

# Elisha and the Shunammite Woman



## Overview

### Materials You'll Need

- blocks or Lego pieces
- doll furniture



### Scriptures

2 Kgs 4:8-37

### Bible Truth Objective(s)

God wants us to love our neighbors as ourselves

### Behavioral Objective(s)

To show kindness to others

### Memory Verse

"And be kind to one another." (Eph 4:32)



## Bible Knowledge

### Elisha

Elisha's name means "God is salvation." We are not told his age or his birthplace, but we may assume he was a native of Abel-meholah in the Jordan valley and was still young when Elijah sought him out. His father's name was Shaphat.

His ministry, if we date it from his call, extended through the reigns of Ahab, Ahaziah, Jehoram, Jehu, and Jehoahaz, a period of more than fifty years. The narratives of Elisha's ministry are recorded in 1 Kings 19, 2 Kings 2-9 and 2 Kings 13, and comprise a series of some eighteen episodes.

Elisha was plowing the fields one day when Elijah (see Lessons 9 and 10) passed by and threw his mantle on him (1 Kgs 19:19). It was a symbolic way to anoint Elisha and allow him to know that God had chosen him to continue the work of Elijah. Elisha obediently followed. His prophetic call was once again confirmed when he saw Elijah ascend to heaven and was given a double portion of Elijah's spirit (2 Kgs 2:1-12). Although the Bible does record that Elisha performed twice as many miracles as Elijah, Elisha was not trying to outdo his predecessor.

By asking for a double portion of his spirit, Elisha was simply asking God to give him spiritual power to do His work.

Elisha began his ministry near the end of King Ahab's reign. Elisha performed many miracles during his work. Some of them included making the bad water good again (2 Kgs 2:19-22), providing the widow with oil so her children did not have to be sold (2 Kgs 4:1-7), raising a boy from the dead (2 Kgs 8-37), making a poisonous pot of food edible (2 Kgs 4:38-41), making an ax head float (2 Kgs 6:5-7), and healing Naaman the leper (2 Kgs 5:1-27).

### The Shunammite Woman

The Shunammite woman knew that Elisha was a man of God. Because of her regard for him, she wanted to provide a room on the flat roof of her house. The room would include the four essential furnishings—a bed, a table, a stool, and an oil lamp.

When the woman's son died unexpectedly, Elisha left his work on Mt. Carmel and returned to Shunem with the woman. He went into the room where the boy lay and shut the door. There he prayed to God, following the example of Elijah. God's miraculous answer was in response to the faith and prayer of Elisha, and the Shunammite woman and her husband were given back their son.



## Understanding Your Students

Teachers who consistently and positively acknowledge a child's loving actions towards others are doing a very valuable service to the child by reinforcing his attempts at kindness. To help the students recognize what they have done, use specific words to describe their actions. Rather than saying, "Good job!" or "I'm so proud of you," try saying, "I like the way you are sharing the markers," or "I know Jesus loved it when you asked your friend if he was feeling better." This helps the children understand what they are doing that demonstrates kindness.

While your students do need to be praised for

their efforts, they also need to know that people will not always be around to say nice things each time they are kind to another person. Inform them that though others may not see their actions or say anything, God sees everything they do and is pleased, because they are showing others the love of God by helping them.

Whenever any lesson lends itself to this topic, open a discussion about ways your students can show God's love to others. By talking about specific situations or things they can do, the children can see more concretely the many ways they can show kindness. List these on a chart and post it in your room as a constant reminder.



## Vocabulary

### **Servant**

someone who works for another person; a servant listens to the master and does whatever the master asks him to do

### **Staff**

a long walking stick

### **Blessing**

to receive good things from God



## Before You Teach

When the Shunammite woman's son was raised from the dead, the woman could not be happier. It was a great miracle. Yet this miracle was in part due to her faith. When her son passed away on her lap, the Bible does not record how she felt at that time. But we can infer that she must have been distraught because when she finally reached Elisha, he could sense that she was in deep distress. Despite her heavy-heartedness, she had the courage to put her dead son on Elisha's bed and ride to find the prophet. Her actions spoke strongly of her faith. Perhaps she realized that it was God who had given her this son, and it would be up to God to return him to her. She must have believed that God could raise her son from the dead because she did not even tell her husband what had happened. She had hope that by the time she came back, her son would be alive and well. Not many of us could do what this woman did, displaying such faith in God. What can we learn from her example?

