

Elisha & the Widow's Oil

2 Kings 4

PPT Title

Elisha & the Widow's Oil

Main Point: Our actions give proof of our faith in God.

Key Verse: *I will show you my faith by what I do.* - James 2:18b

Props: A small bottle of oil, several clay or ceramic pots and jars displayed at the front of the classroom

BACKGROUND/REVIEW

Say: Remember, a prophet is a person chosen by God to be His messenger. **Ask:** Who can tell me the name of the prophet who was taken up into heaven? *Elijah* (ee-LY-dzhuh). **Ask:** Who can tell me the name of the man that replaced him as the most important prophet? *Elisha* (ee-LY-shuh). **Say:** Immediately after Elijah was taken to heaven, Elisha began being used by God to perform miracles. 2 Kings 3 records how Elisha was used to win a military battle for the nation of Israel.

Remember, after King Solomon died, God allowed Israel to be split into 2 nations: Israel in the North and Judah in the South. Ahab was the evil King of Israel who was married to the wicked Jezebel. These two ruled Israel while Elijah was the leading prophet.

Now we are in a new era. Elijah is gone; Ahab and Jezebel are dead. At this point in history, one of Ahab's sons, Joram, was the King of Israel. Joram was not *quite* as evil as his parents, but he still sinned in God's sight. There was a good, God-respecting King named Jehoshaphat over Judah, and Elisha was the head prophet.

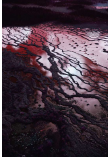


MOAB REVOLTS (2 Kings 3)

With Ahab gone, the king of Moab decided to rebel against Israel. King Joram asked the King of Judah to be on his side. The two Kings, Joram and Jehoshaphat, united their armies and traveled toward their enemy. But after marching for seven days, they were completely out of water. There was no water for the soldiers or their horses. Good King Jehoshaphat wanted to ask a prophet of God for advice. Elisha told bad King Joram that if it weren't for Jehoshaphat, he wouldn't even speak to Joram. Because Jehoshaphat was a King who respected the Lord, Elisha was willing to help them.

Elisha heard a message from the Lord, and told it to the Kings. The Lord told them to dig ditches all over the land. The Lord said, "You will not see wind or rain. But this valley will be filled with water. Then you, your cattle and your other animals will have water to drink. That's an easy thing for the Lord to do. He will also hand Moab over to you." (2 Kings 3:17-18) So the soldiers dug the ditches, and the next morning water came flooding in! It didn't come from a rainstorm; it came flooding in from the country that the soldiers had just traveled through. **Ask:** Now how do we know that the Kings and soldiers believed that God would send the water? *The soldiers dug the ditches!* **Say:** If they had not believed God, the men would not have spent all night digging ditches! God invited the men to be part of His plan, and **their actions gave proof of their trust in God.**





With the ditches full of water, the soldiers and their horses had plenty to drink. In addition, when the Moab soldiers looked down over the land, the ditches of water looked red to them. Perhaps it was the reflection of the sunrise in the water, or maybe God just made it look red. The Moabites thought the ground was covered in blood! They thought the soldiers of Judah and Israel had all killed each other during the night. So the Moab army came running down expecting all their enemies to be dead. These soldiers were taken by surprise when the soldiers of Israel and Judah ran out to fight them. That day, the armies of God's people won the battle against the army of Moab.

Application: Elisha helped the two Kings because Jehoshaphat respected and trusted God. Elisha made it very clear that if Jehoshaphat had not been involved in the battle, he would not have helped them (2 Kings 3:14). Did you know that this principle applies to you? God is with His children. He remembers those who trust in Him, and often His blessings spill over onto the non-believers in our lives. For example, what if a believer is on a team with non-believers? When God blesses the believer, the team receives a blessing. The same is true in a family. If one family member does not believe in the Lord, he or she will still get to share in some of the blessings that the believers receive (1 Corinthians 7:12-14). Whenever God blesses you, be sure to give Him the credit and glory for it. That way, those around you who benefit will be drawn to the God who gives all good things to us (James 1:17).

THE WIDOW'S OIL (2 Kings 4:1-7)

Say: God used Elisha to do a miracle for the whole nation of Israel. Next we see that God is just as concerned about individual people. God had compassion on a woman who was left alone to raise her two young sons. Her husband was in the school of prophets, but he had died.



The wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha. She said, "My husband is dead. You know how much respect he had for the Lord. But he owed money to someone. And now that person is coming to take my two boys away. They will become his slaves."

Elisha replied to her, "How can I help you? Tell me. What do you have in your house?"

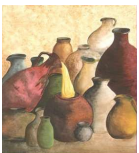
"I don't have anything there at all," she said. "All I have is a little olive oil."

Elisha said, "Go around to all of your neighbors. Ask them for empty jars. Get as many as you can. Then go inside your house. Shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all of the jars. As each jar is filled, put it over to one side."

The woman left him. After that, she shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her. And she kept pouring. When all of the jars were full, she spoke to one of her sons. She said, "Bring me another jar."

But he replied, "There aren't any more left." Then the oil stopped flowing.

She went and told the man of God about it. He said, "Go and sell the oil. Pay what you owe. You and your sons can live on what is left."



Say: This woman was in a very desperate situation. She was in debt. Back then, when someone had a debt they could not pay, they had to offer themselves or their children as slaves to work until the debt was paid off. The only thing she owned that had any value was some oil, but it was almost gone. Then she would have nothing. With nowhere else to turn, she went to Elisha, the greatest prophet. **Teacher:** As you speak, show your many jars, hold up your small jar of oil, and make the motions as if you are pouring oil into each jar, then set it aside. **Say:** Elisha told the woman to collect empty jars from all her neighbors. She took her very small amount of oil and poured it into the first empty jar. Miraculously, the oil kept on pouring until the jar was filled.

