

A Gentle God


Bible verses:

1 Kings 19:4-14

Elijah at Mount Sinai


Aim:

To explore how God meets us with gentleness and patience, and teaches us to rest in his presence


Today's fruit:

Patience



In today's session God meets Elijah in a gentle whisper when he was tired and afraid.

God cared for Elijah, giving him food, rest and encouragement, and showed his patience and love. This story reminds us of the importance of resting in God's presence, listening for his voice, and trusting him with all our heart, soul and strength.

We need patience, as sometimes we need to wait for God's perfect timing.

Each child will need:

- Spend time with a gentle God handout
- Pens/pencils
- Explore It ideas handout

You will need:

- Some fun music
- Fruit of the Spirit poster: *Patience* - download from **Salvationist**



Start it

Play a version of musical statues. Play some fun music and ask the children to dance or run about. When the music stops, ask the children to complete an action depending on the word you shout out.

The words are:

- wind
- earthquake
- fire
- 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 in today's session.



Sing it

Say:

In today's story Elijah is very fed up, even after the spectacular victory on Mount Carmel. 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 one who is feeling fed up at the moment.

Song

'Hope' by Allstars Kids Club (3:50)



Share 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 had 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.

Display the *Patience* sign.



Say:

God didn't rush Elijah or get angry with him. He was patient with Elijah, giving him time to rest, eat, and hear his voice. There are times when we need to wait patiently to see what God will do next. Let's watch the clip to find out what happened.

Video

Elijah in the Wilderness by Saddleback Kids (2:35)

Ask:

- Why do you think 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 actions 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:

'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.”

(1 Kings 19:10–14 *ICB*)

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

Share the memory verse together.

Memory verse

‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.’

(Deuteronomy 6:5 *NIV*)

Say:

Elijah loved God with all his heart, soul and strength, even when he felt scared and tired. This verse reminds us that loving God means trusting him, resting in him and listening for his voice.

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.’ Elijah 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:**

Today we've seen how God met Elijah in a gentle whisper when he was tired and afraid. God cared for Elijah and gave him time to rest, because he is a patient and loving Father.

Say:

In the creation story we read that on the seventh day God rested. God didn't need to rest, but he chose to show us how important rest is, for our minds, bodies and hearts. Rest helps us to slow down, hear God's voice and feel his peace.

Ask:

- How does resting help us?
- Why is it important to have a special day of rest, a Sabbath?
- How could you make time this week to slow down and listen for God's voice?

Say:

Let's practise resting in God's love now. Find a comfy spot, lie down if you want to, close your eyes, and listen to this song as we spend time with our gentle God.

Listen

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

Lower the music gently when attention fades. Close with this prayer.

Pray:

God, thank you for being a gentle and patient Father.

Just like you cared for Elijah, you care for us and meet us when we're tired.

Teach us to rest in you, to be patient, and to trust your timing.

Help us make space this week to slow down, listen for your voice, and be filled with your peace.

Amen.

Explore it

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



Explore It is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview)

A Gentle God

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:
1 Kings 19:4-14



Aim:
To explore how God meets us with gentleness and patience, and teaches us to rest in his presence



Today's fruit:
Patience



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



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



Song for the week

'Hope' by Allstars Kids Club



Memory verse

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.'

(Deuteronomy 6:5 NIV)