First, immediately after her son's death, she thought to turn to God. Many times, when we come upon trials and tribulations, we tend to try to work things out on our own. Only when we have exhausted all avenues do we remember God. Here, this woman only thought about how God could help her.

Then as she traveled, she refused to slow down. She did her best to get to Elisha as fast as she could. In our pursuit of God, we also need to be focused. We need to be full of zeal and seek after God with all our heart.

Third, upon seeing Elisha, she poured out her heart to him. When we have problems we cannot solve, it is okay to come before God and share our sorrows. He will take away our burdens and give us a heart of peace.

After Elisha sent his servant to the woman's house, this woman insisted on staying with Elisha. She would not let go of him until he went to see her son. Today, we also need to grab hold of those opportunities to be with God. When we desire to be with our Lord, He will draw near to us. Then our faith will be strengthened.



## Bible Story

### **Elisha Is God's Chosen Worker**

In the past few lessons, we heard stories about Elijah, a prophet of God. One time, he told King Ahab that no rain was going to come down for a long time. Elijah also went to a widow's house and performed a miracle. He told her that God would not let the flour and oil in her jars run out, so that she would have enough food to eat.

Elijah obeyed God and was a good worker for God. But God knew that Elijah could not do all the work by himself. So God told Elijah that He had picked out another person to help him. His name was Elisha. In the beginning, Elisha was Elijah's helper. Elisha stayed very close to Elijah because he wanted to learn everything that Elijah could teach him about serving God. Elisha wanted to learn as much as he could so he could tell people about God. After Elijah was taken to heaven, Elisha became God's prophet and traveled to many cities and towns teaching and talking about God.

### **A Kind Woman**

One day, Elisha came to a town called Shunem. While he was there, a kind woman came to him and said, "Please come to my house and stay for a while. My husband and I would like you to have dinner with us." So Elisha went to the woman's house. He was probably very tired and hungry from traveling and teaching all day. The woman cooked a nice meal, and Elisha sat down to have dinner with the woman and her husband. Elisha liked his new friends a lot. Every time Elisha passed by this city, he always stopped at their house and ate with them.

Once, when Elisha was not in town, the woman thought about the next time Elisha would visit them again, and she came up with a wonderful idea.

She said to her husband, "Elisha is a man who loves God and teaches people about Him. He always comes to our house when he is in town. Why don't we build a room just for him? Let's build a special room upstairs on the roof of our house so he can always have a place to stay when he is in town. We can put a bed in there, a table, a chair, and a lamp for him to use. What do you think?"

The husband thought it was a great idea. So together, the woman and her husband built this spe-

cial room. Do you remember what the woman wanted to put in the room? (Let the students respond.) They put a bed, a table, a chair, and an oil lamp in the room for Elisha to use. (Explain to the students that an oil lamp was used for lighting.) The woman and her husband were excited about the room. They couldn't wait for Elisha to visit them again.

Soon, Elisha came to their city again. When he stopped at their house to eat, the woman and her husband took Elisha upstairs to show him the surprise. Up, up, they went until they got to the room. Elisha looked into the room. What a wonderful surprise! A room built just for Elisha. It would be a quiet place where Elisha could pray, rest, and sleep.

Elisha knew that his friends had worked hard on the room. He was very thankful that God had given him such kind and wonderful friends.

### **Elisha Promises the Woman a Son**

Elisha was really thankful that the woman and her husband had shown him such kindness. But what could he do to thank them? The woman and her husband did not have any children, so Elisha told the woman that she would have a son next year.

Elisha said, "This time next year, you will be holding your son in your arms."

How do you think the woman felt when she heard this? The woman was surprised. She had wanted children for as long as she could remember. So she could hardly believe what prophet Elisha was saying, but the news must have made her happy.

Sure enough, about a year later, the woman had a little baby boy. God knew what she wanted, and He gave her a son.

### **The Boy Dies**

The woman and her husband were very happy now because they had a happy family. Over the years, as their son grew, Elisha often stopped by to see the family, and stayed in the special room.

Then one summer day, the boy went out to the fields to help his father. It was a very hot day. All of a sudden, the boy put his head in his hands.

