

LESSON 2—ELISHA, Part 1: DEADLY STEW & A FLOATING AXE HEAD

Bible Reference: 2 Kings 4:38-41; 6:1-7

Key Verse: Philippians 4:4—Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

OVERVIEW

- Bible Story
- Key Verse
- Prayer Part
- Small Group Activities

ITEMS NEEDED:

- Signs that say: *Elisha, Servant, One of Them, Man Cutting Wood*
- A can of diet soda, a can of non-diet soda and a large clear container $\frac{3}{4}$ full of water.
- Signs for: The Lord's Prayer sign
- Each small group will need items for the Prayer and Praise journal craft.

BIBLE LESSON

(Based on 2 Kings 4:38-41; 6:1-7)

SAY: We are so glad that you're here today. Today we're continuing a new series called "The Choice to Rejoice."

CONTROL TOOL

Anytime I say, "*Make the choice!*" I want you to say, "*To rejoice!*"
Practice a few times.

REPEAT after me: *Give thanks In EVERYTHING, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus—1 Thessalonians 5:18.*

Use other variations as well:

Have boys say the first part / Girls say the second part.

Have those with dark hair shout the first part / Those with light hair, the second part.

Have those wearing tennis shoes say the first part / Those with sandals or dress shoes say the second part.

SAY: Because God is so good and we can trust Him, we can give thanks even when "bad" things happen.

ASK: **Who remembers what last week's Bible story was about?** (Paul and Silas. Briefly review the story with them.)

ASK: **What bad thing happened?** (They were falsely accused and thrown in prison.)

ASK: **How did Paul and Silas respond?** (They kept trusting God and were even singing. They made the choice to rejoice.)

ASK: **Who knows what book of the Bible last week's story came from?** (Acts.)

ASK: **Is the book of Acts in the Old Testament or New Testament?** (New Testament.)

SAY: Today's story comes from the Old Testament and happened about 900 years before Jesus was born. The next few weeks we're going to be looking at stories that happened to one of God's prophets, a man named Elisha.

ASK: **What do you know about Elisha?**

SAY: We're going to learn a lot about him over the next few weeks.

Bible Story

Choose 4 volunteers and give them signs that say: Elisha, Servant, One of Them, Man Cutting Wood. Put three on one side of you and the Man Cutting Wood on the other side of you.

SAY: Our volunteers are going to help us show two stories today. In both stories something bad is going to happen, the people are going to respond, Elisha is going to respond and God is going to do something. As you listen to these stories try to figure out these four things:

SAY: Hold up a finger for each of the four things I want you to listen for...

- What was the bad thing that happened?
- How did the people respond?
- How did Elisha respond?
- And what did God do?

Give your volunteers the signs that say: Elisha, Servant, One of Them, Man Cutting Wood

The Man Cutting Wood isn't in the first story. Ask him to stand back and help your other volunteers act out the story as you read it...

Read 2 Kings 4:38-41 from your Bible

ASK: **What was the bad thing that happened?** (The stew had poisonous food in it.)

ASK: **How did the people respond?** (They were scared.)

ASK: **How did Elisha respond?** (He wasn't shaken. He just acted and he acted in faith. He told them to put some flour in the stew and then to serve it.)

ASK: **What did God do?** (The flour didn't fix the stew. God did. God responded to Elisha's act of faith and the stew could then be eaten.)

SAY: Now let's hear another story and I want you to listen for those same four things.

SAY: Hold up a finger for each of the four things I want you to listen for...

- What was the bad thing that happened?
- How did the people respond?
- How did Elisha respond?
- And what did God do?

Move your Elisha volunteer to the Man Cutting Wood and help them act out the story as you read it...

Read 2 Kings 6:1-7 from your Bible

ASK: What was the bad thing that happened? (The axhead fell into the water.)

ASK: How did the people respond? (The man was upset because he had borrowed the axe.)

ASK: How did Elisha respond? (He wasn't shaken. He just acted and he acted in faith. He asked where it fell in and then he threw a stick into the water.)

ASK: What did God do? (The stick didn't make the axhead float. God did. God responded to Elisha's act of faith and the iron axhead floated to the top.)

Give our volunteers a hand.

SAY: Some things float. Some things sink. I'm going to name something and I want you to say float or sink.

- An iron axhead (sinks—it's heavy!)
- A coin (sinks)
- A rubber ducky (floats)
- An iron anchor (sinks)
- A chair (sinks)
- An inflatable ball (floats)
- A baseball (sinks)
- A can of soda (hold up a can of Diet soda)

ASK: Who thinks this can of soda will sink? Who thinks it will float? Let's find out...

Put the can down in a large, clear container full of water

The diet can of soda will float.

Hold up a can of non-diet soda.

ASK: Who thinks this can of soda will sink? Who thinks it will float? Let's find out...

The regular can of soda will sink.

SAY: The only difference between these two cans is about three small packets of sugar. It might seem small but it makes a big difference.

SAY: In the same way, how you "see" situations will make a big difference too. The people in the stories simply "saw" what was there—poison in the stew and a sunken axhead. But Elisha looked beyond what he "saw" to what he knew God could do, and he immediately acted in faith.

SAY: When “bad” things happen in your life—Don’t just look at what happened but look through it to see what God can do through what happened. Then put your trust in Him.

Leader: “*Make the choice!*” Students: “*To rejoice!*”

KEY VERSE

SAY: When things don’t seem to go your way, just trust (Have your students repeat: *Just Trust*) and make the choice to rejoice.

