

# ELIJAH HELPS A POOR WIDOW

1 KINGS 17:8-24

## **MEMORY VERSE**

1 KINGS 17:15

“So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days.”

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

Two bowls, two small spoons, two small jars that are the same size, two tables, flour, masking tape and small prizes (optional).

Play dough mixture: 2 cups flour, 1 cup salt, 1 cup water and 2 tablespoons of cooking oil, 2 bowls and zip lock bags.

One piece of paper for each child and a bowl.

## **ATTENTION GRABBER!**

### **Fill the Flour Bin!**

In today’s lesson, we will learn how the Lord provides for a widow and her son. To introduce today’s lesson, let’s see how fast you can fill up a jar with flour. You will need two bowls, two small spoons, two small jars that are the same size, and flour. Split your class into two equal teams. Set up a table for each team. On each table, set up a bowl filled with enough flour to fill one of the jars. Place one jar and one spoon on each table. Have the two teams line up behind each table. Make a starting line with masking tape.

Set the spoon next to the bowl. When you say “go,” the first child in line will go to the table, get the spoon, and take one spoonful of flour and place it in the jar. Then they will set down the spoon and return to the line tagging the next child to proceed to do the same. The next child may not go until their hand is tagged. This will continue until one team has their jar completely filled (teacher will be the judge of “completely filled”). You may want to declare a winner and award small prizes.

## LESSON TIME!

Have you or your family ever had a time when money was pretty tight? Maybe you were not even sure where your next meal was going to come from. Sometimes our circumstances can strike fear in our hearts. We wonder how God can “fix” our difficult situations.

In our lesson today, a certain widow found herself in such a situation; little did she know that her lack would result in an opportunity to bless a prophet of God—Elijah. Little did she know that she would have an encounter with the one true God and learn to trust in Him. **God wants us to learn how to trust in Him.**

### 1 KINGS 17:8-16

Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

"Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you."

So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink."

And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand."

So she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die."

And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son."

"For thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.'"

So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days.

The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah.

Last week we looked at the way the Lord God took care of the prophet Elijah in the wilderness. Elijah obeyed the word of the Lord, and God took care of his every need. As Elijah continued to walk in obedience and in harmony with God's purposes, he had an opportunity to help a widow and her son learn to trust God.

God called Elijah to go to a widow who lived in Zarephath. This was in the area of Sidon. Sidon was an area outside of Israel not ruled by king Ahab (see 1 Kings 16:31). In verse 12, the widow says to Elijah "your God." This probably means she was not an Israelite or

a Jew and did not serve the “one true God” (look up Daniel 6:16, and Ruth 1:16 to compare how some other people used the phrase “your God”).

We are not told why God sent Elijah to a nation outside of Israel and to a woman who did not believe in the one true God; perhaps, it was because God saw her heart. God loves His people and has special plans for them; but He also loves the whole world, which has yet to come to know Him. God desires to use His people to reach out to those who have never believed in Him.

God had taken care of and provided for Elijah in some pretty amazing ways. But, now, why would God send Elijah to a woman who was poor and a widow for the purpose of taking care of him? She did not have any way to support herself, yet alone a prophet from Israel.

God did not send Elijah to the richest person in Sidon or even to the owner of the supermarket; but rather, He sent Elijah to a poor widow who did not even have enough for another meal. Through this seemingly hopeless situation, both Elijah and the widow would learn to trust in God. So many times God sends us into impossible situations that our faith might grow stronger. **God wants us to learn how to trust in Him.**

This widow thought for sure that she and her son were going to die soon. Remember, from our last lesson, there was a severe drought in the land. There had not been any rain in the land for about three years causing food to be scarce. The widow’s food had completely run out. She had reached a point where she no longer felt there was any hope.

Elijah came to the widow and asked for some water and bread. Elijah would be asking her to give up the last of her food for him to eat. The widow explained that she did not have any bread and was preparing the last little bit of flour and oil she had before she and

her son would die. Elijah told her, “Do not fear.” Elijah then made a strange request. He told her to make a cake and give it to him first, and then make some for her son and herself.

Now the widow had a choice to make. Would she obey the prophet and the Lord and trust that everything would work out? Or, would she look at what she had and say, “I don’t have enough! I need this for me and my son”? God often tests our faith. He is in control; In fact, the Bible says “He owns the cattle on a thousand hills.” Surely, He can take care of our needs. As we are obedient and trust in Him, He will bless us! **God wants us to learn how to trust in Him.**

The widow chose to do what Elijah requested; and God honored His Word as He always does. The flour and oil lasted for *many* days--it did not run out! What a testimony to God’s grace and provision. Then something else happened to the widow....

## **Oil and Flour Play Dough**

Not only is flour and oil good for food, but can also be made into something fun to play with. We are going to make some homemade play dough. You will need 2 cups of flour, 1 cup of salt, 1 cup of water and 2 tablespoons of cooking oil, a couple of bowls and small zip lock bags. You can adjust this recipe up or down based on how many children you think you might have.

Mix all of the ingredients together. Add the water and the cooking oil. Next, knead the dough for at least 10 minutes. The kneading will make the dough smooth and shiny. Flour your hand to prevent the dough from sticking. As an option you can bring food coloring to make the dough a certain color. Give a little bit of dough to each child with a small zip lock bag to take home. Tell

the children that when they play with play dough, they should remember how God provides for them just like he provided for the widow and her son.

#### 1 KINGS 17:17-24

Now it happened after these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him.

So she said to Elijah, "What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?"

And he said to her, "Give me your son." So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed.

Then he cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?"

And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him."

Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived.

And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives!"

Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth."

Sometime later, the widow's circumstances took a turn for the worse. Her son died. Can you think of anything worse? Has anything ever happened to you that was so bad that you thought that God had forgotten about you? Maybe this widow thought the same thing. Put yourself in that widow's place. Her husband had died; and now, she has lost her only child. In the middle of all that pain, she was still willing to learn to trust Elijah's God, for she let Elijah take her son to the upper room where he was staying. **God wants us to learn how to trust in Him.**

We see that Elijah cried out to the Lord on her behalf. No doubt he was saddened with her over the loss of her son and wanted to help her. Elijah cries out to the Lord three times desiring that her son would come back to life.

In verse 22, we read that God heard Elijah's cry and the boy's life was restored. What a joy and a witness to God's faithfulness to the Gentile widow and Elijah.

Again, the widow saw that God is true and can work miracles on behalf of those who trust in Him. She declared, "Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth." What lessons she learned about trusting God!

We, too, can trust in God in every circumstance of life. Certainly, God is able to take care of us, no matter how hopeless our situation seems, just as He cared and provided for the widow and her son. Our faith is built as God delivers us from one difficult situation and then another, just as the widows faith was built. Let us keep our confidence in God. He will never fail us! **God wants us to learn how to trust in Him.**



## **Pick a Word Review**

Before class choose 20 – 25 key words from today’s lesson (i.e.: flour, Elijah, widow, etc.). Write them on a small piece of paper and place them in a bowl. Pass the bowl around class and have each child pick one word each. After everyone has chosen a word allow the children to take turns sharing what their word is and how it is important for today’s lesson.

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to trust in the Lord with all of their hearts and to give any problems or difficult situations to the Lord. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.