LESSON 4

FIRE ON MOUNT CARMEL

BEFORE YOU TEACH

Drought

It was now the third year of the drought that God had inflicted upon the Israelites for their disobedience and for the wickedness of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. Smaller bodies of water, like the brook Cherith, had dried up and the people became more and more desperate for water. King Ahab sent Obadiah, the governor of his house, to look for water and grass so that the animals would not perish (1 Kgs 18:5).

Today, God also sends us many different kinds of droughts to turn us back to Him. Sometimes, a shortage of money or food will remind us to rely on Him for all our needs. Other times, He sends us to places where there is no church to help us learn to treasure His word and draw near to Him. There are even times when the drought is a serious illness or a major problem in our lives.

Whenever we face these dry spells, we must learn to examine ourselves to see if we have sinned, ask Him to show us what we may have done wrong, and ask Him to correct us. We should not be stubborn, as Ahab and the Israelites were, insisting on their own ways and continuing to worship ineffective idols. Rather, we should turn to Him and repent as soon as we realize His message and our mistakes.

False Prophets

The false prophets during the time of Elijah were employed by King Ahab. Their sole purpose was to say what the king and queen wanted to hear; they often predicted a future filled with riches and power. They were also called priests because they were responsible for managing the heathen religious practices.

As a result, these false prophets led very wealthy lives. These so-called priests also engaged in many pagan rituals. In this particular story, they danced wildly, prophesied frantically, and even inflicted wounds upon themselves in attempts to get the attention of Baal. Contrast this with Elijah, who prayed earnestly to God.

Both Jezebel and Ahab despised God's prophets because His prophets rebuked their wickedness and sins. False prophets were widespread because they were needed to counter Elijah's words. By employing them, Jezebel and Ahab could feel some comfort in hearing their empty promises. It was also an appealing profession because these false prophets could indulge in their sinful pleasures and still be called "priests."

Interestingly, King Ahab believed his heathen prophets would be able to win the battle against Elijah. Elijah, on the other hand, was confident that God would provide and bravely challenged all those who had turned away from worshipping the true God.

BIBLE TEXT

1 Kings 18:16-40

BIBLE TRUTH

God is the one and only true, living God.

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To learn to fear God and repent when we do something wrong.

MEMORY VERSE

"Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer."

(Psalm 4:1b)

PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Lord Jesus, we know that You are the only true God. We know that You are always there to help us and look after us. We pray that You will lead us on the right path and teach us Your words so that we may follow in Your way. We praise You for Your mercy because we know that You are forgiving. Help us do what is right. Hallelujah! Amen.

The Twelve Stones and Water

Elijah used twelve stones when building the altar to represent the twelve tribes of Israel.

At that time, Israel had already separated into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. The kingdom of Judah consisted of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, while the kingdom of Israel comprised the remaining ten tribes. Although the northern kingdom called itself Israel, the name was supposed to represent all twelve tribes.

By using twelve stones on Mount Carmel, Elijah was reminding the people that they were supposed to be one united people, the people of God, and that they had sinned by turning away from God.

Elijah also chose to drench the altar with water. Onlookers might have thought this was a foolish thing to do because the water would have only helped to extinguish the fire. Also, by this time, there had already been three years of drought and famine, and every bit of water was precious. But, Elijah did this to demonstrate that he was not using any tricks and that the Lord their God was in fact almighty.

In the end, it was the power of God that turned the hearts of His people back to Him. Only a true and living God could have unleashed such strength and authority. God's mighty miracle on Mount Carmel, and later, the gift of rain, showed the people how absurd they were to worship Baal.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

Often, whenever the word "idol" is mentioned, images such as wooden sculptures or other figurines come to mind. Indeed, many people attach great significance to these physical icons. However, it is important to be aware of other idols that exist in less obvious forms.

Briefly defined, idols are things or persons we depend on other than God that we hold as more important than Him. They can include money, power, education, worldly status, material possessions, or even another person. These can be the idols in our lives if we devote ourselves to them wholeheartedly.

