

LESSON 5: GOD TAKES ELIJAH TO HEAVEN

Leader Guide for Grades 5 & 6

Classroom: Deeply Rooted

 2 Kings 2:1-18

01/05/2020

Teachers Dig In

Dig In to the Bible

- Read: 2 Kings 2:1-18
- In This Passage: In this mysterious Bible story, God takes Elijah up to heaven in a chariot of fire drawn by horses of fire. The chariot is caught up in a whirlwind, carrying Elijah to heaven. Elisha looks on, upset that Elijah is gone but ready to carry on his legacy. These strange events show that God is mysterious.
- Bible Point: God is mysterious...
- Application: ...so we have faith.
- Summary Verse: "For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?" (Isaiah 43:19).

Dig Deeper

- You'll Be Teaching: *God is mysterious*. Kids love mysteries! But sometimes God's mysterious qualities can be an obstacle to belief. It can be hard for older kids to believe in something they can't see or fully explain. Use this lesson to help kids understand that faith is believing even when we don't understand the mystery of God.
- Think About: What questions do *you* have about God? Ask him to help you have faith even when you don't understand him.

Dig In to Prayer

- Pray that kids will be more in awe of God because he is beyond what our brains can comprehend.

Quick Tip

- As you explore the mysterious nature of God, kids are bound to have questions! Don't feel like you have to have all the answers. It's okay to say "I don't know" or throw questions back out to see what kids think. And in the end, if no one can answer a question...that's all part of the mystery!

This Lesson at a Glance



OPENING

Kids share about a topic related to the lesson.

Supplies

- Bible



CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Kids part streamer rivers, decorate chariots, and create fiery whirlwinds.

Supplies

- Bible
- glass jar or drinking glass
- disposable plate
- pitcher of water
- coin
- blue, red, yellow, and orange crepe-paper streamers
- appliance boxes, laundry baskets, or storage bins large enough for a child to fit in (1 for every 5 kids)
- tape
- markers (optional)



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Kids ask God questions.



OBJECT LESSON

Kids see how static electricity moves a soda can.

Supplies

- inflated balloons (1 per child)
- empty soda cans (1 per child)
- several pieces of wool fabric



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Kids play a game of Tag with a mystery.

Supplies

- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)



LOW-ENERGY GAME

Kids blow balloons to make them rise.

Supplies

- uninflated balloons (1 per child)
- permanent markers (1 for every 2 kids)
- sticky notes (5 per child)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)



CRAFT

Kids make fiery pinwheels.

Supplies

- “Whirlwind Wheel” handout copied onto card stock (1 per child) (download [here](#))
- scissors
- hole punches
- pens
- markers
- clear tape
- stapler
- jumbo (smoothie) straws (1 for every 3 or 4 kids)
- regular straws (1 per child)
- red, orange, and yellow curling ribbon

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.

**Marked supplies are also used in Core Bible Discovery*

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



OPENING

Welcome

[5 min]

Supplies

- Bible

Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, have kids show their goofiest faces to everyone around them.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by having kids say “snappy mirthgray” (which rhymes with happy birthday).
- Collect the offering.

Introduce the Lesson

Say: **Today we’re going to learn that God is mysterious, so we have faith. Today’s Bible story is a bit of a mystery. Mysteries can be fun!**

Share

- In a whisper, tell kids about *your* favorite mystery story or series (this could be from a book, TV show, or movie).
- Have kids form pairs. Ask kids to whisper about *their* favorite mystery story or series.
- After partners have discussed, ask two or three kids to whisper to the whole group what they talked about with their partners.

Summarize

Open a Bible to 2 Kings 2, and say: **At the end of a mystery story, we usually like to have figured out everything. But sometimes, we can’t figure out God! God is mysterious because he’s bigger than we can understand. Sometimes we’re not sure why he does things. But we can have faith and believe in him even when we don’t understand. One way God helps us start to understand him is through the Bible. It’s his special book. Before we dig in to the Bible, let’s talk to God.**

Pray, praising God for being mysterious.

