

The Gentle Whisper

UPPER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: Sometimes, when God wants to get our attention, he speaks to us in a gentle whisper.

Scripture: 1 Kings 19:11-12

Memory Verse: 1 Kings 19:12 - 'After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.'

The Children's Sermon

You know, the Bible tells us about a man named Elijah. Now Elijah was a prophet, a man who was chosen by God to tell the people God's messages. He did some things sort of like what a pastor does nowadays. Now Elijah ran away from the people that he was trying to help, and was hiding because an evil queen didn't like it when Elijah gave the people God's messages. He was hiding in a cave and trying to figure out what God wanted him to do next. So, God sent a strong windstorm, he sent an earthquake, and there was also a great fire. Elijah thought that he would hear God's voice in all of that bad weather, but he didn't. And you'll never guess how God finally spoke to him! Yes, he spoke to him in a (softly) gentle whisper. God told him what he should do, what he should say to the people, and promised that he would protect him from the evil queen. So Elijah did what God said and went back to the people and gave them God's message.

This story is so special because it teaches us about Elijah's Whisper. It's not just about the sound; it's about how sometimes the most important messages come in the quietest ways. Elijah was waiting for something big and loud, but what he needed to hear came in a whisper.

Now, let's think about when we are playing with our friends. Sometimes, we're all talking and laughing loudly, and maybe your friend whispers something to you. You have to stop and really listen, right? It's just like that with God. Sometimes, we expect big signs to know what God wants us to do, but often, it's in the quiet moments that we can hear Him best.

Elijah's Whisper teaches us to be quiet sometimes, to listen. It's like when you're playing hide and seek. You have to be really quiet to hear the footsteps of your friend who is "it" coming to find you. If you're too noisy, you might miss it. In the same way, if our hearts and minds are too noisy with worries, games, or even our own plans, we might miss what God is trying to tell us.

After Elijah heard the whisper, he wrapped his face with his cloak and went out to stand at the entrance of the cave. That's when he really listened to God. This part of the story shows us that Elijah respected and honored the voice of God. He knew it was special and important.

Elijah's Whisper wasn't just for Elijah; it's for us too. It tells us that God doesn't always speak in the ways we expect. He might not use a loud voice or a big sign. Sometimes, He speaks to our hearts in a way that's as soft as a butterfly landing on a flower.

Why do you think Elijah paid attention and did what God wanted him to do? Because when God spoke to him in a gentle whisper, just like my students, he had to listen and pay attention, so he could know what he was supposed to do and say!

Now, God may get our attention when there's a really big storm, for a little while, at least. But the times when God speaks to us the most is when we read the Bible, or a teacher or pastor teaches us something and we just feel or know in our hearts that He is speaking to us, telling us what He wants us to do. So, next time, we read the Bible, or when a teacher or pastor here at church tells us something about God, let's try to remember that, in a way, God is speaking to us, let's try to listen, and let's try to do what God wants us to do.

Elijah's Whisper is a reminder for us all. It tells us that no matter how noisy the world around us gets, we can find quiet moments to listen to God. It might be when you're lying in bed before you sleep, when you're looking at the stars, or when you're sitting quietly after reading a Bible story. In those moments, if we listen, we might hear God's whisper in our hearts.

And you know, sometimes, we can be like Elijah for others. When a friend is sad or needs help, instead of using loud words or big actions, sometimes a gentle whisper, a kind word spoken softly, can mean the most. It can be like a hug for their heart.

So, let's remember Elijah's Whisper in our lives. Let's find time to be quiet, to listen for God's gentle guidance. And let's use our whispers to help and encourage others, just like God does for us.

Let's stand and have our prayer. Dear God, help us to listen for Your whispers in our lives. Help us to know that even when You speak softly, Your words are very important. Help us to be quiet sometimes, so we can hear You better. And help us to use gentle words to help our friends, just like You do for us. Amen.

Bible Memory Verse

1 Kings 19:12 - 'After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.'

You Will Need:

- Blankets or large towels
- A small, battery-operated fan (optional)
- A flashlight
- A small bell or chime

Get Ready:

- Gather all materials and ensure the flashlight and fan (if using) have batteries.
- Create a 'cave' by draping blankets over chairs to simulate the cave where Elijah found shelter.

Do This:

1. Have the children sit inside the 'cave' you've created. Explain how Elijah was looking for God in the big and loud events like the wind, earthquake, and fire, but found Him in the gentle whisper.
2. Turn on the fan outside the cave to simulate the wind and ask if they can find God in the wind. Then, shine the flashlight into the cave to represent the fire and ask again. Finally, gently ring the bell or chime to represent the gentle whisper and discuss how sometimes God speaks in quiet ways we need to listen for.
3. Encourage the children to be still and quiet for a moment, listening for God's 'gentle whisper' in their hearts. Conclude by having them share any thoughts or feelings they experienced during the quiet time.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- Bible or printed copies of 1 Kings 19:11-12
- A variety of noise-making items (e.g., small bells, whistles, drums)
- Quiet, gentle sound items (e.g., feathers for waving, a small battery-operated fan, a quiet music box)
- Blindfolds
- Quiet space large enough for the group

Get Ready:

- Set up two areas: one for the loud noises (Storm Station) and one for the gentle whispers (Whisper Station).
- Test your quiet, gentle sound items to ensure they can produce a soft, soothing sound.
- Review 1 Kings 19:11-12 to familiarize yourself with the story of Elijah and how God spoke to him.