For the students, they may not be at the stage where they will desire money or power. However, there are many other things that can replace the importance of God in their lives. Some examples may include video games, television, movie stars, and friends.

Particularly in this age of techno-paraphernalia, it is very easy for them to devote all their time and energy into material things. Sometimes, students may also feel that it is unfair that their school friends can enjoy their weekends while they need to observe Sabbath. At a later age, they may begin to grumble about why they can't join their friends for activities on Saturday.

Whatever the case may be, it is very important to let them know what idols are. They aren't simply the wooden or stone statues they see in other churches or homes. If they let things get in the way of worshipping God, then these things are their idols. Ask your students who they look to for true happiness and security. Who do they trust and who is in charge of their future? They should be able to answer that they depend on God. Encourage them to always pray and rely on God because He is the only Savior.

At this stage in their lives, your students are still dependent on their parents and look to their parents for all that they have, want, and need. Now is a good time to introduce that God is above their parents because He is the Father of us all.

Like their parents, God wants us to obey Him and do His will. And like their parents, He will sometimes punish us, like He punished the Israelites, to bring us back to Him. We should encourage our students not to be stubborn like the Israelites or King Ahab when they do something wrong, either against their parents or against God. Rather, we need to be humble and acknowledge our wrongdoings and return to Him as soon as we can, and He will accept us with open arms.

VOCABULARY

idol: anything or anyone that we depend on that is not God that we hold dearer to us than God

false prophets: those who are not God's prophets; they speak for gods that are not real and they do not

give the correct messages

trench: a ditch in the ground, usually made to hold water

Baal and Asherah: idols worshipped by the Canaanites

REVIEW

Last week, we learned about a great miracle that God had performed. Elijah had been staying with a widow who had a son. Some time later, her son became very sick and suddenly died. She cried bitterly and asked Elijah why this had happened to her.

When Elijah heard this, he also became sad. He asked the widow to bring her son to him. What did Elijah do with the boy? (He took him upstairs and prayed to God to bring him back to life.)

God heard Elijah's prayer and He brought the boy back to life. When Elijah brought the boy back to his mother, what was her reaction? (She praised God for His mercy and glory.) We learned that if we faithfully pray to God, He will answer us.

BIBLE STORY

Three Years of Famine and Drought

When Elijah first worked for God, he told King Ahab that there would be no rain until he said there would be. By now, it had been around three years since Elijah had delivered the message. Now, God told Elijah to go find King Ahab and said that after he did, He would send rain.

King Ahab had continued his idol worshipping during these three years and he had also relied on his false prophets who worshipped the idols, too. They did not speak the words of God and only said things to please the king. God knew that He had to show the people that worshipping idols was wrong.

Since it hadn't rained for three years, there was hardly any water left, and the people were both hungry and thirsty. Even King Ahab began to worry. He was afraid that his own mules and horses would soon perish. So, he took one of his servants, Obadiah, and went into the country to look for grass to feed his animals.

King Ahab said to his servant, "You go that way and I will go this way. Search every place you can think of where there might be grass growing." So the two men split up and went to look for grass.

Obadiah Meets Elijah

Meanwhile, Elijah had already left the widow's house on his journey to go see King Ahab.

On his way, he saw Obadiah searching for grass. Even though Obadiah worked for the king, he still worshipped God in his heart. He even secretly saved one hundred of God's prophets by hiding them in caves during the time when Queen Jezebel was gathering God's prophets and killing them.

When Obadiah saw Elijah, he fell on his face and greeted the prophet. After receiving Obadiah, Elijah gave him an important job. "Go and tell King Ahab that I want to see him," Elijah said.

Obadiah was worried about completing this task. He thought the king would get angry at him for mentioning Elijah's name. He knew the king hated Elijah. He also worried that Elijah would be gone when he returned with King Ahab and then Ahab would be even angrier and

would kill him. Do you think you would have done what Elijah asked if you were Obadiah? Well, Obadiah was very brave and he agreed to do what Elijah asked him.

To comfort Obadiah's fears, Elijah said, "I will wait here while you get the king. It is God's will that I meet him today!" After hearing this, Obadiah left to get the king.

