

# Explore It

## FOR LEADERS



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### IS GOD EVEN THERE?

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📖 1 Kings 18:22-24, 25-27

Elijah goes head-to-head with Ahab and Jezebel. In a dramatic contest, Elijah's opponents pray frantically to their god Baal without an answer, and Elijah taunts them by saying that Baal seemed to be 'sleeping so you will have to wake him'. Sometimes we may be tempted to feel our God is sleeping like this. So this week we explore what we do when God feels absent.

Each child will need:

→ Pens/pencils and paper

You will need:

→ A children's newspaper like *First News* (optional) – see Action It section

## Start It

### Ask:

- What are you like at waiting for things?
- Does your family have any games that you play together when you are waiting in a queue or sat in traffic? Share them with the group.

### Option one

Play one of the games suggested by the children.

### Option two

Depending on the size of the group, work together or in smaller groups to come up with a game to play while they are waiting for something. Give them five minutes to create the game and then have a go at playing together.

- **Say:** We now have some games to play while we and our family are waiting for something. As the people in today's Bible story will tell you, waiting can be very frustrating.

Last week's *For Me* activity invited the children to learn more about the story of Elijah and the widow. If required, give the children an opportunity to share what they discovered.

## Sing It

- **Say:** In the next part of our story, Elijah and the people had been waiting a long time for God to send rain. Many of the people continued to pray to Baal, the god worshipped by King Ahab and Queen Jezebel.

- **Say:** Elijah on the other hand, continued to trust in God. Today's song reminds us how important it is to trust in God while we are waiting for him to answer our prayers.

'Waiting here for you' by Kid's Praise Company (Lyric Video) (5 mins 45 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hTq6BvZAh0>

If you would like a shorter version of the song, then a natural stopping point is 2 mins 45 secs.

## Tell It

● **Say:** In the last session we met Elijah, King Ahab and Queen Jezebel.

### Ask:

- Who was the most important god in King Ahab and Queen Jezebel's life?
- Who was the most important God in Elijah's life?

● **Say:** Last session you made predictions about what would happen next in the story. Let's find out if you were right.

### Video

Watch the clip from the beginning, recapping last session and stop it at 2 mins 29 secs – 'They both prayed for fire, and then waited to see whose god brought it first.'

*God's Story: Elijah* by Crossroads Kids' Club (stop at 2 mins 29 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2T5gAXoerjw>

### Discuss

- What did God tell Elijah to say to King Ahab and Queen Jezebel?
- How do you think the people felt about there being no rain for their crops?
- How did King Ahab and Queen Jezebel react to Elijah's news about the drought?
- How long had the people been waiting for the rain to come?
- What challenge did Elijah set for King Ahab in the third year of the drought?

The story of the challenge is found in 1 Kings 18:20-27 (ICB).

**'So Ahab called all the Israelites and those prophets to Mount Carmel. Elijah stood before the people. He said, "How long will you try to serve both Baal and the Lord? If the Lord is the true God, follow him. But if Baal is the true God, follow him!"'**

**'But the people said nothing.**

**'Elijah said, "I am the only prophet of the Lord here. But there are 450 prophets of Baal. So bring two bulls. Let the prophets of Baal choose one bull. Let them kill it and cut it into pieces. Then let them put the meat on the wood. But they are not to set fire to it. Then I will do the same with the other bull. And I will put it on the wood. But I will not set fire to it. You prophets of Baal, pray to your god. And I will pray to the Lord. The god who answers the prayer will set fire to his wood. He is the true God."**

**'All the people agreed that this was a good idea.**

**'Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "There are many of you. So you go first. Choose a bull and prepare it. Pray to your god, but don't start the fire."**

**'So they took the bull that was given to them and prepared it. They prayed to Baal from morning until noon. They shouted, "Baal, answer us!" But there was no sound. No one answered. They danced around the altar they had built.**

**'At noon Elijah began to make fun of them. He said, "Pray louder! If Baal really is a god, maybe he is thinking. Or maybe he is busy or traveling! Maybe he is sleeping so you will have to wake him!"'**

● **Say:** The prophets of Baal kept praying all day for their god to send rain, but nothing happened. They must have felt so frustrated as Elijah made fun of them.

**Ask:** We won't find out the next part of the story until next week, but what do you think happened next?

## Action It

● **Say:** Earlier in the year we spent time reading through newspapers and watching *Newsround* to find important topics to pray about. Rather than being a one-off activity, we need to keep praying for those things in the world that concern us.

## In the news

Watch the latest episode of *Newsround* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround>, look at the website or read a children's newspaper together (like *First News*) to see if there are any of our prayers that are still waiting to be answered.

If the group did not complete this activity earlier in the year, then discuss situations that people at church or around the world have been praying for that still remain unanswered.

🗨️ **Say:** We have prayed for the children stuck in the middle of conflict in the Ukraine. We have prayed for communities that are suffering the negative impact of climate change. Sometimes it can feel like God is not answering our prayers.

**Ask:** What prayers are still waiting for answers?

## Prayer concerns activity

Choose one of the ideas below, or create your own, to give the children the opportunity to share with the rest of the church the world issues they are praying for.

- ➔ Plan and set up a prayer station in the church with prompts for people to pray for specific topics.
- ➔ Help the children plan a prayer time that they can lead for the whole of the church.
- ➔ Create a prayer leaflet to share with the rest of the church.

🗨️ **Say:** One thing that we learn from Elijah is how important it is to keep praying. Just like Elijah, we don't know what happens next in the story.

## Pray It

🗨️ **Say:** We have worked out a way to share our prayer concerns with the rest of the church, but now we are going to spend time praying for them ourselves.

Give the group thinking time, and ask them to write a one-sentence prayer for one of the prayer topics raised today.

Spend time in prayer together listening to the one-sentence prayers, and then bring your time together to a close.

## Explore It

Remember to send home the Explore It Ideas for children and families.

# Explore It

## IDEAS

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.

### FOR ME



#### Create

In today's session you thought of different ways to share your prayer requests with the rest of the church. Are there any of these ideas that you could adapt to remind you to pray regularly at home?

Create your own way of remembering to pray for the situations that are on your heart.

You could:

- ➔ set up a prayer space in your room.
- ➔ create a prayer journal with different topics to explore and pray for.
- ➔ set up a prayer noticeboard and put newspaper clippings and prayer ideas on it.

It's completely up to you – the important thing is that you remember to pray.

### TOGETHER



#### Pray

In today's session the people were on year three of a very long drought. There was no water for crops and no grass for their animals. They were getting desperate and didn't know what to do.

There are still lots of people across the world struggling without clean water to drink. Watch the clip with someone at home and spend time praying for the young people who miss school in order to collect water for their family to drink.

*The girls who turned to water* by Water Aid

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-DMMJpgiFk>

Is there anything else you could do to help as a family?



#### Song for the week

'Waiting here for you' by Kid's Praise Company  
(Lyric Video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hTq6BvZAh0>

#### KIDS ALIVE! ONLINE

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive>

*Kids Alive!* The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!

