

Elisha Helps a Widow's Family

(2 Kings 4:1-7)

Introduction

Who is the one that takes care of you? Who is the #1 person that makes sure you have food to eat, a place to sleep, takes care of you when you're sick? [Teacher, lead the children in a discussion about their primary care giver and what they do to provide for them.] What would you do if your [primary caregiver] was to get sick, or have an accident, lose his job, or even die? How would you feel? You might be afraid or hopeless. You would probably wonder who would take care of you now.

The family in our Bible story must have experienced these same feelings.

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You for giving us our families that love and care for us. They feed us and clothe us and give us a nice warm bed to sleep in. We don't want to take them for granted; we know they are a gift to us from You. Bless them now and give us hearts of appreciation for all that You do for us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think. (Ephesians 3:20)

Lesson

We spent four weeks learning about Elijah, but after God took him to heaven, Elisha became God's prophet. It was his job to tell people God's messages and to love and care for God's people.

One day, a woman came to see Elisha. She was very upset.

2 Kings 4:1

One day the widow of a member of the group of prophets came to Elisha and cried out, "My husband who served you is dead, and you know how he feared the LORD. But now a creditor has come, threatening to take my two sons as slaves."

This woman's husband had died owing a lot of money. And the man he owed the money to wanted to be paid. But this woman had no money. What was she to do?

In those days poor people were allowed to pay their debts by selling their children as slaves. This poor woman not only lost her husband, but now she was about to lose her two sons, too. She was probably worried about how she would even survive without someone to take care of her. She must have felt hopeless.

Have you ever felt hopeless? Maybe you were riding your bike all alone and then you crashed and got hurt. Or have you ever gotten lost? That is scary, isn't it. I remember a time I came home from school and my mother wasn't there and I was locked out of the house. I was frantic with fear!

Well, this woman was in an awful and scary situation. She just lost her husband and now she was about to lose her two sons. This woman had two great needs: **peace** on the inside and a **plan** to know what to do. [Teacher, write those words on the board.]

So, she went to Elisha for advice and comfort because he was a man of God. Turning to God for help is a wise thing. You can trust your Heavenly Father to supply all you need in hard times.

2 Kings 4:2

"What can I do to help you?" Elisha asked. "Tell me, what do you have in the house?" "Nothing at all, except a flask of olive oil," she replied

Elisha kindly showed God's love to this woman. He asked her, "How may I help you." He wanted to help her, but she didn't have much! All she had was a little oil.

Olive oil was very important to people's survival in those days. They used it for lighting their lamps and for cooking and heating.

Well, Elisha and the widow couldn't do much with just a little oil, but God could! So Elisha told the widow what to do. Having a **plan** gives you **peace** on the inside!

2 Kings 4:3-4

And Elisha said, "Borrow as many empty jars as you can from your friends and neighbors. (4) Then go into your house with your sons and shut the door behind you. Pour olive oil from your flask into the jars, setting each one aside when it is filled."

God loved the widow and her sons very much! He knew about their needs and cared what would happen to them. God loves you very much, too, and wants to supply your needs, as well. But you must be willing to trust Him and obey Him, just like this widow did.

Elisha's plan might have seemed odd to this woman. She was told to go to all her neighbors and borrow all the pots and pans and bottles and jars they would lend to her. Her neighbors must have thought she was crazy, but she did it anyway because she trusted God.

2 Kings 4:5

So she did as she was told. Her sons kept bringing jars to her, and she filled one after another.

The widow obeyed Elisha's command. She trusted God and expected Him to supply her needs. And, as she trusted and obeyed God, she was filled with **peace**.

The boys brought every kind of container the neighbor's would give them—big jars, small jars, pots and pans, cups and bottles. When the boys brought her the first jar, she filled it with olive oil from her jar—the jar that had been almost empty the last time she looked. But she was able to fill that jar right to the top! Amazing! The boys brought her a second container. Again, she filled it with oil from her jar. When they brought her a third jar, there was plenty of oil to fill it, too.

God caused the oil to continue to flow until all the jars were full.

What would you have thought if you'd been there?

It may have seemed like a difficult or even silly thing to do, but the widow was depending on God to cause the small amount of oil she had to fill up all those containers.

2 Kings 4:6

Soon every container was full to the brim! "Bring me another jar," she said to one of her sons. "There aren't any more!" he told her. And then the olive oil stopped flowing.

When they had filled every available jar with oil, the oil stopped flowing.

2 Kings 4:7

When she told the man of God what had happened, he said to her, "Now sell the olive oil and pay your debts, and you and your sons can live on what is left over."

Elisha told the woman to sell the oil and pay the money she owed and use the rest of it to take care of herself and her sons.

If you find yourself in a place of great need, remember that God can supply what you need, when you need it. And as you trust and obey Him, he will give you **peace** on the inside and show you His **plan** for your life.

Spiritual Lesson for us...

Oil in scripture is a picture of the power of the Holy Spirit. God fills you with His power just like He filled that woman's jars with oil. But notice that the oil stopped flowing when there were no more jars to fill. The number of jars the woman's sons brought showed how much faith they had. They must have had great faith because they brought every jar they could get their hands on.