"Father! Help me!" he cried.

"What's the matter, son?" the father asked.

"My head, it hurts so much," he moaned.

Immediately, the father called a servant to carry the boy home to his mother. All morning, the boy lay in his mother's lap in a lot of pain. The moth-

er held him and wrapped her arms around him. She cradled him and rocked him to comfort him. However, the boy did not feel any better. By lunch time, the boy had died! The mother must have been very upset but she knew just what to do! She took her son's body upstairs into Elisha's room and laid him down on the bed. Then she left the room, closing the door behind her. She hurried outside and asked her husband to get her donkey ready. She was going to go and see prophet Elisha. She was going to ask for God's help.

### **Elisha Prays for the Boy**

As the woman rode to where Elisha lived, Elisha could see the woman coming from afar. So Elisha sent his servant to meet her.

When the servant reached her, he asked her if everything was okay. She told the servant that she was fine. She wanted to talk to Elisha herself as soon as she could.

When she finally reached Elisha, she was so upset she fell down at his feet.

Elisha asked her, "What is it?"

"It's my son," she said.

Then Elisha knew what had happened. He sent his servant back to the woman's house first.

Elisha gave his staff to his servant and said, "There's no time to lose. Go to the boy and don't stop to talk to anyone along the way. When you get to him, hold my staff over his face until I get there."

The servant left immediately.

The woman said to Elisha, "I won't leave. I will stay with you, Elisha."

So Elisha got up and followed the woman back to her home.

Elisha's servant got to the house first. He did as Elisha asked him to and lay the staff on the boy's face. But nothing happened. The boy just laid on the bed. So the servant ran back to tell Elisha that the boy did not wake up.

When the woman and Elisha finally reached the house, Elisha hurried up the stairs to his room. He found the dead boy lying on his bed. Elisha closed the door to the room, and he knelt down to pray to God. Elisha prayed hard that God would give the boy his life back. Elisha prayed and prayed. He even laid down over the boy's body and prayed. Then Elisha got up and walked around the room. After that, Elisha stretched himself over the boy's body again and prayed some more.

Suddenly, the boy sneezed, again and again. Do you know how many times he sneezed? He sneezed seven times and then he opened his eyes. Praise the Lord! God had given him his life back!

Elisha called his servant and asked him to bring the boy's mother into the room. When the woman came back upstairs, Elisha told her, "Here is your son."

The woman was very happy and thankful that her son was well again. God had given her what she wanted most of all. He had given back her son.

We learned from today's story that the woman was blessed with a son because she was kind to Elisha. She built a room for him so that he would have a place to stay whenever he passed through town. Elisha was also kind to the woman and her family. He told her she would have a son. When the boy died, Elisha came to pray for him so that he could come back to life again. God is pleased when we are kind to one another. He will bless us, just like He blessed the woman.



### Check For Understanding

1. **Who was Elijah's helper?** (Elisha)
2. **Who invited Elisha to dinner?** (The woman from Shunem and her husband.)
3. **What did the woman want to prepare for Elisha on the roof of the house?** (A special room for Elisha.)

4. **What things were placed in the room?** (A bed, a table, a chair, and an oil lamp.)
5. **The woman and her husband showed great love by taking care of God's prophet, Elisha. This story reminds us that we show our love for God by caring for people around us. What can we do to show kindness?** (Allow students to answer.)
6. **What did Elisha promise the woman in**



return for her kindness? (She would have a baby boy next year.)

7. **When the boy grew older, what happened one day when he was in the field?** (He had a headache.)

8. **What happened to the boy when he went home?** (He died in his mother's lap.)

9. **Whom did the mother go to for help?** (Prophet Elisha, to ask God for help.)

10. **How did Elisha help?** (He prayed very hard to God so that the boy could live again.)

11. **Did the woman have faith in God to help her son come back to life?** (Yes, she had strong faith.)



## Life Application Story

### The Toothbrush

"I want to see them first," said Rachel as she grabbed one of the bags from her mother's hands.

Mrs. Hayes and Rachel had just come home. They had been at the pharmacy picking up some things they needed for the house. Two of those things were new toothbrushes for Cathy and Rachel.

Rachel sat at the kitchen table and began to look through the plastic bag.

