

## Lesson #3-8

# *The Widow of Zarephath*

1 Kings 17:1-16 [17-24]



### Key Verse:

The jar of meal was not emptied, neither did the jug of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord that [God] spoke by Elijah.  
1 Kings 17:16

### The Point:

God provides for us, often in ways we do not expect.



## *Introduction*

We first meet Elijah as he warns the king of Israel that there will be a drought. Then, God sends Elijah to Zarephath, where he meets a widow who feeds him. The widow and her son were starving, and she was about to make a final meal to eat before they died. Elijah went from prophesying to the most powerful person in Israel to telling a starving family in a foreign land that they would not run out of food. The widow trusted Elijah, and neither her flour nor oil ran out from that day forward.

### The Point

**God often provides for us in ways that we do not expect.** The story begins with a detail about where Elijah is from: he is a Tishbite from Tishbe. Neither Elijah nor his hometown are well known. This is an important detail, because it tells us that prophets can come from just about anywhere and, as the story communicates, speak to people in just about any circumstances. How about today? Anywhere you have been and anywhere you go, God can speak to you and through you for the sake of guiding and blessing others.

# Activities a la Carte

## Activities

## Supplies

### Introduction

#### *Where Are You From?*

Discuss perceptions based on birthplace.

10 min.

- † Paper
- † Pens or pencils

### Learning the Story

#### *Prophetic Warnings and Blessings*

Map messages to different characters.

10 min.

- † Bibles
- † Activity Sheet #3-8.A
- † Pens or pencils

### Activities

#### *Bread and Oil for God's People*

Consider God's gifts to people.

20 min.

- † Activity Sheet #3-8.B
- † Whole wheat flour
- † White flour
- † Baking powder
- † Salt
- † Oil
- † Hot water
- † Honey
- † Molasses

# Activities a la Carte

## Activities

## Supplies

### Activities

#### *What Is a Prophet?*

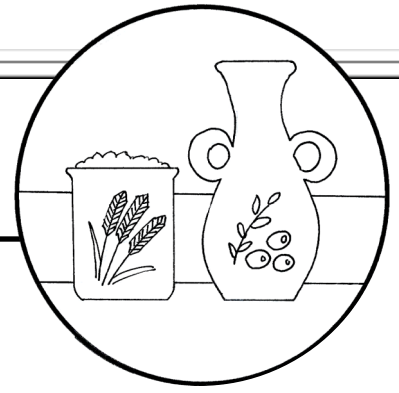
Answer questions about Elijah's story.

*10 min.*

- † Bibles
- † Activity Sheet #3-8.C
- † Pens or pencils
- † Magic 8-Ball® toy
- † Optional: Activity Sheet #3-8.D, scissors, basket or bowl; or Internet-connected device

### Prayer

# *God's Story @ Home*



## *Introduction (10 minutes)*

### *Where Are You From?*

Discuss perceptions based on birthplace.

#### *Supplies:*

- † Paper
- † Pens or pencils

#### *Instructions:*

1. Discuss the following questions. Remember to listen to everyone and give everyone a chance to tell their story. Start with the youngest person and then circle around so each person has an opportunity to speak.
  - **Where are you from?**
  - **Is where you are from the same as the place you were born? If it is somewhere different, explain.**
  - **What makes someone from the place you are from unique?**
  - **Do you think other people wish they could be from the same place you are from? Why or why not?**
2. **As we hear today's Bible story, be prepared to meet people who come from many different places. We will meet Elijah, King Ahab, and a widow with her son, and they are all from different places on the map, sometimes places with unusual or unfamiliar names. We will hear about how God finds a way to meet and speak to each of the people in our story, no matter who they are or where they are from.**

## *Learning the Story (10 minutes)*

### *Prophetic Warnings and Blessings*

Map messages to different characters.