God's provision is as large as our faith and obedience. Be sure that you don't limit God's blessing by doubting His ability to supply all your needs.

Ephesians 3:20

Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.

Closing Prayer

Father, we want to be filled with your Holy Spirit. Please guard our hearts from becoming hard and cold towards You. We want to be open and available for You to flow into our lives. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Oil Painting

Materials:

White paper, black permanent markers, crayons, newspaper, baby or cooking oil, pie tins or jar lids, cotton balls.

Preparation:

- Cover the tables with newsprint
- Pour small amount of oil into pie tins or jar lids

Procedure:

1. Using black permanent markers, write "God Supplies Our Needs" in big out-lined letters. Or use the pattern on the last page.

God Supplies

Our Needs

2. Using bright-colored crayons, color in the spaces (some spaces may be left white.)
3. Place papers face down on the newspaper and use cotton balls to rub oil over the back of the picture. Let the papers absorb oil for a few minutes; then students hold papers up to the light to see how the scenes have become transparent.

Note: don't use construction paper for this project, it absorbs too much oil. Use plain white copy paper.

Alternate Craft Idea: Bible Verse Jar

Materials: String or yarn, fine-tipped markers, glue, sequins.

Directions:

1. Enlarge the oil jar pattern.
2. Copy pattern on heavy paper.
3. Use markers to color the jar.
4. Cut yarn into two pieces to glue on the lines at the top and bottom of the jar.
5. Glue sequins on the circles.



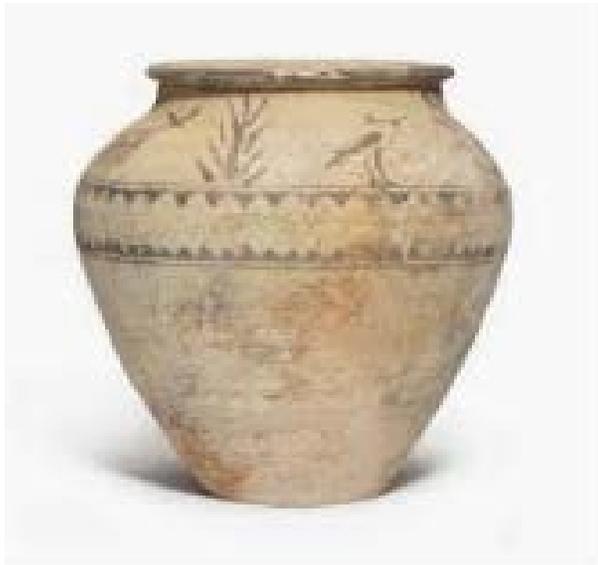
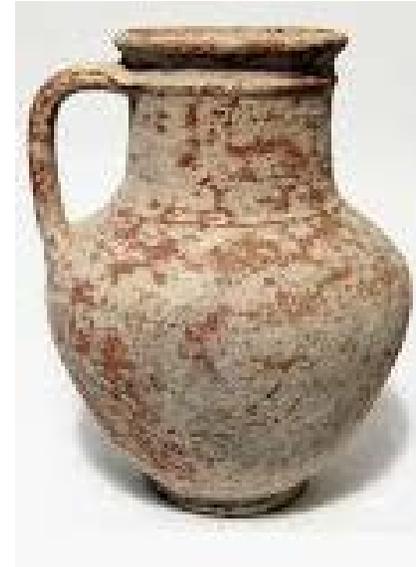
Game Center

Make game cards using pictures of different kinds of pots or jars on the front. Write a number of points on the back of each. Use Velcro 'dots' to secure them to a felt board. Divide children into teams. For each correctly answered question, allow a child to choose a game card to discover the points they won for their team.

Or, use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. Why did the widow feel scared and hopeless? (Her husband had died. She didn't have any way of getting money.)
2. Why were her sons going to be sold into slavery? (In those days poor people were allowed to pay their debts by selling their children as slaves.)
3. What were this woman's two great needs? (**Peace** on the inside and a **plan** to know what to do.)
4. When is a time a (mom) might feel like she has no one to help her?
5. Who are some people who might not have anyone to help them? (Homeless, single moms)
6. What did God give to the widow and her sons? (Oil)
7. Why was oil important to people in those days? (Olive oil was very important to people's survival. They used it for lighting their lamps and for cooking and heating.)
8. How can we receive more of God's power to care of others? (Pray and ask God for help to know right ways to help people who have no one to help them. Pray and ask God to help us notice people who need help. Read the Bible to find ways God tells us to help others.)
9. What is the name of the book which tells about Elisha and the widow and all the oil God provided? (2 Kings.)

10. What stopped the oil from flowing out of the woman's jar? (No more containers were available.)
11. What did she do with all that oil? (She sold the oil and paid the money she owed and then used the rest to live on.)
12. What do you get on the inside when you trust and obey God? (**Peace.**)
13. What is oil a picture of? (The power of the Holy Spirit.)
14. The oil stopped flowing when there were no more jars to fill. What spiritual lesson does that teach us? (That we need to be open and available for God to flow into our lives.)
15. What do we need to do to be open and available for God to flow into our lives? (Trust and obey Him; don't doubt his ability to supply all our needs.)



God Supplies
Our Needs