"Found them!" she yelled, as Mrs. Hayes put the other bags on the counter.

"I think I want the red one," Rachel said as she looked at the toothbrushes. "The yellow one is nice too, but I like this red one better."

"They really are the same, just a different color," Mrs. Hayes replied.

Just then, Cathy opened the front door. Their neighbor, Mrs. Lee, had driven her home from school today. Before Cathy had even taken off her shoes, Rachel came running to the front door and showed her the new toothbrushes.

"Oh, new toothbrushes," Cathy said. "I want the red one."

"You can't have it. I already said I wanted it," Rachel replied.

"How come you always get to pick first?" Cathy asked.

"Because I saw it first," Rachel said.

Cathy walked to the kitchen. Mrs. Hayes had already poured out some milk for her.

"Well, you can't both have the red one. There is only one," Mrs. Hayes explained.

"I really, really, want the red one," Rachel begged.

"Okay, you can have the red one," Cathy

replied.

"Really?" asked Rachel, a little bit surprised.

"Yes," Cathy said as she drank her milk.

"Cathy, that was very nice of you to let your sister have the red one. It was a very grown-up thing to do," Mrs. Hayes commented.

"Last week, in RE class, we talked about being kind to others. The teacher asked us to try to do one nice thing for somebody this week. She also said that if we are nice to others, then nice things will happen to us too," Cathy explained.

"Jesus did teach us to love our neighbors as ourselves. That means we should treat others the way we want to be treated. And sometimes, Jesus blesses us with nice things because He remembers the good things we are doing," Mrs. Hayes added.

As the three of them cleaned up the bags, the door bell rang. Mrs. Hayes went to open the door. It was the mail person with a special delivery. Mrs. Hayes signed for the package and shut the door.

"It's for you, Cathy," Mrs. Hayes said as she handed the brown package to her.

"For me?" Cathy asked excitedly as she ripped open the paper wrapping.

"Oh, it's the books we ordered from the Internet," Cathy said. "I have been waiting for them to get here. Now I can read them!"

"Wow," Rachel said as she looked at some of the books. "Something nice just happened to you, Cathy."

"Yes, I guess it did."

"Maybe I should be nice so that nice things can happen to me too!" Rachel said.

Mrs. Hayes let out a small laugh.

"Well, it's a good idea to be kind and nice to others. But we don't do it just so that we can have nice things happen to us. Jesus wants us to do good things because that is what makes Him happy. And He did promise to bless us if we obey His com-

mands.”

“So should I be nice or not?” asked Rachel.

“Of course, and if nice things happen to you, that is wonderful. But no matter what, we should always do our best to show kindness and love. Just like when your sister let you pick the red toothbrush, she was doing it because she wanted to be kind. She didn’t expect something in return,” explained Mrs. Hayes.

“Okay, I think I understand,” Rachel said.

“Mom, do you think we could read a bit of this one now?” asked Cathy.

“Yes. We have some time before I need to get dinner started,” Mrs. Hayes said as she cleaned up the rest of the bags. “Let’s go to the sofa where we can get comfy.”

The three of them headed to the family room to enjoy Cathy’s new book.

#### Questions to Think About:

1. **What did Cathy do when both she and Rachel wanted the red toothbrush?** (She let Rachel have it.)
2. **Why is it important to show kindness and love to others?** (That is Jesus’ command for us.)
3. **What is something you have done recently to show your kindness and love?** (Allow students to answer.)
4. **How do you feel when you have done something nice for someone?** (You feel good and warm inside.)



### Activity 1

#### Elisha’s Room

The woman in the story prepared a room for Elisha. Do you remember what she put in the room? She put in a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp. The bed is already in the picture. Draw in the rest of the things.



### Activity 2

#### Elisha Prays for the Boy

Cut out the story book and fold along the dotted lines. Review the story with the students. The students can color in the pictures.