#### *Supplies:*

- † Bibles
- † Activity Sheet #3-8.A
- † Pens or pencils

#### *Preparation:*

1. Make at least one copy of Activity Sheet #3-8.A.
2. Decide if you will do this activity as a family or individually.

#### *Instructions:*

1. **God sent Elijah with messages of warning to King Ahab and messages of blessing to the widow and her son. Not only does God's message go to very different kinds of people, but God's message is also delivered to many kinds of places. King Ahab ruled over God's people in Israel, while the widow lived in another country, now called Syria. This tells us that God's prophets speak to the most powerful and the most humble people alike, to people near and far. God's voice knows no boundaries.**
2. **Turn to your activity sheet and answer each of the questions about Elijah, King Ahab, the widow, and yourself. We will find answers about Elijah, King Ahab, and the widow in the story we are focusing on today in 1 Kings 17:1-16. However, we will not find direct answers about ourselves in the Bible. Instead, we get to imagine ourselves as part of God's story, and wonder about the kinds of warnings and blessings God might send to us and what they might mean.**
3. **Afterward, discuss the following questions:**
  - **How do you think God chooses whether to send a warning or a blessing to different people?**
  - **How do you think King Ahab felt when Elijah told him Israel would not get any rain until further notice? How do you think the widow felt when Elijah told her to feed him the last bit of her food, and that she should not worry because her flour and oil would not run out?**
  - **How might you would respond to a prophet giving you a warning or a blessing like these?**



## *Activity (15 minutes)*

### *Bread and Oil for God's People*

Consider God's gifts to people.

#### *Supplies:*

- † Activity Sheet #3-8.B
- † Whole wheat flour
- † White flour
- † Baking powder
- † Salt
- † Oil
- † Hot water
- † Honey
- † Molasses

#### *Preparation:*

1. You can make a smaller batch and use a toaster oven if you prefer.
2. Make a copy of the recipe found on Activity Sheet #3-8.B.

#### *Instructions:*

1. **We are going to prepare bread to help us remember our story.**
2. Work together to prepare the bread from the recipe on Activity Sheet #3-8.B.
3. **As you can see we have an abundance of bread in front of us. Just like the widow of Zarephath we can see God's promises of flour and oil right in front of us.**
4. **Bread is as important to Christians today as it was to the widow of Zarephath but for different reasons. The widow was starving to death from lack of food. At our church, very few of us have ever or will experience what it is like to come close to death by starvation. However, we gather knowing that we are all hungry to see God at work in our lives.**
5. **God responds to our hunger. God promises to be present when we break bread—eat—together, whether that it at home, at school, at work, or at church. Furthermore, one of the many ways we see God during worship is in the context of communion. God appears among us in the bread that is blessed and distributed.**



## Activity (10 minutes)

### What Is a Prophet?

Answer questions about Elijah's story.

#### Supplies:

- † Bibles
- † Activity Sheet #3-8.C
- † Pens or pencils
- † Magic 8-Ball® toy
- † Optional: Activity Sheet #3-8.D, scissors, basket or bowl; or Internet-connected device

#### Preparation:

1. Make copies of Activity Sheet #3-8.C person.
2. If you do not have a Magic 8-Ball® toy available, do an Internet search for online versions, or download a Magic 8 Ball® app to your phone. You may also print out Activity Sheet #3-8.D and cut into strips. Fold the strips and place them in a basket or bowl from which to draw them at random.

#### Instructions:

1. **We are going to begin learning about God's prophets today, starting with a story about a prophet named Elijah. Let's talk about what a prophet means to the Christian church, because the word prophet can mean lots of different things to lots of different people.**
2. **Our story introduces us to the prophets. Sometimes people think that prophets are people who can magically tell what the future has in store, similar to a fortune teller. So, today we are going to head deeper into the story to learn about the difference between popular ideas about prophets and what the Bible has to say about prophets.**
3. **Use Activity Sheet #3-8.C to ask the Magic 8-Ball® toy the questions. Record your answers on the activity sheet.**
4. **Now, think back to our story or look in your Bible to discover what kinds of answers the people receive to their questions from the prophet Elijah . Write your answers on the activity sheet.**

# Prayer

Review the lesson by discussing the following questions.