SAY: You can always rejoice in God, no matter what is happening because Jesus will never leave you.

SAY: Get ready for a Bible Drill (*This is the same drill as last week, so it should seem familiar to those who were here.*)

Ready...Philippians 4:4...Go! (Philippians is halfway through the New Testament.)

Read this verse aloud and then emphasize to the students that God wants us to *always* rejoice in Him, no matter what situation we find ourselves in.

SAY: After everything I say, I want you to say: Rejoice!

*When you have a great day, you can...*Students: Rejoice!

*When the have a rotten day, you can...*Students: Rejoice!

*When you get what you want, you can...*Students: Rejoice!

*When someone else gets what you want and you don't, you can...*Students: Rejoice!

*If you loose everything you own, you can...*Students: Rejoice!

*When your dad picks his nose and your friends all see him, you can...*Students: Rejoice!

*When something scares you, you can...*Students: Rejoice!

*When you get an A on a test, you can...*Students: Rejoice!

*When you're watching your favorite movie, you can...*Students: Rejoice!

When you're watching your least favorite movie because it's your little brother's

*favorite movie that you've already seen 113 times, you can...*Students: Rejoice!

*Every moment of everyday, you can...*Students: Rejoice!

SAY: You can always rejoice because if you’ve given your life to Christ, God will never leave you and you can always trust him. You can look beyond what you see to what God can do.

SAY: A minute ago you saw how just a little sugar made a big difference between one soda can that floats and another that sinks. When you make the choice to rejoice it will make a huge different in how you see situations and how you see what God can do in your lives.

Control Tool

Leader: *Make the choice* / Students: *To rejoice!*

PRAYER PART—“And forgive our debts”

Choose 2 volunteers to hold the “Lord’s Prayer” sign. Ask your kids to say it with you.

SAY: We’ve been saying the “Lord’s Prayer” each week using posters but today we’re going to say two times—Once with the posters and once without the posters.

Say the Lord’s Prayer together looking at the posters. Then hide the posters by having your volunteers turn around.

ASK: What do you think this sample prayer means when it says, “And forgive our debts”?

ASK: **What debts do we owe to God?** (This is talking about our sins—Every day we need to ask God to remove any sin from our lives and to forgive us for anything wrong we have done.)

ASK: **What is sin?**

ASK: **What are some examples of sins?**

SAY: We have all done wrong things—that’s the reason we all need a Savior and when Jesus died He took the punishment for our sins. Because Jesus died and rose again, He made a way to take our sins away.

OLDER STUDENTS

ASK: When you give your life to Jesus, that’s the moment you are saved and your sins are forgiven. From that moment on you can know for sure that you’re going to Heaven. **But when a person sins after giving his life to Jesus, is he still going to Heaven?** (Yes, the Bible is very clear that no one can take you out of His hands.)

ASK: **So why do we ask for forgiveness after we’re saved?**

SAY: Doing something wrong after you’re saved doesn’t “lose your salvation” but it does mean that you’re not right with God. If you sin and are saved, you’re still going to Heaven, but you’re not walking in a right relationship with the Lord. That’s the reason we ask for forgiveness even after we’re saved—to stay in a right relationship with God.

Illustration

Choose 1 volunteer...

Let’s say you and I are brothers. One day I’m walking down the hall and out of nowhere, you jump from the woodwork and punch me in the nose. Are we still brothers? Of course. Just because you did something wrong didn’t change our family. The same is true with God. When you trusted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you became a part of God’s family. Now if you do something wrong, like the brothers, are you still a part of the same family? Of course. But, if we were brothers and you punched me in the nose, would we be right with each other? No. So what would you need to do for us to get right? Say you’re sorry. It’s similar with God and us. As a Christian, when you do something wrong, you still ask God to forgive you. You’re asking Him to forgive you, NOT to go to Heaven—you’re already going there; NOT to be saved—you’re already saved; you’re already a part of His family, but so you can

be in a right relationship with Him. God didn't just save you to go to Heaven; God saved you to walk with you here and now.

YOUNGER STUDENTS

SAY: This sample prayer that Jesus gave his disciples showed them how to pray and teaches us to ask God to forgive our sins.

PRAY

SAY: Everybody bow your heads and close your eyes. Now with your heads bowed and your eyes closed. I'm going to call out some of today's prayer requests and as I do, I want you to pray silently for them. *(Pause...Call out some of the prayer requests and then pray.)*

Dismiss to Small Groups

SAY: Right now it is time for our small groups, so I'm going to dismiss you one row at a time.

Dismiss rows of chairs to the tables in the rooms. Give them specific directions where to go.

Prayer and Praise Journals

SMALL GROUPS

Today our students are going to make and decorate Prayer and Praise Journals. This will give them a place where they can write down their prayer requests and any praises that they have for God. Remind them that because of who God is, like Paul and Silas last week, we can praise God in any situation and even give praise for a prayer that He has not yet answered.

Also, your students don't need to bring these back to church but should take them home and use them there.

Discussion Questions

Below are questions that you can discuss with your students before, after or while participating in today's activity:

- What do you think about Elisha?
- How was he different from the others in the stories?
- How is he different from other people that you know?
- In what ways would you like to be like Elisha?
- Who is someone in your life that you see has great faith?
- How can you see their faith in action?
- Are there situations you can think of where things happened in your life and instead of looking through to what God could do, everyone just became mad or frustrated or angry?
- What could you do to become a person of great faith?

Prayer—Take prayer requests and pray with your students.