### Activity 3

#### Let’s Build A Room

##### Materials:

1. blocks of Lego pieces of various sizes
2. doll furniture

##### Directions:

1. The class can work together or students may work in pairs.
2. To review the story of Elisha and the Shunammite woman, provide the students with

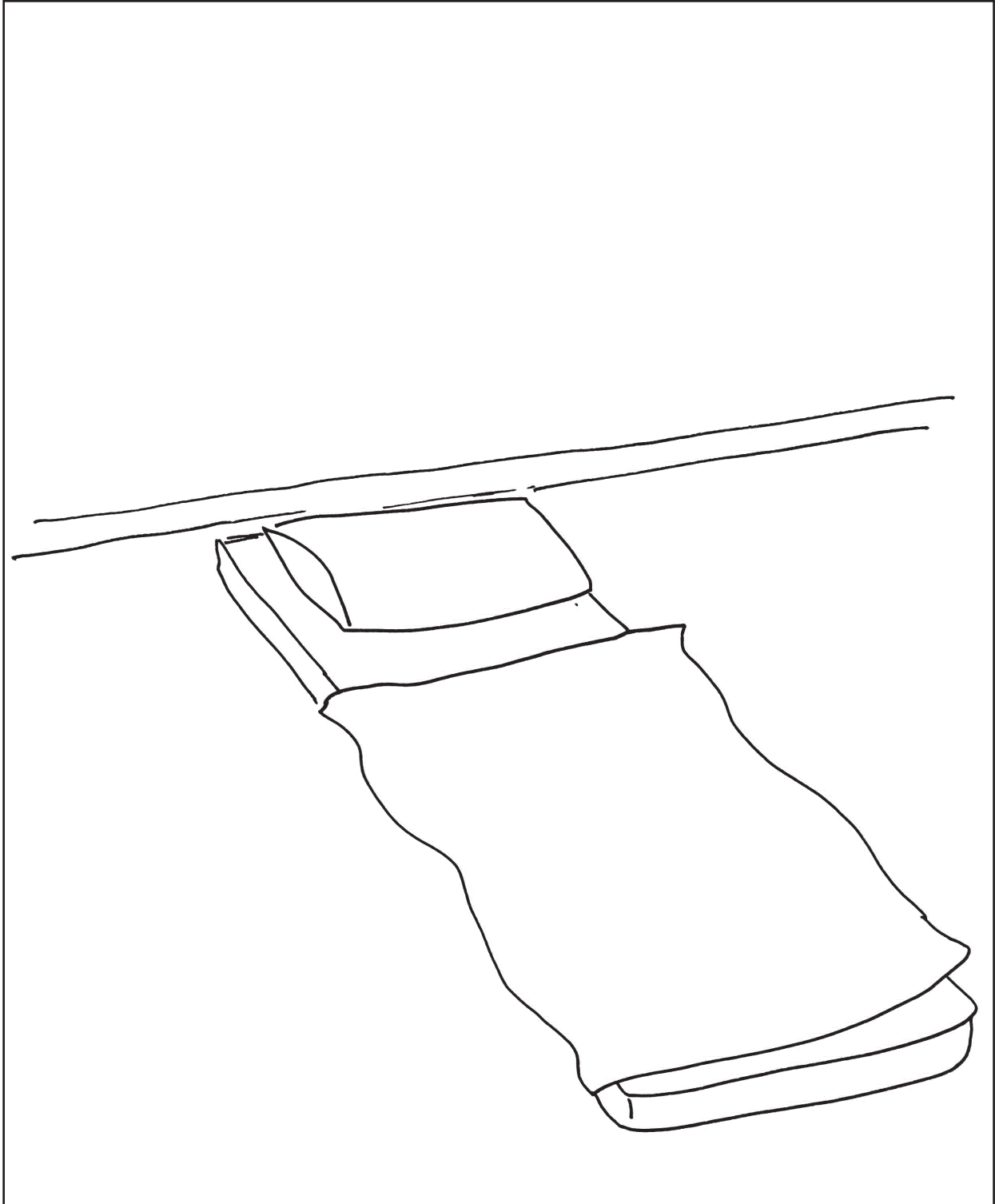
enough blocks so that they can build a room for Elisha.

3. Review the things that were found in the room. Encourage the students to use their imagination as they build.
4. Remember to talk about the important aspects of the story (i.e. Shunammite woman is kind and offers to build a room; Elisha promises her a son; her son dies; the woman runs to Elisha for help; Elisha raises the boy from the dead) as the students are working.

*Activity 11:1*

**Elisha's Room**

The woman in the story prepared a room for Elisha. Do you remember what she put in the room? She put in a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp. The bed is already in the picture. Draw in the rest of the things.