1. **Do you think it is harder to give someone a warning that they do not want to hear or to give someone a blessing that they might not imagine is possible? Why?**
2. **Is it harder to give warnings and blessings to someone you know or to a stranger? Why?**
3. **Practice giving others a blessing. No matter who we are, where we are from, or who we are speaking to, we can always bring a message of God's blessing. Find a partner and each of you draw a cross on each other's forehead and give the person a word of blessing. Here are some examples of words of blessings you might use:**
  - **May God bless you with blessings that never run dry!**
  - **May God bless you with life as God blessed the widow!**
  - **May God bless you to bless others like Elijah did!**
  - **God loved Elijah, God loved the widow, and God loves you!**

Stand in a circle to pray. Use the following or say your own prayer.

**God of creation,** (stretching both hands up in a circle)

**You send us warnings,** (extending left arm out with hand up, communicating "stop")

**You send us blessings,** (extending right hand out with palm up, communicating "gift")

**So we can live with others,** (grasp hands of those next to you)

**And love others.** (put your hands on the shoulders of those next to you)

**Give us your words to share,** (cup hands around both sides of your mouth)

**And ears to hear when you have a message for us.** (cup hands around ears)

**Amen.**

If you have the "Living the Word: Sharing God's Story @ Home" sheet, remember to use it throughout the week as a part of your family devotions!

# *Prophetic Warnings and Blessings*

*Map messages to different characters.*

	<b>Elijah</b>	<b>King</b>	<b>Widow</b>	<b>Me</b>
<b>Where does this person come from?</b>		Israel		
<b>What does this person expect will happen to them?</b>				
<b>Does this person get a warning or a blessing from God?</b>			Blessing	
<b>What is the warning or the blessing this person receives?</b>				
<b>What happens as a result of the warning or blessing from God?</b>	Even though it was sometimes wonderful and sometimes difficult (both a warning and a blessing), God called Elijah to be a prophet.			



# *Bread and Oil for God's People*

*Consider God's gifts to people.*

## Luther Seminary Bread Recipe:

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1 cup white flour
- 1 1/4 tsp. baking powder
- 1 1/4 tsp. salt
- 4 tsp. oil
- 3/4 cup + 2 Tbsp. very hot water (minimum of 180 degrees F/82 degrees C)
- 3 Tbsp. honey
- 3 Tbsp. molasses

### Instructions:

1. Sift dry ingredients together **three times**. It is critically important to sift dry ingredients!
2. Stir in 4 tsp. oil. Set aside.
3. Mix wet ingredients together until the honey and molasses are dissolved:
4. Add wet ingredients to dry ingredients and mix well. Dough should be slightly sticky. Do not knead.
5. Divide into four balls and flatten each into a 1/4 inch thick disk.
6. With a knife, score the top of each loaf into eight pie-shaped sections, so that the sections can be more easily broken off while serving. Alternatively, you could score a cross onto the loaf.
7. Lay the loaves on a baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees F/176 C for 10 minutes. Remove from oven and brush the tops of the loaves with oil. Bake an additional 5-8 minutes. Let cool.

Yields: four 8 oz. loaves. The loaves freeze well.



# What Is A Prophet?

Answer questions about Elijah's story.

	<b>Magic 8-Ball® Answer</b>	<b>Prophet Elijah's Answer</b> (relaying a message of warning or blessing from God)
<b>King Ahab:</b> Is there going to be rain in my kingdom tomorrow?	Example: <i>You may rely on it</i>	Example: <i>No, there will be no rain until I bring you another word from God.</i> (1 Kings 17:1)
<b>King Ahab:</b> Is there going to be rain in my kingdom in a month?		
<b>Widow of Zarephath:</b> Am I going to die from starvation?		
<b>Widow of Zarephath:</b> Is my son going to die from starvation?		
<b>Widow of Zarephath:</b> Will there ever be enough for my son and I to eat?		
<b>Widow of Zarephath:</b> Does anyone notice my son and me and care?		



# *What Is A Prophet?*

*Answer questions about Elijah's story.*

It is certain
It is decidedly so
Without a doubt
Yes, definitely
You may rely on it
As I see it, yes
Most likely
Outlook good
Yes
Signs point to yes
Ask again later
Better not tell you now
Cannot predict now
Concentrate and ask again
Don't count on it
My reply is no
My sources say no
Outlook not so good
Very doubtful