She set it aside and poured oil into the next jar. One by one, she filled each jar, until there were no empty jars left. With this abundance of oil, the woman could sell the oil, pay her debt, and still have plenty of money to provide for her needs and the needs of her sons. The Lord took what little the woman had and He multiplied it. He not only gave her enough money to pay her debt and keep her children from becoming slaves. But He gave her plenty extra so that she could buy food, clothing, and everything else they would need in the future. **Ask:** Now how do we know that the woman believed that God would help her? *She sent her sons to collect jars from their neighbors!* **Say:** If she had not believed God, she would not have bothered the neighbors and risked being embarrassed if nothing happened. God invited this woman to be a part of his plan, and **her actions gave proof of her trust in God.**



Application: Isn't this story a beautiful picture of how much God cares for His children? No problem is too great or too small for our loving God! Jesus taught His disciples how much God cares for each of us. He said:

Aren't five sparrows sold for two pennies? But God does not forget even one of them. In fact, He even counts every hair on your head! So don't be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows. - Luke 12:6-7

If God takes care of the smallest bird in the sky, He will certainly take care of those who trust in Him.

THE SHUNAMMITE WOMAN (2 Kings 4:8-37)

Say: A rich woman and her husband lived in a town called Shunem. Every time Elisha came to visit Shunem, the woman invited Elisha to eat with them. The woman was kind to Elisha because she knew he was a holy man of God. She and her husband even made a small bedroom on their roof so Elisha would have a place to stay when he was in town.



One day Elisha came. He went up to his room. He lay down there. He said to his servant Gehazi, "Go and get the Shunammite woman." So he did. She stood in front of Elisha.

He said to Gehazi, "Tell her, 'You have gone to a lot of trouble for us. Now what can we do for you? Can we speak to the king for you? Or can we speak to the commander of the army for you?'"

She replied, "I live among my own people. I have everything I need here."

After she left, Elisha asked Gehazi, "What can we do for her?"

Gehazi said, "Well, she doesn't have a son. And her husband is old."

Then Elisha said, "Bring her here again." So he did. She stood in the doorway. "You will hold a son in your arms," Elisha said. "It will be about this time next year."

"No, my master!" she objected. "You are a man of God. So don't lie to me!" - 2 Kings 4:11-16

Say: When Elisha offered the woman any blessing, she had a very humble attitude. She said that she had everything that she needed. In fact, there was one thing she did not have - a child of her own. But having a child was more than the woman could ever hope for. She was afraid Elisha was kidding with her. But sure enough, she became pregnant. And one year later, she was holding her new baby boy, just as Elisha had said.





The boy grew. One day he went to his father who was out in a field watching the servants gather the crops.

The boy said to his father, "My head hurts! It really hurts!"

His father told a servant, "Carry him to his mother." The servant lifted the boy up. He carried him to his mother.



The boy sat on her lap until noon. Then he died. She went up to the room on the roof. There she laid him on the bed of the man of God. Then she shut the door and went out.

She sent for her husband. She said, "Please send me one of the servants and a donkey. Then I can go quickly to the man of God and return." - 2 Kings 4:19-22

Her husband asked why she wanted to go to Elisha, but she didn't answer. She told him there was nothing to worry about. Then she rode to Mount Carmel to find Elisha. Elisha saw her while she was still a long way off. He sent his servant out to see if she was okay. She told the servant that everything was all right. But when she got to Elisha, she fell to his feet. Elisha could tell that she was terribly upset.

"My master, did I ask you for a son?" she said. "Didn't I tell you, 'Don't get my hopes up'?"

Elisha said to Gehazi, "Tuck your coat into your belt. Take my wooden staff and run to Shunem. Don't say hello to anyone you see. If anyone says hello to you, don't answer. Lay my staff on the boy's face."



But the child's mother said, "I won't leave you. And that's just as sure as the Lord and you are alive." So Elisha got up and followed her.

Gehazi went on ahead. He laid Elisha's wooden staff on the boy's face. But there wasn't any sound. The boy didn't move at all.

So Gehazi went back to Elisha. He told him, "The boy hasn't awakened."

Elisha arrived at the house. The boy was dead. He was lying on Elisha's bed.

*Elisha went into the room. He shut the door. He was alone with the boy. **He prayed to the Lord.** - 2 Kings 4:28-33*



Then Elisha spread out over the boy, and the boy's body began to get warm. Elisha walked back and forth across the floor. Then he returned to the boy and spread out over him again. The boy sneezed seven times, and then opened his eyes!

Elisha called for the boy's mother. When she came, Elisha said, "Take your son." She came in and fell at Elisha's feet. Her heart was overflowing with gratitude.



Ask: Now how do we know that the woman believed that God could save her son? *She rode to get Elisha!* **Say:** If she had not believed God could raise her son to life, she would not have left her son and rode to Mount Carmel! This woman knew that God gave her the son in the first place, and she knew that He was the One who could restore his life. She did not hesitate to go to the man of God, and she refused to leave him until her son was healed.

Application: From the greatest King to the poorest widow, our almighty God cares about the needs of His followers. He hears our prayers (Proverbs 15:29), He does not sleep (Psalm 121:3-4), and He does not forget (Psalm 115:12). Many times He invites us to be part of His plan, and when we obey, our actions give proof that we trust in Him.

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