The Meeting on Mount Carmel

When Obadiah told the king, Ahab went immediately to meet Elijah. When he saw the prophet, he mocked him.

"Is that you, Elijah, you troublemaker?"

Why did King Ahab call Elijah that? Do you think he was right? Well, Elijah had other ideas. Elijah replied, "I have not made trouble, but you have. You have continued to sin and worship idols instead of the true God. Send for everyone from the land and tell them to meet me on Mount Carmel. Also, gather the 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah who serve your idols." Who do you think was really the troublemaker of Israel?

The Challenge

King Ahab then sent word to all of Israel and to all the false prophets to gather at Mount Carmel. Can you imagine the people of an entire nation gathered together at one place? This was indeed a big moment.

When everyone had gathered at Mount Carmel, Elijah spoke in a very loud voice, "How long will you keep on sinning? If the Lord is God, you should follow Him. If Baal is god, then follow him." No one dared to speak.

Elijah continued, "I am the only true prophet of God left in the land. Your idol Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. We will see who serves the one true God. Let's make an offering on two different altars. But we won't set the wood on fire. Instead, we will pray. You can all call on your god and I will pray to the Lord. Whichever god answers with fire and burns up the offering is the true God."

The false prophets thought that this was a good idea and that it would demonstrate their power. Elijah let them go first since there were so many of them. So they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon.

"O Baal, answer us!" they shouted. Do you think that fire came down from the sky? No, there was no fire.

When Elijah saw this, he mocked them saying, "Cry louder! Maybe your god is busy or asleep."

And so they cried louder and danced harder around the altar until they became dizzy. They even cut themselves with spears and swords until they bled to show that they were sacrificing themselves to their god.

They kept this up for a long time, but did fire come down from the sky? No, there was no fire because their god did not exist.

God Sends Fire

Then Elijah called the people to come closer to him. As the people watched, Elijah repaired an altar of the Lord that had been taken apart. Then he took twelve stones that represented the twelve tribes of Israel and used them to build the altar. Afterwards, he dug a trench around it. He put wood on the altar and laid the offering on top of the wood. Then he gave some strange orders.

Elijah said, "Pour four jars of water on the offering and

on the wood."

He told the people to pour the four jars of water three times so that in the end, twelve jars had been poured. The water soaked the altar and even filled the trench. How was fire going to burn now? Elijah did this because he wanted everyone to see how powerful God was.

After all this was done, Elijah prayed to God.

He said, "O Lord, let these people know today that You are the only true God. Let them know that I am Your prophet. Answer me, O Lord and turn their hearts back to You."

Suddenly, fire came down and burned up the offering, the wood, and even licked up the water in the trench! God had answered Elijah's prayer. When the people saw this, they fell to the ground. They realized that they had been wrong in worshipping idols. They felt very sorry and wanted to worship the only true God. They cried, "The Lord is God!"

After this, Elijah seized the 450 false prophets of Baal and had them killed because they had corrupted the entire land.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING
Fill In the Blank/True or False
1. Elijah used (twelve) stones to build the altar.
2. God answered Elijah's prayer and sent down (fire).
3. Baal also answered the false prophets by sending down fire. False; the false prophets' prayers were not answered.
4. The people still did not turn back to God after seeing the sign from God. False; they saw that God was the only true God.
5. Elijah commanded people to pour jars of (water) all over the offering and the wood.

MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week. You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

"Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer." (Psalm 4:1b)

SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

1. Renounce the idols in our hearts and have the courage to say "NO" to idols.

We know that God wants us to love Him only; He doesn't want our hearts to go astray by idol worshipping. From today's story, we can see that God got so mad at the Israelites for the idol worshipping led by King Ahab that He kept rain from falling onto the ground. As a result, the people suffered from a great drought for 3 years. "As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word" (1 Kgs 17:1). In the end, on Mount Carmel, Prophet Elijah revealed to people the almighty power of God by praying to God to send fire on the altar.

