

# GOD'S MESSENGERS

**Bible Basis:** 1 Kings 17:1–6; 18:1–2, 17–18

**Key Verse:** [Elijah said,] “I serve the Lord. He is the God of Israel.” —1 Kings 17:1 NIRV

**Bible Point:** God encouraged Elijah in hard times. God encourages me.

**Resource:** *The Story for Children*, Chapter 15: “God’s Messengers”

## STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

As you get started, ask the children to settle down, stand quietly, and close their eyes. Say, **Imagine you’re running from something that makes you feel scared.** Have the children start running in place. **You’re running past a wall of rock. Suddenly you see a small opening in the rock. It’s a cave! Crouch down if you would go in the cave to get away from being scared.** Pause to see if children will crouch. Then tell them they can open their eyes. Talk about:

- Does a cave make a good hiding place? Why or why not?
- Tell me about a time you felt like hiding in a cave.

Say, **We all get scared sometimes. We all wish we could just make our troubles go away. Our story today is about someone in the Bible who wished his troubles would go away if he went in a cave.**

## STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

**Stuff You Need:** copies of *The Story for Children*, Bibles, *The Story Elementary Trading Card 15*, poster board

**Optional:** noisemakers, pompoms

Tell the story from *The Story for Children*, Chapter 15. You can also have children find 1 Kings 17 and mark it in their Bibles. Either you or a child in your class can read the Scripture passages listed throughout the story.

### God’s Encouragement

On a poster board, write this cheer:

God says, “Go, go, Elijah.

I’m with you, you betcha!”

If you're using optional noisemakers and pompoms, distribute them to a group of children who will act as cheerleaders for the large group. (If your group is small, everyone can have props.)

You'll need five children to help you. One will carry the cheer poster across the front of the room to lead all the children in a cheer. Four others will participate in presenting the story. You will pause as indicated during the story to ask a game-style question, and the four contestants will compete to answer first. Have the four contestants stand a distance away from you. When you ask a question, they should run to be first to slap a table or the back of a chair, then answer the question.

**God's people divided into two kingdoms, Judah and Israel. Israel had a series of evil kings. One of the worst was Ahab, whose wife Jezebel was even more evil than he was! At the same time, though, there was a man living in Israel who loved God and did God's work. His name was Elijah, and God chose him to speak to King Ahab.**

**Elijah went to Ahab and gave him a message from God. The message said there would be no rain in all of Israel until Elijah said it would rain. Of course, Ahab was not pleased with this message. Read 1 Kings 17:2–6.**

*Pause for the helper with the poster to walk across the room and lead the cheer. Then ask a game-style question: **How did God encourage Elijah during the years without rain?** Wait for the players to answer.*

**Read 1 Kings 18:1–2. Elijah challenged Ahab and his false gods. On a mountain in front of all the people of Israel, Elijah proved that God was the only true God, and the gods Ahab worshiped had no power at all. God showed his power by starting a fire, while Ahab's false gods could do nothing. This made Ahab and Jezebel angry! They were ready to kill God's messenger!**

**Elijah was afraid, so he ran for his life. He ran and ran and ran. Finally he fell down under a tree and said, "Lord, just let me die!" Then he fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." Elijah woke up. Read 1 Kings 19:6–7.**

*Pause for the helper with the poster to walk across the room and lead the cheer. Then ask a game-style question: **How did God encourage Elijah when he ran for his life?** Wait for the players to answer.*

**Elijah walked and walked for forty days and forty nights. He kept going until he came to Horeb, the mountain of God. He felt all alone and afraid that Ahab would hunt him down and kill him. When he found a cave, he went into the cave to spend the night.**

**The Lord said to Elijah, "What are you doing here?" Elijah answered, "The people of Israel have turned their backs on you. I'm the only one left who is doing your work, and they're trying to kill me."**

**Read 1 Kings 19:11–13b. God said, "Go back the way you came. I still have work for you to do."**

Pause for the helper with the poster to walk across the room and lead the cheer. Then ask a game-style question: **How did God encourage Elijah when he was hiding in the cave?** Wait for the players to answer.