**Supplies**

- Bible
- glass jar or drinking glass
- disposable plate
- pitcher of water
- coin
- blue, red, yellow, and orange crepe-paper streamers
- appliance boxes, laundry baskets, or storage bins large enough for a child to fit in (1 for every 5 kids)
- tape
- markers (optional)

See Something Disappear

Say: **Today we're going to learn that God is mysterious. That means there are some things about God we can't fully understand.**

Before we get into the Bible story, let's see something else that's mysterious.

Put the coin on a table, and set the jar or glass right side up on top of the coin. Gather kids around so they can see the coin under the glass by looking through the side.

Say: **I can make this coin disappear!** Pour water from the pitcher into the glass, and then place the plate on top of the glass. When viewed through the side, the coin will seem to disappear.

Ask: • **How do you think I did that?**

Say: **Well, I can solve this mystery for you.** Lift the glass and reveal that the coin is still there.

Say: **Although it *looked* like the coin disappeared, it never moved. The water changed the direction of the light, and that made the coin invisible to you. Mystery solved!**

But in our Bible story, someone *actually* disappeared...and it was no trick! God is mysterious, so this story might be a little hard to understand. But when it's hard to understand God, that's an opportunity to have faith. Let's look at the story to find out more.

Cross a River

Say: **This story is about two guys with similar names: Elijah and Elisha. *Elijah* was the older one. *Elisha* was the younger one who went everywhere with Elijah and learned how to be God's prophet from watching Elijah. A prophet is someone who shares God's messages with other people.**

In the story, Elijah and Elisha were traveling around to several towns. And at every town, people warned Elisha that God was going to take Elijah away soon. Elisha knew that, but he didn't want to talk about it. He just kept traveling with Elijah.

Listen to what happened when a river got in their way.

Read 2 Kings 2:7-8.

Ask: • **How do you think Elijah split the river with just his coat?**

Say: **God is mysterious, and we can't explain everything he does. We don't know how God gave Elijah the power to split the river. But let's see if we can split rivers in an easier way.**

Have kids form trios. Give each trio three pieces of blue crepe paper, each several feet in length.

Have trio members take turns breaking the "river" of crepe paper. Two members of each trio will hold a piece of crepe paper. The third person will karate-chop the crepe paper with his or her hand and then walk between the other two kids. Have kids trade roles so everyone can "split the river."

Make Chariots

Say: **As they kept walking, something even more mysterious happened.**

Read 2 Kings 2:11-12.

Say: **Elijah disappeared, just like our coin! But unlike our coin, Elijah was really gone—he wasn't hiding and it wasn't a trick. It's not even something we can explain or figure out logically. God is**

mysterious, and we don't know how or why he sent chariots of fire to take Elijah to heaven. Elijah is one of two people in the Bible who went to heaven without dying first. That's a mystery!

To give our brains a break from all these brain-bending mysteries, let's make our own chariots of fire.

Have kids form groups of five. Have each group work together to decorate a box, laundry basket, or storage bin to look like a chariot of fire. Kids can use tape and red, yellow, and orange streamers to add flames. If you're using boxes, kids can also use markers to decorate the boxes.

When kids have their chariots ready, have chariot races. The smallest child in each group will be Elijah and will get in the chariot. Two other kids will push or pull the chariot. The remaining two kids will swirl streamers around the chariots to represent the whirlwind.

After kids have gone across the room and back, have them sit with their groups of five. Set the chariots and streamers aside.

Ask: • **What questions would you want to ask if you saw Elijah's chariot of fire?**

• **Why do you think God took Elijah to heaven without Elijah dying first?**

Say: **After Elijah went to heaven, Elisha got Elijah's coat and crossed the river the same way they had before. When other people saw that Elijah was missing, they went out to look for him. But unlike the way we found the coin in our trick, they couldn't find Elijah. He'd disappeared from earth and gone to heaven!**

Ask: • **A lot of strange stuff happened in this story. What do you think is the most mysterious part?**

Say: **The Bible doesn't tell us why this happened. But that's okay. God is mysterious, so we have faith. Faith means believing even when we can't see or fully understand something.**

Ask: • **What's something about God you don't fully understand? Share your own example first.**

Say: **Thanks for sharing. It might seem weird for your Sunday school teacher to tell you that you can't understand God. But think of it this way: If you could fully understand every single thing about God, wouldn't that make him smaller than your own brain? He wouldn't be much of a God, would he? We can't understand God fully because God is mysterious. He's so much bigger than we are! But the more we spend time getting to know him and reading his Word, the more he grows our faith so that we believe in him...even the parts we can't understand.**



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

[5 min]

Ask and Thank

Tip

- Sitting silently may be uncomfortable at first, especially for you. Allow the awkward silence to give God time to speak into kids' lives.