Other false prophets, too, did the same to their gods but nothing happened. A psalm reads, "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; eyes they have, but they do not see; they have ears, but they do not hear; noses they have, but they do not smell; they have hands, but they do not handle; feet they have, but they do not walk; nor do they mutter through their throat. Those who make them are like them; so is everyone who trusts in them" (Ps 115:4-8). Here, the Bible tells us that idols are merely the work of men's hands. They can't do anything even if someone makes them with four eyes and eight noses. But our God is different. He has the power to do anything, even to send fire that licks up water.

Sometimes, it may not be that we intend to worship idols ourselves, but we are put into situations where we need the courage to say "no" to worshipping idols. Have you ever been in a situation like that? What did you do? [Let students share.] Saying "no" is very difficult sometimes, especially when it comes to people that are older than you. But, God wants us to stand strong in our belief. He doesn't want us to give in to idols just because we are not brave enough to say "no." Read the following scenarios and learn how to have courageous conversations when saying "no" to idols.

[Emphasize the key words underlined. You may choose to use the provided image to tell your students what a physical idol may look like.]





SCENARIO #1

Grandma: Evan, these oranges are very sweet. Try some!

Evan: Thank you, Grandma! But I cannot eat them since they have been used for idol worship.

Grandma: What's wrong with using them for idol worship? The idols we worship protect us from danger and we

should offer to them for their protection. Now, listen to grandma and eat some oranges!

Evan: No, grandma, but thank you. With all <u>respect</u>, I cannot eat these oranges because I believe in <u>only</u> one God. <u>I believe that</u> He is the only God who has the <u>power to protect</u> us from all dangers. Let me share a <u>testimony</u> with you: One time, I was very sick and I had a high fever. I couldn't fall asleep. My medication didn't seem to work, so my parents were thinking that if my situation persisted, they'd bring me to the ER early the next morning. That night, my parents called a few other church members to pray for me. We also prayed together to ask God to heal me so that I wouldn't have to go to the ER. I fell asleep soon after I prayed with my parents. The next day, I woke up without even remembering that I was very sick the night before! My parents told me that my fever had gone down since I fell asleep. God listened to our prayers and healed me overnight without any medication or doctors.

Grandma: Wow, that's amazing! So you're saying that your God is the only true God and that He can protect us? How do you worship Him? Guess what, let's forget about the oranges. Can you tell me more about your

God? I want His protection, too!

Evan: Of course! My pleasure!

SCENARIO #2

Tommy: Do you want to go to the temple with me this weekend? Our temple just got a new Buddha. It's HUGE and my parents say that it can bless us with many things if we worship it. All you have to do is to go up to it and place a candle. It's really easy. I'm going to ask for a new video game!

Alex: No, Tommy, thank you. I cannot come with you. I'm a Christian, and I only believe in God.

Tommy: I know that. But there's no harm in trying! You have no clue how big this Buddha is! You should at least try once... Who knows if it'd bless you with your favorite shoes!

Alex: Well, no matter how big the Buddha is, isn't it still just "man-made"? The temple can make a "god" as big as they want. And if a "god" needs to be made with our hands, I don't see how much power it could have in its hands. On the contrary, my God is the <u>Creator</u> of the world. He has created everything around you, even you and me! His hands have <u>almighty power</u>. He doesn't need to be made. He has also made many promises to bless us if we worship and follow Him.

Tommy: I guess you're right... I never thought about that. The Buddha is merely a sculpture made by men. It can't

talk or give any promises. Well, forget about going to the temple. Do you want to come to my house this

weekend and tell me more about your God? I want to know more about His promises. I want His

blessings, too!

Alex: Of course! My pleasure!

SCENARIO #3

Alan loves playing video games. He spends all his free time playing. He doesn't participate in any school activities or even family activities because all he cares about are his video games. He is spending so much time playing that his lifestyle has become very imbalanced. Several times each day, Alan's parents have to physically stop him from playing. Sometimes, his dad will just turn the TV off so that Alan cannot keep playing. Alan's relationship with his parents has worsened ever since Alan started playing video games.

