to make our own mantle with reminders on it about how we can remember to keep inviting God into our lives. Because when God is in our lives, then our lives are more powerful.

EXPLAIN Art Project of Mantle/Cape Reminder

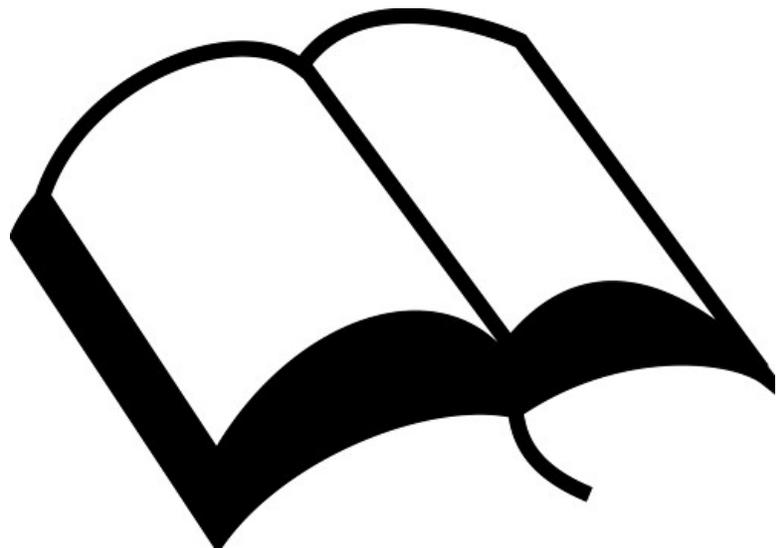
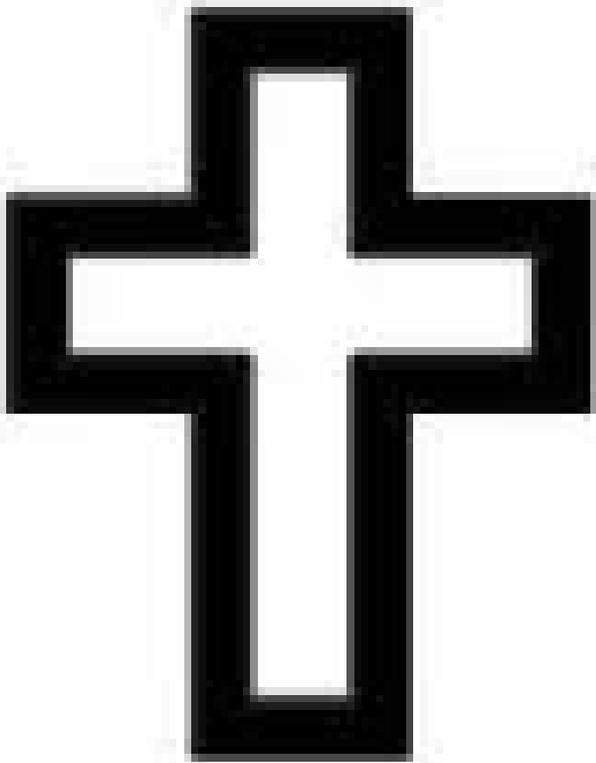
- The first thing that's going to happen is that I'm passing out to you pictures that we need to color in.
- We will eventually be putting these pictures on our mantles, so color carefully.
- Also, these are the colors that mantle might come in. You may want to color-coordinate your pictures with your mantle color.
- [As the students are coloring, start passing out the sections of cut table cloth - one per student]
- Once you've finished coloring your pictures, go ahead and cut them out of the paper.

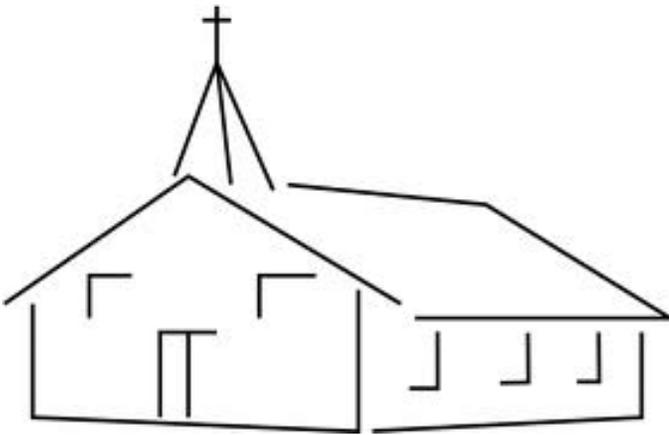
- Then take your mantle that I passed out to you and decide what part will be the top and the bottom of the mantle; what part will be the inside and the outside of the mantle.
- You'll want to tape the pictures on the outside of the mantle. And right-side up.
- Also, don't tape them too closely to the top of the mantle, because then we won't be able to see them very well.
- Once you have the pictures colored and taped on, take the mantle, and put the top of it over your shoulders and around your neck.
- Now come up to me or another adult/helper who will then place velcro strips on both sides of the mantle by the neck so that the mantle will stay on you without you holding it up.
- Now go out to _____ (a larger space where the kids can run around) and run around, making the mantle flow out behind you!

CLOSING PRAYER

TELL

- This is a "repeat after me" prayer.
- After I say a line, then you say the same line as a class.
- Let's pray:
 - Dear God (Dear God)
 - Thank you for the story of Elijah and Elisha (Thank you for the story of Elijah and Elisha)
 - Please help us to be like Elisha (Please help us to be like Elisha)
 - by helping us (By helping us)
 - inherit a double share of Elijah's spirit. (inherit a double share of Elijah's spirit)
 - Please help the mantles we just made (Please help the mantles we just made)
 - be a reminder (be a reminder)
 - of how we can seek you. (of how we can seek you)
 - Thank you for loving us. (Thank you for loving us)
 - Amen (Amen)





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