Ask Questions

- Have kids talk to God silently about the questions they have about him.
- Have kids listen in silence.
- Kids can then thank God for being so big that we can't fully understand him.
- To close their silent prayers, kids will ask God to help them have faith even when he's a mystery.

Wrap Up

Pray: **God, thank you for being mysterious. Thank you for being too big and amazing for our little brains to understand! Help us have faith even when we're confused. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Thank kids for coming, and encourage them to come back next week.



OBJECT LESSON

Mystery Movement

[10 min]

Supplies

- inflated balloons (1 per child)
- empty soda cans (1 per child)
- several pieces of wool fabric

Move Soda Cans With Balloons

Say: **Have you ever heard someone say, “God moves in mysterious ways?” God is always at work, even if we don’t fully understand what he’s up to. Let’s make a soda can move with the help of a scientific force we can’t see.**

- Give each child a balloon and a soda can.
- Have kids lay each soda can on its side on the floor or table in front of them.
- Show kids how to “charge” balloons by rubbing them on hair or a piece of wool for about 20 seconds.
- Have kids place the charged area of the balloons over the cans without touching them and then slowly move the balloons to the right. The charge will cause the cans to roll toward the balloons.
- Invite kids to try to roll their cans to the left, too. Challenge kids to “mysteriously” move their soda cans from one side of the floor or table to the other, recharging balloons as needed. You can even have kids race their cans as time allows.



Talk About It

Ask: • **How do you explain the cans’ mysterious movement?** Kids might mention static electricity or negative and positive charges that attract. For every response, ask a follow-up “Why?” or “How?” question until kids just aren’t sure how to explain the scientific principles at play. For example, you might ask, “Why does wool make static?” “Why is the balloon charge negative and not positive?” “Where do electrons come from?” and so on.

Say: **Maybe you know a little about the science behind this experiment—that’s great! But it’s difficult to fully explain how the cans moved. It’s a mystery!**

Ask: • **What are some things we know for sure about God?** Share an example to begin. You might say that he created the world and he loves us.

Say: **Thanks to the Bible, we know a lot of things about God. But other things about God are harder to explain, like how a chariot of fire can take someone to heaven. God is mysterious. That’s okay! Like the balloons guided the soda cans, God will move in our lives and guide us. We may never understand everything about who God is and how he moves, but he’ll show us more and more about**

himself as we follow him.



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

[10 min]

Mystery Tag

Supplies

- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).

Play Tag With a Mystery to Solve

Say: **The Bible story we read today about God taking Elijah to heaven is full of amazing things that make us wonder...why? Why does God do things the way he does? Let's play a game of Tag that has a mystery, too—let's see if you can figure it out!**

- Invite a willing person to be "It."
- For each round of Tag, you'll whisper to It the "code" for who'll be tagged during the game, such as any person wearing something on his or her head.
- Everyone else will not only run from It but will also try to figure out the reason It is tagging who he or she is tagging.
- Anyone can call out guesses as the game is in play. If someone guesses correctly, a new person will become It for a new round of the game.
- The goal is to figure out who It is tagging before It tags all the players that fit the description.
- If no one solves the code by the time It has tagged everyone he or she can, then It will tell everyone what the code was. Then a new child can volunteer to be It and begin the next round.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play.
- Try to choose tagging guidelines that include a lot of kids, such as these:
 - anyone wearing red—or any other specific color a lot of kids are wearing
 - anyone wearing glasses
 - anyone who's a girl
 - anyone who's a boy
 - anyone with short hair
 - anyone wearing sports team apparel
 - anyone wearing anything from a movie (superhero, Disney, or cartoon characters)

Talk About It

Ask: • **Which codes were hard to figure out? easy?**

• **What's it like to not be able to figure something out?**

Say: **It can be frustrating to not be able to figure something out. Sometimes we just want to know why.**

Ask: • **What's a mystery you want to understand or that interests you?** Share an example of your own, such as "why in the world did God create mosquitoes?" or "how do animals survive in the deep, deep ocean?"

