

Supplies: a chair for every student; the Wright Family story (found in the lesson plan); one balloon for every student; one blindfold for every two students; a larger space to move around in; small (4 oz or smaller) disposable cups (like Dixie cups); newspaper to ball up and throw around; rope/string/yarn to mark start and finish lines.

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: *What is one of your favorite songs or who is one of your favorite singers?*

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 the prophet Elijah trying to show the king of Israel that Baal and the Baal prophets were simply a distraction.
- Today, we're going to read a story about Elijah that follows directly after that story with the Elijah and the Baal prophets.

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 to take away my life, also." 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."

TELL

- God talks to us just like God talks to Elijah in this story.
- Except, the words are not out loud. Instead, the words are inside our heads.
- This isn't so strange, because if we think about it, we realize that we hear lots of different voices in our heads.
- For instance, if you think of your favorite song that you named earlier, can you hear that song in your head? Can you hear someone other than you singing it? That's a voice that you're hearing in your head.
- When you're about to cross a street, what's a thought that you have in your head? ("Look both ways" Hopefully!). And whose voice does that thought belong to (Mom or Dad's, usually).
- The same way we hear those voices in our heads is the same way we can hear God's voice in our head.
- What this story is telling us is that even though God is speaking to us, it is hard to hear God when we're doing or focusing on other things (as shown by the fire and earthquake).
- So, we're going to do some activities now that demonstrate this point of how being still helps us to hear better and, conversely, how when lots of things are happening, it's harder to listen (to God or to others).

EXPLAIN AND DO FIRST ACTIVITY – The Wright Family

- This is a listening exercise. Every time I say the word "Right," yell the word "RIGHT" and move one seat to your right.
- Every time I say the word "Left," yell the word "LEFT" and move one seat to your left.
- Let's practice this so that everyone has their right and left down
- [Practice saying left and right and having them move and yell.]
- Now remember to listen for the words right and left as I read this story to you about the Wright family.

NOTE: For the first paragraph, read pretty slowly. And wait for the noise to subside before continuing on with the story. But as you keep going, don't wait for the noise to subside, just keep reading rather loudly - and be sure to especially emphasize the "left" and "right" parts! Also, the more chaotic the activity gets, the better the activity will work as an illustration.

READ Story

The Wright family had decided that it was the right time to take a vacation. They had never left their dog before, but they knew he would be all right if the neighbors looked out for him. So on Tuesday, the Wright family left their dog and plunged right into a vacation to Arizona.

[STOP reading. Be sure everyone has settled down in individual chairs and has figured out the basic concept of the activity.]

As soon as Mr. Wright backed out of the driveway, he took a left at the corner and anticipated driving right through town on his way to the Wright family destination. But suddenly, after signaling left and turning right, the whole Wright family was shook up by a near accident. Tommy Wright became so upset that he threw up, while little Penny Wright left the back seat and bounded to the front seat.

Mr. Wright decided to stop the car to take care of the situation. It was then that Mrs. Wright remembered she had left her iron on and demanded that Mr. Wright take her right back home. Mr. Wright left the car and told Mrs. Wright that he would be right back. Instead, Mr. Wright kicked the left front tire and left his family sitting in the heat. In the meantime, Baby Wright had left mother's lap and crawled right through the mess in the back seat that Tommy Wright had left.

Mr. Wright returned and told Mrs. Wright that they would go right back home to turn off the iron that she had left on. Right away, he backed out and turned left, as Mrs. Wright picked up Baby Wright and returned Penny Wright to the back seat. Left holding a dirty baby, Mrs. Wright felt sure that this vacation should have been left in her dreams. Mr. Wright pulled out, turned left, and headed right home.

TELL

- The story is finished. Which means we're done moving and yelling left and right.
- I have some questions for you...

ASK

- Why were the Wrights leaving home?
- What was their destination?
- Who threw up?
- Why was the baby dirty?
- Why did they have to go back home?
- How well do we know the answers? (maybe not very well)
- Do you think we would more easily know the answers if we had held still, without yelling and just listened to the story?
- The same thing happens when we listen to God in prayer: We listen better when we are holding still and being quiet.

EXPLAIN 2nd Activity - Tank

- We're going to do an activity now that involves balloons.
- I'm passing out a balloon to each of you.
- Please blow it up and tie it.
- Now we're going to get into groups of two [teachers, its best if you assign the partners. Put older kids with younger kids].
- One person will be blindfolded and given two blown up balloons; this person is the tank.
- The other person is the driver and cannot touch the tank or the balloons.
- The driver "drives" the tank by talking to the tank and telling it what to do, where to go, etc.
- The object of the game is to hit the other tanks and drivers with the balloons.

- If either the tank or the driver is hit by a balloon that is mid-air, then both the tank and driver are out.
- Last team left wins.
- Then we'll reverse roles and play again.

DO 2nd Activity - Tank

ASK/TELL

- Was it hard to hear your partner?
- Why?
- As the tank, did you ever just start throwing your balloons even though you couldn't hear or understand your driver?
- As the tank, did you talk back to your driver?
- Why not?
- Often times we do that – we don't hear God because of the noise. Or, we don't understand what God is telling us.
- But then, we don't say anything ourselves, and instead, we just start doing our own thing.
- And sometimes good things happen, and sometimes good things don't happen, but its pretty random.
- The next activity will help demonstrate to us what we can do when we aren't hearing clearly enough.

NOTES for 3rd Activity

- Create a start and a finish line (one end of the room to the other end)
- Randomly place paper cups and balled up newspapers in-between the start and finish lines.
- Take the teams from the last game and stick one partner at the start line and the other partner at the finish line.

EXPLAIN

- Those of you who are at the start line [*point to start line*] will, in a moment, be blindfolded.
- Your task is to get as close to or even surpass the finish line without kicking or stepping on a cup or piece of paper.
- Your partner from the last activity is at the finish line. S/he must stay behind the finish line and will yell instructions out to you to help you move through the minefield.
- If you step on an obstacle/mine, then you just went "ka-blooie!" and you'll have to sit down right where you blew up.
- After first round, we'll reverse roles.

DO 3rd Activity – Minefield

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?

- 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

- This is how it is with us and God, too.
- In the story, Elijah hears and sees a lot of big things.
- But once those things go away, then he can hear God's voice better.
- And God's voice always outlasts those other sounds, so sometimes we just have to be patient and wait.
- And that's the Good News for today.

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 the storms (Thank you for the story of Elijah and the storms)
- Please help us to listen like Elijah (Please help us to listen like Elijah)
- by helping us (By helping us)
- be still and quiet (be still and quiet)
- when listening for your voice (when listening for your voice)
- Thank you for speaking to us (Thank you for speaking to us)
- and loving us. (and loving us)
- Amen (Amen)