



# Shaped to Serve

Sunday, January 22, 2017

## Elijah: The Get-R-Done Prophet

### Some Background

Elijah is a Jewish hero. He is celebrated each year at the *seder* meal, and a chair is reserved for him at every *bris*. At the end of each *shabbat*, Jews sing songs about his eventual return as a messiah figure. Elijah is a big Jewish deal.

We Christians hear less about Elijah. The New Testament includes incidents of disciples mistaking Jesus for Elijah, and the two appear along with Moses at Jesus' transfiguration, lining Jesus up with the best of the law and the prophets. Most of us think first off prophets as fortunetellers, but that's not Elijah. Elijah had the challenging task of being a truth-teller, not only to the Israelites, but also to rulers, such as King Ahab. As a prophet, Elijah spoke for God, calling the people to repentance, performing signs to prove God's power in the world, and working with God to care for God's people. Elijah trusted God to care for him, and God did. Elijah encouraged the Israelites to trust God too.

Throughout Elijah's story, God provides signs and wonders to show God's power and care for Elijah and those around him. Great things happen: God provides food, rain, and shelter. God raises the dead. However, God's work in the world is not all signs and wonders. Elijah's experience of God in the small voice is a stark reminder that God can work in all things, and often unseen.

Even when Elijah ascends to heaven, his care for the Israelites doesn't stop. Elijah does not leave the Israelites alone. He passes his mantle to Elisha, assuring that God's voice will continue to be heard in Israel.

**Youth Mindset:** Whether it is idol worship (choosing things other than God to devote too much attention towards), looking for guidance about the future and how to better themselves, or trying to make sense out of chaos and violence, pre-teens can certainly relate to Elijah's purpose before God and God's people.

**Teacher Homework:** Read some key passages about the life of Elijah: 1 Kings 17:1-7, 17:8-16, 18:20-40, 19:11-18, and 2 Kings 2:1-12.

### **Opening Activity**

Set up the room with fans (wind), the sound of waves, and lightning. Have students spend a few moments meditating throughout all these things. Read 1 Kings 19:11-18.

Pass around note cards. Have students come up with two lies and a truth about themselves, writing their names at the top of the notecard. Read through these and have students guess which is the truth of the bunch for each person. Talk about seeking truth and God's voice amidst natural disasters, chaotic times, and every day opportunities.

### **Watch the Video**

Show the video: "Elijah: The Get-R-Done Prophet"

- How do you determine if someone or something is trustworthy?
- What in Elijah's story helped to prove God as trustworthy?
- When have you heard and trusted God? How difficult was it?

### **Passing the Mantle**

How would you have felt if you were Elijah and you just received the mantle from your teacher and friend Elijah? Have students turn the room into an obstacle course. Give them a mantle (piece of cloth similar to a stole worn by a pastor). Talk about the responsibility of pastors to teach and pass on the mantle of leadership in the church. Instruct students that they must each grab hold of the mantle and make it through the obstacle course together without anyone letting go of the mantle. Once this activity is accomplished, take the mantle and cut it into enough pieces for everyone.

### **In the Bible**

Close in prayer, having each person hold their strip of cloth. Create petitions for each prayer moment and prayer request. End each by loudly saying, "Lord in your mercy," to which everyone will respond in a still quiet voice, "hear our prayer."

### **Take-Home Question**

Talk about a quiet place you enjoy. This could be a space where you read a book, do homework, escape for a walk, or listen to music alone. Sometime this week, take a minute to pray in this space. What was it like to pray in a still, quiet way with only God and yourself in that moment?