Do this:

1. ****Introduction to Elijah's Story****: Gather the children and tell them the story of Elijah from 1 Kings 19:11-12, emphasizing how God wasn't in the wind, earthquake, or fire, but in the gentle whisper. Explain that today, they'll experience something similar.

2. ****Storm Station Activity****: Blindfold each child in turn and have them stand or sit in the middle of the Storm Station. The other children make loud noises using the items provided. After a minute, guide the blindfolded child away, asking if they could hear anything other than the noise.

3. **Whisper Station Activity**: Move to the Whisper Station. Blindfold a child and have them listen quietly. Use the gentle sound items to create soft, soothing sounds around them. After a minute, remove the blindfold and ask if they could hear the gentle sounds and how it made them feel.

4. **Reflection and Discussion**: Gather the children and discuss the activities. Ask them how they felt during the loud and quiet moments and if they've ever noticed quiet moments in their lives where they could "hear" God. Encourage them to think about how they can find quiet time with God every day, even in small ways.

5. **Closing Prayer**: End with a prayer, asking God to help us listen for His gentle whispers in our lives, amidst all the noise and distractions.

Snack Activity: Whispers of the Wind Edible Crafts

You'll Need:

- Mini marshmallows
- Pretzel sticks
- Blue frosting
- Graham crackers
- Plastic knives or spreaders
- Small bowls
- Paper plates

Get Ready: Lay out all your materials on a clean table. Place a paper plate in front of each child for their crafting area.

Do this:

1. Spread blue frosting on a graham cracker using a plastic knife or spreader to create the 'sky'. This represents the calm after the storm and the peaceful environment where Elijah heard God's whisper.
2. Place mini marshmallows at one edge of the graham cracker to represent the gentle whisper of God. Explain how God's voice can be soft and gentle, not always loud or obvious.
3. Use pretzel sticks to create a small figure or symbol on the graham cracker, representing Elijah or ourselves listening for God's whisper. Discuss the importance of being quiet and listening for God's guidance in our lives.

Game Activity: Whisper Wind

You'll Need:

- A blindfold for each child
- Various objects that can make noise (bells, shakers, etc.)
- A quiet, open space

Get Ready: Place the noisy objects around the open space at different locations, ensuring there's enough room for children to walk around safely without running into each other.

Do this:

1. Explain to the children that in 1 Kings 19:11-12, God didn't speak to Elijah through the wind, earthquake, or fire, but through a gentle whisper. Today, they'll learn to listen for God's whisper.
2. Blindfold one child at a time, spinning them gently to disorient their direction. The other children will pick up an object and make a noise with it, then quietly place it back.

3. The blindfolded child must listen carefully to the direction of the sound and point to where they think it came from. After guessing, they can remove the blindfold to see if they were right. The goal is to understand that sometimes, we need to be still and listen carefully to hear God's guidance, much like listening for the gentle whisper among louder noises.

4. Rotate until all children have had a turn to be blindfolded and to make noises with the objects. Conclude with a discussion on how this activity relates to listening for God's guidance in our lives.

Craft Activity: The Gentle Whisper Wind Chimes

You'll Need:

- A small clay pot (4-5 inches in diameter)
- Fishing line or thin string
- Beads (various sizes, including some large enough to stop at knots)
- Small metal washers or bells
- Acrylic paint & brushes
- A printed copy of 1 Kings 19:11-12

Get Ready: Prepare a work area by covering it with newspaper or a plastic sheet. Have the scripture printed and ready to discuss.

Do this:

1. Begin by reading 1 Kings 19:11-12 together. Discuss how God can speak in quiet ways, not just through loud or dramatic events. Emphasize the importance of listening for God's gentle whisper.
2. Paint the clay pot with scenes or symbols that represent peace, quiet, and listening for God. Allow the paint to dry.

3. Cut the fishing line into various lengths (between 12-24 inches). Tie a bead or washer at one end of each string to act as a stopper. Thread more beads onto the string for decoration, then finish each string by tying a bell or washer at the other end.
4. Once the pot is dry, punch small holes around the rim (parents or the teacher can help with this step). Tie the strings securely to the pot's rim, spacing them evenly. The bells or washers should hang down from the pot.
5. Hang the wind chime in a place where it can catch the breeze. Every time the chime rings, let it be a reminder to listen for God's gentle whisper in our lives.

Prayer Activity: Whispers of God

You'll Need:

- A quiet room or outdoor space
- Several sheets of paper
- Pens or pencils

Get Ready: Prepare a comfortable, quiet space where children can sit and listen without interruptions. Distribute sheets of paper and pens or pencils to each child.

Do this:

1. Begin by reading 1 Kings 19:11-12 aloud to the group. Explain that sometimes God speaks to us not in loud or dramatic ways, but in gentle whispers.
2. Ask the children to sit quietly for a few minutes, close their eyes, and listen for any sounds they can hear around them. Encourage them to focus on the quietest sounds, the ones they usually overlook.
3. After the listening session, invite them to write or draw on their paper about anything they felt or heard during the silence. It could be something as simple as the

sound of their own breathing, the wind, or a distant bird. Encourage them to think about how God might use gentle whispers or quiet moments to speak to us.

4. Conclude by sharing their experiences in a circle, discussing how God can communicate in subtle ways and the importance of taking time to listen.