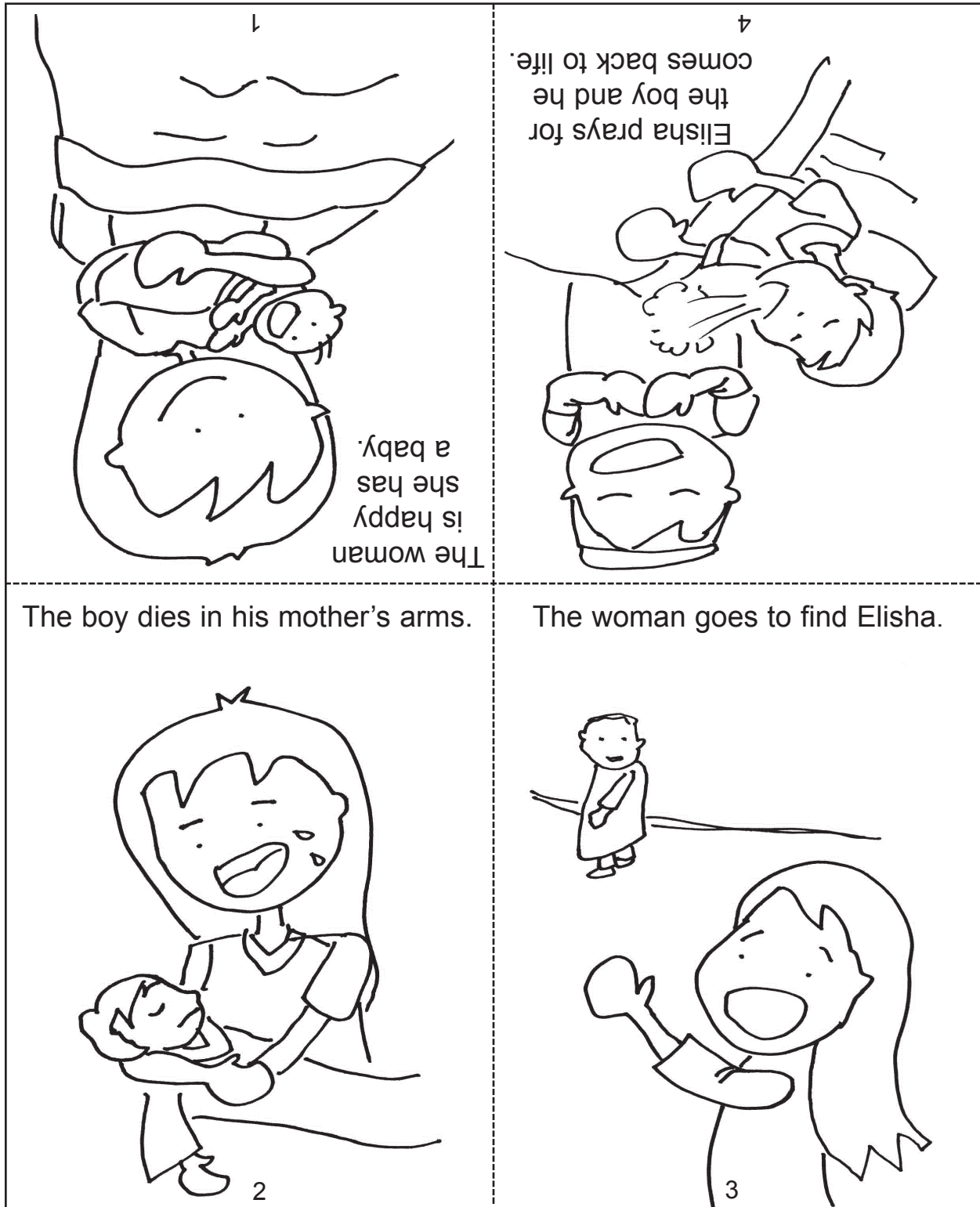
Activity 11:2

### Elisha Prays For the Boy

Cut out the story book and fold along the dotted lines.

Review the story with the teacher.

Color in the pictures.



The woman  
is happy  
she has  
a baby.

The boy dies in his mother's arms.

Elisha prays for  
the boy and he  
comes back to life.

The woman goes to find Elisha.