One Saturday morning, Alan came to his mom and said, "Mom, is it OK if I stay home today instead of going to church? My RE teacher said that this week's lesson is about idol-worshipping. I don't think it applies to me... I don't even know anyone who worships idols! I'd rather not waste my time and instead play video games at home." Alan's mom, with great concern, sat down with Alan and said to him, "Alan, you're very wrong for saying that. Going to church is about worshipping God—the God who we put first in our lives. It's about giving yourself in wholeheartedness to God and resting from everything else in this world. How can you place your video games above God?" She continued, "As a matter of fact, your RE lesson today is very applicable to you. By not honoring the Lord's Day, you are worshipping an idol in your heart. Do you know what it is?" Alan thought for a few seconds and then answered, "...You mean my video games?" Alan's mom said, "Yes, Alan. Anything that we deem more important than God, or anything that we'd choose over God, is considered an idol. We let these idols take away what we must give to God—in your case, your time and your heart to worship Him! An idol in your heart is far scarier than a physical idol. Do you understand?" Alan nodded and agreed to go to church with his parents. That day, Alan learned that God dislikes idol-worshipping and had punished the Israelites in anger many times because of their idols. Alan prayed very hard in the final prayer, asking God to forgive him for making video games an idol in his heart. He promised God to start using more time every day to pray and read the Bible instead of playing video games.

2. Repent and turn back to God.

We all make mistakes and, sometimes, sin against God. But thank God for His mercy and grace, He is always ready to forgive us if we are willing to repent. 1 John 1:9 reads, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Our mistakes and wrongdoings are like filth on our bodies; they're nasty. We shower every day to make sure our body is cleansed from filth. Likewise, our sins have to be cleansed. Here, the Bible tells us that in order for our sins to be taken away, we need to first confess our sins to God. In other words, we need to know what we did wrong and tell God about it. How can we tell God? [Let students think.] Pray! In our prayers, we can be honest with God. We should tell God that we know what we did was wrong, and ask God for forgiveness by promising Him that we won't do the same thing again. We need to remember not to make the same mistakes again, because God's forgiveness is very precious.

Let's read the following scenario. We will see how Charlie turned back to God after making a mistake and how he prayed to God for His forgiveness.

CHARLIE'S PRAYER

"Dear God, I have a secret to tell you. It's an embarrassing secret, but I want to tell You so You can see how much I regret it. Today, I lied to my mom. I lied to her about my science grade because I didn't want to disappoint her. I told her that I got an A as usual, but really, I got a C. I wasn't brave enough to tell her that I forgot about my test last week because of a new TV show. I was afraid that she wouldn't let me watch that show anymore. God, I feel so guilty. I feel so sorry to You because, ultimately, I disappointed You by being a dishonest child. I feel so bad that I wish I hadn't lied. God, I'm really sorry. Please forgive me. I promise You that I will never do this again. Please give me the strength to be an honest child. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Discussion Questions

- **1. How did Charlie feel about his lie?** He felt embarrassed, guilty, and sorry.
- **2. What did Charlie ask God for?** He asked God for forgiveness. He also asked God to give him the strength not to make the same mistake again.
- **3.** What promise did Charlie make to God? He promised God never to make the same mistake again.

* * * *

Activity: "No Idols" Sign-Making

Ask the students to identify some of the idols that exist in our lives today. Examples include money, education, material possessions, etc. Give the students each a large sheet of paper and tell them to draw a big circle with a slash over it, like the "No Smoking" signs. Then, inside the circle, have them draw representations of each idol that you have come up with as a class. When everyone has finished drawing, discuss how we can make sure that these things don't become our idols.



* * * *

Optional Activity: Spin the Wheel!

[Note: The teacher needs to prepare the wheel in advance by cutting out a wheel and arrow out of construction paper. Attach the arrow to the wheel with a fastener. Give the arrow enough space to spin. Divide the wheel into several sections, with the name of a character written in each section. Include characters such as Jezebel, Ahab, Elijah, the widow, the widow's son, and the false prophets of Baal.]

Many characters were introduced in the past few lessons. Use a spinning wheel to reinforce some of the lessons learned. Have one student start by spinning the arrow. Whomever the arrow points to will be the character the student must speak about. The student can say one thing he remembers about the character. Once the student is done with his turn, the next student spins until everyone has had a turn at the wheel. Continue the game as needed.

