



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 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: DVD movie (online at www.rfour.org/media.html. Or you can contact me at support@rfour.org about receiving a DVD with all the movies on it for Season 3); TV w/DVD player; 4 to 5 scripts for puppets (see *Storytelling Supply Document S3.S2*); some sort of upright material to for the puppeteers to hide behind and put their puppets above (a large, modified cardboard box works perfectly – if you really want to get into it, get a refrigerator box from an appliance store); camcorder; popsicle puppets (see “How to make popsicle puppets” directly below)
- **How to make popsicle puppets:** Print out the pictures as provided in the *Storytelling Supply Document*. Cut them out and either paste or tape them to large craft/popsicle sticks. I often times tape the pictures to dark-colored construction paper to help with support and contrast.

Classroom Statement

This Storytelling Class consists of reading the Elijah and the still small voice; watching a “movie” about Elijah; and acting out the story using a script and popsicle puppets that is then recorded to be turned into its own movie.

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.

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, later on, take your place."

ASK (answers in parentheses)

- Why did Elijah run away and hide in a cave? (because the Queen wanted to kill him)
- What were the three things that passed Elijah by? (wind, earthquake and fire)
- What followed the wind, earthquake and fire? (Sheer silence)
- What did God tell Elijah to do after the wind, earthquake and fire? (return home; anoint people king; anoint Elisha as his student)

TELL

- We're now going to watch a short movie that retells the story you just heard, but in first person. That means the person talking will be pretending to be Elijah himself.

WATCH Video on DVD

ASK

- What was Elijah paying attention to that caused him to not be able to hear God very well? (was too worried about Israel not paying attention and Queen Jezebel wanting to kill him)

TELL

- Now we're going to make our own movie.
- We have one character, Elijah.
- He's a puppet. He has a lot things to say.
- Then there are other parts that are not speaking parts.
- And then there are noise-maker parts.
- So what we're going to do is go behind the screen, here.
- And then we'll assign parts.
- [If need be, you can assign an "audience" part to the less than enthusiastic students.]
- Our shepherd here will record our play (or maybe have a student help out here, too).
- We'll do a practice run-through (depending on how much classtime you have), where I'll be the director, helping yall know what to do and when to do it.
- Once we got through the practice run, then we film it.

DO & RECORD Popsicle Puppet Play

Puppet Play Script

Speaking Characters:

- Elijah

Non-speaking parts:

- Cloud with mouth blowing air
- Earthquake pounding sounds
- Shepherd to shake the camera
- Clouds with lightning

Popsicle "people" and props needed:

- Paper that says Outside Cave | Inside Cave
- Elijah
- Cloud with mouth blowing wind
- Cloud with lightning

Screen Play

Elijah: Nothing is going right! I'm so upset! I think I'm going to just sit in this cave and feel sorry for myself.

[bounce Elijah character around for a few seconds]

Elijah: I can't get comfortable. And I keep thinking about Queen Jezebel who wants to kill me. I mean I can understand being upset. But wanting to kill me? I did her a favor! I showed her that the Bail Prophets were fake! But instead, she just wants to kill me. What can I possibly do? It's hopeless! I just can't hold still, I'm so upset!

[bounce around back-and-forth for a few seconds]

Elijah: I should probably pray. But right now I can't focus. I just keep thinking about work! Augh!

[bangs head against cave wall]

Elijah: Alright, this is what I need to do. I need to tell God what I'm upset about. 'God, I'm upset that I do your work and even though I do it well, people want to kill me! This is my reward for doing your work and doing it well -- I get death threats! And not just from angry, toothless peasants, God-bless 'em, but from the Queen! And the rest of the people don't care. They don't listen to me about you. This is so USELESS!'

[holds still; then tilts as if listening]

Elijah: I just had a thought. A thought that said I was paying attention to the wrong things. And that I should go outside and see what's happening out there.

[move to "outside of cave" part of the sheet]

Elijah: Alright! I'm outside the cave! What do you want to show me!

[Have a cloud with a mouth blowing move in front of Elijah. Have child making blowing sounds. Elijah tilts away from the cloud]

Elijah: Oh my! That is a strong wind!

[cloud goes away]

Elijah: I don't know what the point of that was

[Shake Elijah violently. Have student(s) pound on the stage. Have shepherd gently shake the camera.]

Elijah [gently pound on your own chest when talking to simulate talking in an earthquake]: Why is the earth shaking? Is the world ending? Could I be so lucky?

[earth stops shaking. Stop pounding on chest and on the stage. Stop shaking camera.]

Elijah: Rats. I guess I'm not that lucky!

[Hold up clouds with lightning bolts coming out of them. Have students yell “Boom” for thunder effects]

Elijah: Whoa! The sky is on fire!

[pull clouds down; stop with the thunder effects]

[Be absolutely still; Hold Elijah perfectly still for five seconds; then tilt him as if he is listening; hold for another 5 seconds]

Elijah: I feel peaceful, strangely enough. I can tell that God is present, has always been present with me. I feel thankful and give thanks for this day, even though I've been upset. I give thanks to God for this life I live. I give thanks that even though the people of Israel do not listen to me, I can still listen to God. I can tell that if I sit still now and be silent, I will receive thoughts from God.

[hold still for 5 seconds]

Elijah: Really? Are you sure? You want me to anoint Jehu? He's kinda ... tiny...

{hold still for another 5 seconds}

Elijah: Ok, I will go home and anoint the kings of Aram and Israel. And I will anoint the Elisha as my student. I am still not happy about the Israelites, but I am thankful to be able to have something to do other than run away. [bounces off-stage]

TELL

- You've heard the story in three different forms, today.
- Thank you for your listening!
- Thank you for your acting!

CLEAN UP

Suggested Variations for age groups

The younger kids won't be able to read the Elijah part very well, so have the teacher or shepherd do that part.