**Elijah obeyed God once again. He went out of the cave and walked down off the mountain to keep doing the work God gave him to do. He met Elisha, a young man God had chosen to be a new prophet. Elijah’s job now was to teach Elisha about giving the people God’s message. Finally, Elijah was getting really old, and God decided it was time for Elisha to be the main prophet. So Elisha and Elijah traveled together. They kept walking and talking together. Suddenly a chariot and horses appeared. Fire was all around them! The chariot and horses came between Elijah and Elisha, and Elijah went to heaven in a strong wind. Elijah’s long life of serving God was over—and he got to go to heaven without dying first!**

Pause for the helper with the poster to walk across the room and lead the cheer. Then ask a game-style question: **How did God encourage Elijah when his life was over?** Wait for the players to answer.

After you have told the Bible story, give each child a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card* 15. Ask children to look at the picture and tell you about some of the things that Elijah did and how Elijah went to heaven. As a class, read the key verse from the back of the card or from the Bible. Ask:

- **What made Elijah so discouraged?**
- **How did God encourage Elijah?**

Say, **Elijah’s story reminds us that God knows what we feel and he wants to encourage us.**

Collect the cards for now. You’ll send them home with the children later.

## STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help your class explore the lesson further.

### OPTION 1: You Can Do It

**Stuff You Need:** You Can Do It Activity Sheet, basket

Ahead of time, cut apart the cards on the handout, fold them and put them in the basket. Say, **God encourages us when we’re discouraged. One way it does this is through other people—you and me! Let’s get some practice cheering each other on.** Have children take turns drawing one of the slips from the basket and following the instructions. The other children will cheer on the performer. If necessary, suggest specific things children can say to encourage each other. Then talk about:

- **Tell me about a time when someone encouraged you.**
- **Tell me some ways that God encourages you.**

Say, **If we open our eyes wide, we'll find ways every single day that we can encourage another person.**

### **OPTION 2: ENCOURAGEMENT CARDS**

**Stuff You Need:** Encouragement Card Activity Sheet, Encouragement Verses Activity Sheet, safety scissors, glue, other card-making supplies

If possible, duplicate the Encouragement Card activity sheet on colorful card stock. Say, **Giving someone a card can be a great encouragement. Today we are going to make cards with some verses from the Bible to encourage someone who may be going through a difficult time. Think about someone you'd like to encourage with a card.** Give each child a copy of the activity sheets. Have the children cut the interlocking card shape on the heavy black lines of the Encouragement Card Activity Sheet. Fold on the dashed lines. Lock the two pieces of the front together by cutting slits as marked. Then choose one of the verses from the Encouragement Verses Activity Sheet and glue it on the inside of the card. Use any available supplies to decorate the card further. Say:

- **Tell me about the person who needs your card.**
- **Tell me about a time when someone encouraged you.**

Say, **God knows when we feel discouraged. Let's open our hearts to the ways he sends encouragement into our lives.**

### **OPTION 3: OFF TO HEAVEN**

**Stuff You Need:** Off to Heaven Activity Sheet, markers, glue, red, orange, and yellow tissue paper

Give an activity sheet to each child. Talk about the way that God rewarded Elijah for his faithful service. Say, **What a wonderful sight it must have been to see the chariot take Elijah to heaven. Color this picture of Elijah and share with your family.** Have children color the activity sheet and glue tissue paper on the flames.

### **OPTION 4: GIANT ENCOURAGEMENT CARD**

**Stuff You Need:** poster board, markers, stickers, and other decorating supplies

Fold the poster board in half. Let children decorate and write encouraging messages for your church's staff on the giant card.

## **STEP 4: GOING HOME**

Pray in small groups asking God to show you ways to encourage others this week. Make sure each child takes home a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 15*, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.