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

- 1 True
- 2. False; there were 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah, but Elijah was the sole prophet of God.
- 3. False; they worshipped God, and said, "The Lord, He is God!"
- 4. danced
- 5. water
- 6. fire
- 7. twelve
- 8. Answers may vary. Possible answers: Money, education, material possessions, etc.
- 9. Answers may vary.

ACTIVITIES

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Mount Carmel

Objective: To help students recall God's triumph on Mount Carmel.

Instructions: Read the sentences and fill in the blanks by using the pictures as clues.

The name of the wicked k of I	srael was A Queen Jezebel
and the king worshipped i n	nade of stone. Because the queen
had killed so many of God's prophets, the rest of the	ne prophets ran and hid in
c Finally, God told the prophet Elija	ah to go to the k and
announce that there would be no r	for a long time. Without the water,
the crops dried up and the g	was almost gone. The
p and a	were starving.
After t years, the prophet we	nt back to the k and told him
to bring the false prophets up to Mount C	There they would see who
was the true God, whom they should w	
"If the L is God, f	
f him	." (1 Kgs 18:21)

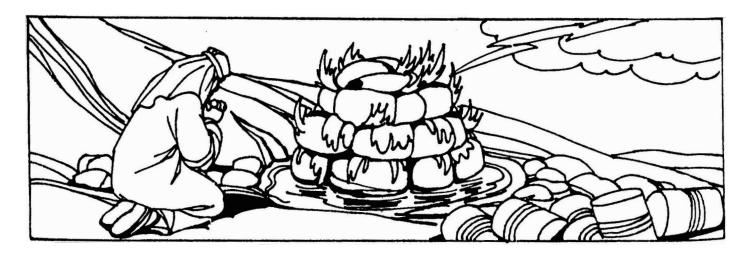


Elijah Match-Ups

Objective: To help students recall the characters and events at Mount Carmel.

Instructions: Read the first half of the sentences and find the correct ending for each one. Make sure the number is written in the blanks.

1. The false prophets prayed to Baal	it was Elijah's turn.
2. The false prophets danced around the altar	but their prayers were not answered.
3. Elijah mocked Baal's prophets, saying,	the water filled the trench.
4. Finally, Baal's prophets gave up and	and cut themselves with swords.
5. Twelve jars of water were poured on the sacrifice until	God, saying, "The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!"
6. Then Elijah prayed, saying, "You are the God of Israel.	"Cry louder. Your god may be asleep."
7. God answered Elijah's prayer and fire came down and burnt up	the sacrifice, the wood, and the water in the trench.
8. When the people saw the miracle, they worshipped	May these people know You are the Lord God."



E1 Year 2 Book 2 Lesson 4—Fire on Mount Carmel

Homework Assignment

	Parent signature: [Dat	Date:	
ruth: God is th	ie one and oi	nly true, livin	g God.					
Objective: To	learn to fear	God and rep	oent when w	e do somethi	ing wrong.			
Reading: Please: Please put a c								
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>					
	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
Bible Reading								
Prayer								
		Please w		ory Verse				
				lm 4:1b)	,			
	Wł	nat I Lear	ned fror	n the Bib	le This \	V eek		

Homework Assignment Understanding What You Have Learned

True or False

1.	The false prophets worshipped idols and preached the wrong message
2.	There were more true prophets than false prophets
3.	The people still did not turn back to God after He answered Elijah's prayer
	Fill In the Blank
4.	The false prophets shouted loudly and around the altar until they were dizzy.
5.	When Elijah was building the altar, he commanded the people to pour on top of the offering
	and wood.
6.	God answered Elijah's prayer by sending on the altar.
7.	Elijah used stones to build the altar.
	Short Answer
8.	What are some of the idols that people worship today?
9.	a. List two things or people in your life that are very important to you. For example, your grades at school, playing the piano well, or a school friend.
	b. Are you in danger of making these things more important to you than God? What are some things that you can do to help you keep God first?