Say: **For a lot of those mysteries, we could probably find answers. But God is too big, too powerful, and too amazing for us to understand all that he does and why. God is mysterious, so we have faith in him even when we don't understand.**



LOW-ENERGY GAME

Elijah on the Rise

[10 min]

Supplies

- uninflated balloons (1 per child)
- permanent markers (1 for every 2 kids)
- sticky notes (5 per child)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).

Blow Balloons Upward

Say: **Today's Bible story was full of amazing things happening to Elijah—from the waters of the river parting to God taking Elijah up to heaven and everything in between! Let's play a game where you'll try to blow a "balloon Elijah" up to heaven.**

- Form pairs, and give each pair a marker and two balloons.
- Have everyone draw a face or a person on his or her balloon to represent Elijah and then inflate and tie off the balloon. Have adult or teen helpers help kids inflate their balloons, if needed.
- Have pairs spread out around the room where they can lie on the floor with their heads against the wall.
- Partners will take turns lying down and blowing their balloons as high up along the wall as they can. Kids will mark the highest point each balloon reaches with a sticky note on the wall, writing the person's initials on the sticky note.
- Each person can have five tries to blow his or her balloon as high as possible.
- If time allows, have kids change partners and play again.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play.

Talk About It

Ask: • **What did you discover that helped the balloon go higher?**

• **Why do you think only God could carry Elijah all the way to heaven?**

Say: **God is mysterious.** God's huge power and the way God does things can be hard to understand, but it all shows us that God is bigger, stronger, and more loving than *anyone* else.

Ask: • **What's something that amazes you about God?** Share an example of your own, such as how God knows you better than you know yourself and *always* knows what's best for you.

Say: **God is mysterious.** But even if we can't understand everything about God, we can have faith that God is good in everything he does.



Supplies

- “Whirlwind Wheel” handout copied onto card stock (1 per child) (download [here](#))
- scissors
- hole punches
- pens
- markers
- clear tape
- stapler
- jumbo (smoothie) straws (1 for every 3 or 4 kids)
- regular straws (1 per child)
- red, orange, and yellow curling ribbon

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



Make Pinwheels

Show kids the sample craft you made. Give each child a “Whirlwind Wheel” handout. Set out the remaining supplies to share. Have kids follow these directions to make their own pinwheels.

- Cut out the square on your handout, and also cut along the diagonal lines.
- Use a hole punch to punch holes in the corners where the dots are.
- Use a pen to poke a hole in the center dot. Push the pen all the way through to widen the hole.
- Use markers to add flames to both sides of the square. The flames can remind you of Elijah’s fiery chariot.
- Bend the corners of the square in to the center so the holes line up. Start with the corner labeled “1,” and then continue in order. Tape each piece in place as you go (without blocking the holes).



- When you have all the corners taped in place, staple them next to the hole.
- Cut approximately 1-foot pieces of curling ribbon (four of each color). Tape three pieces to each point of your pinwheel.
- Cut a piece of a jumbo straw, about 1½ to 2 inches long.
- Stick the piece of straw through the hole in the pinwheel.
- Put a full-length regular-sized straw through the jumbo straw piece. (If it's a bendy straw, cut it at the bend.)

Make Them Spin

Say: **In our Bible story, Elijah was caught up in a whirlwind and taken to heaven in a fiery chariot.**

What a strange sight that must've been! Let's make our pinwheels spin like they're in a whirlwind.

- Have kids hold their pinwheels by the straws and blow on their pinwheels to make them spin.
- Kids can also run around the room carrying their pinwheels and watch their pinwheels spin as they run.

Talk About It

Ask: • **Tell about whether or not you like it when it's windy out.**

• **What's mysterious about wind?**

Say: **God is mysterious. And wind is kind of mysterious, too! We can't see wind, but we can see the things it's moving around. You might not be really sure where wind comes from, but you can feel its strength and you know it's there. When Elisha watched Elijah get taken to heaven in a whirlwind, maybe he could feel the strength of the wind!**

Have kids take their pinwheels home and show them to their friends and families as a reminder that God is mysterious.