

Explore It

FOR LEADERS



A GENTLE GOD

1 Kings 19:4-14

Ahab and Jezebel had become very angry with Elijah and they both wanted him killed. We have seen how God is both spectacular and gentle in this story. It is important to know that when we switch off and slow down, we may find that God helps us in new ways. This week we explore what matters most to us and what types of activities help us to become calm.

Each child will need:

- 'Spend Time with a Gentle God' sheet, pens/pencils

You will need:

- Fun music to dance or run about to – see Start It section

Start It

Play a version of musical statues. First of all, choose some fun music. Ask the children to dance or run about, and then when the music stops, they will need to complete an action depending on the word you shout out.

The words are:

- wind
- fire
- earthquake
- whisper

You can either show them an action that you have already created, or you can agree as a group on an action for each word. Then start the music and play the game.

- **Say:** In our story today God uses the wind, an earthquake and fire, and finally a gentle whisper in which he speaks to Elijah. Make sure that you remember the actions for each one as you will need them later on in today's session.

Sing It

- **Say:** In today's story Elijah is very fed up. He cannot hear God's voice and he doesn't understand why everything is going wrong. But God sends an angel to Elijah to give him hope. Today's song is a message of hope for any of you who are feeling fed up at the moment.

'Hope' by Allstars Kids Club (3 mins 50 secs)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_t5xitQjlc

Tell It

Ask:

- Who can give us all a quick recap on Elijah's story so far?
- What happened on top of the mountain and why did it make King Ahab and Queen Jezebel so angry?

🗨️ **Say:** Today we are going to find out the next part of the story. God turned up for Elijah and showed all the people his power by turning the wet pile of wood on the altar into burning fire.

Ask: How do you think Elijah felt after that happened?

🗨️ **Say:** You may think that Elijah was full of joy, but instead he became afraid and thoroughly fed up.

Watch the clip to find out what happened.

Video

Elijah in the Wilderness by Saddleback Kids (2 mins 35 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOn2Ftucjrk&t=41s>

Ask:

- ➔ Why do you think that Elijah was so fed up?
- ➔ What did Queen Jezebel want to do to Elijah?
- ➔ How does it make you feel that someone as faithful to God as Elijah still found it difficult sometimes? Does it give you hope?
- ➔ How did God look after Elijah while he was feeling hopeless?

🗨️ **Say:** We are going to find out what happened in the final part of the story. Let's see if you have remembered the action for wind, earthquake, fire and whisper.

Give the children the chance to try out the action after each word.

🗨️ **Say:** As I read the final part of the story, you need to do the correct action whenever you hear the words wind, earthquake, fire or whisper.

The *International Children's Bible* describes the whisper as a 'quiet, gentle voice'. The word 'voice' has been changed to 'whisper' for the purposes of this activity.

Read 1 Kings 19:10-14 (*ICB*)

'Elijah answered, "Lord, God of Heaven's armies, I have always served you the best I could. But the people of Israel have broken their agreement with you. They have destroyed your altars. They have killed your prophets with swords. I am the only prophet left. And now they are trying to kill me, too!"

'Then the Lord said to Elijah, "Go. Stand in front of me on the mountain. I will pass by you." Then a very strong **wind blew. It caused the mountains to break apart. It broke apart large rocks in front of the Lord. But the Lord was not in the **wind**. After the **wind**, there was an **earthquake**. But the Lord was not in the **earthquake**. After the **earthquake**, there was a **fire**. But the Lord was not in the **fire**. After the **fire**, there was a quiet, gentle [**whisper**]. When Elijah heard it, he covered his face with his coat. He went out and stood at the entrance to the cave.**

'Then a voice said to him, "Elijah! Why are you here?"

'Elijah answered, "Lord, God of Heaven's armies, I have always served you the best I could. But the people of Israel have broken their agreement with you. They have destroyed your altars. They have killed your prophets with swords. I am the only prophet left. And now they are trying to kill me, too."'

🗨️ **Say:** God asks Elijah, 'Why are you here?'

Ask: Where do you think God wants Elijah to be?

🗨️ **Say:** Sometimes, just like Elijah, we feel like we want to give up. Following God may seem difficult, or someone might be being unkind to us. If you've ever felt like that, then remember Elijah's story and how God came to him in a gentle whisper because he is a gentle God.

Action It

Spend time with a gentle God

Explain that the children will be looking at Elijah's time in the wilderness to see how God used it to restore and strengthen him. Give each child a 'Spend time with a gentle God' sheet and talk through each section using the prompts below. Give the children time to reflect on their own situation.

Tell God how you feel: Elijah said, 'I've had enough, Lord.' He knew that God loved him even when he was tired and fed up. What difficult feelings would you like to share with God?

Eat well: God provided a delicious meal for Elijah to eat. What is your favourite meal? Draw it in the section of the handout. Try and choose a meal that will help you to grow stronger.

Rest: Elijah had been very busy doing lots of things for God and he was exhausted. What do you do to relax? What helps you to recharge your batteries after you have been serving God? Write or draw your ideas on your sheet.

Listen: Sometimes we feel like God isn't there or we can't hear him. The story of Elijah shows us that God is always with us and is willing to try to communicate with us in lots of different ways. God sent Elijah the wind, an earthquake and a fire. But it was only when Elijah was quiet enough that he was able to hear God whisper. Write down ways that you could be quiet in God's presence this week.

● **Say:** We have seen how God is both spectacular and gentle in this story.

Ask: Which do you prefer?

● **Say:** Maybe this week you could take some time to be quiet, rest in God and listen for his quiet whisper.

Pray It

● **Say:** A few weeks ago we spent time resting and relaxing in God's presence. We're going to have another go at that today. This may be something that you would like to try at home to give your mind a break from everything else that is going on.

● **Say:** We're going to listen to a song that reminds us just how much we are loved by God.

Relaxation video

Ask the group to find a place to lie down quietly on the floor and close their eyes. Just like last time, there is no expectation that the children will lay quietly for the whole song!

'Oh the deep, deep love of Jesus' (feat. Fernando Ortega) by Audrey Assad (2 min 35 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1vUhwyjdk8A>

When you feel the group is losing concentration, lower the music and close your time together by asking God to whisper into the hearts of each young person.

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



Watch

In the first two sessions we started to watch a clip all about the life of Elijah but we never got to the end. Watch the whole of the clip to discover Elijah's story.

You could write your own version of the story or even turn it into a comic strip.

God's Story Elijah by Crossroads Kids' Club

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

TOGETHER



Play

Elijah listened to God's quiet whisper. He was quiet and calm and able to hear God's voice. Watch the clip to work out how to play the Whisper Challenge and then have a go with the people at home. You could make up your own phrases linked to a film that your family loves.

'Star Wars Whisper Challenge with Daisy Ridley' by *The Tonight Show* Starring Jimmy Fallon

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FgV0yBZG6E>



Song for the week

'Hope' by Allstars Kids Club

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_t5xitQjlc

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!

