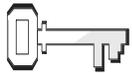


God's Gentle Whisper



References

1 Kings 19:1-18;
Prophets and Kings,
pp. 167-176



Memory Verse

"Your ears will
hear a voice . . .
saying, 'This is the
way; walk in it' "
(Isaiah 30:21).

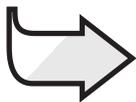


Objectives

The children will:
Know their inner
voice is God whispering
to them with love.

Feel a desire to
listen to God's
gentle whisper.

Respond by
asking Jesus to help
them pay attention to
God's gentle whisper.



The Message

I will listen to
God's gentle whisper.

Monthly Theme

Grace is the gift of life.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Jezebel is trying to kill Elijah. Elijah is afraid, and runs for his life for 40 days. Tired and discouraged, he arrives at Mount Horeb, and goes into a cave to rest and hide. God says to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" God tells Elijah to go stand on the mountain, and He will pass by. There is a powerful wind, an earthquake, and a fire, but Elijah isn't moved by any of these. Finally God speaks in a gentle whisper and tells Elijah to go back where he came from and continue to work for Him. Even though Elijah wasn't feeling good about himself, he listened and did what God asked him.

This is a lesson about grace.

God comes after His children, even if they try to run away from Him. He lovingly whispers to them the way to go, and gives them the power and loving support to do it. To be on the right track in life, we must put away distractions and listen to His voice.

Teacher Enrichment

Mount Horeb, the "mountain of God" to which Elijah fled, is also known as Mount Sinai. This is the same mountain where God first appeared to Moses in the burning bush, where the Lord caused water to flow from the rock for the Israelites, and where God handed His holy law to Moses.

"It was from a 'cliff of the rock' on Sinai that Moses had been given a view of God, and it may have been the same cave where Elijah now took up his lonely abode" (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 824).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 9.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>Whispering Welcome</i> B. <i>Shell Sounds</i>	Bible seashell, cup, bowl or any other curved object; Bible
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> offering container prayer notebook
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	adult Bible-times costume for Elijah; brown blanket or sheet; drum or metal pans; red, orange and yellow streamers; sign that says "Wind" Bible, index cards, clothespins, nylon cord or rope Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>True Listening</i>	none
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Listening Path</i>	none

***Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Give directions for the readiness activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- Bible

A. Whispering Welcome

Greet children at the door in a whisper and talk to them only in a whisper for several minutes. The children will probably respond in a whisper naturally. Eventually someone will ask, “Why are we whispering? (Or if the children aren’t also whispering, “Why are *you* whispering?”) If no one asks after several minutes, you can ask.

Debriefing

What happens when someone whispers? (You tend to whisper back; you have to pay attention; you have to be quiet so you can hear.) **God whispers to us, too.** Read aloud your memory verse, Isaiah 30:21. **How does God talk to us?** (through nature, through the Bible, through circumstances, through our thoughts, through people who love Him) **Do you take time to “hear” His voice?** Allow response time, then say: **That reminds me of our message for today:**



I WILL LISTEN TO GOD’S GENTLE WHISPER.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- seashell or cup or bowl or any other curved object
- Bible

B. Shell Sounds

Provide a seashell for the children to listen to. (A cup, bowl, or any other curved object will give you the same sound. Fun fact: The sound you hear is really the sound around you, and also the sound of your blood circulating in your head.) Give everyone a turn.

Debriefing

Ask: **How is the sound in the shell like God’s voice?** (It’s a gentle sound or whisper; you have to listen very carefully to hear it; the sound comes from deep inside the shell and God speaks deep inside us; etc.) Read aloud your memory verse in Isaiah 30:21. **How do you know when God is speaking to you?** (God will never ask you to do something contrary or opposite to His commands or that goes against the Bible; God will never ask you to do something that hurts someone else or that is not a loving thing to do.) **When do we need to listen to God’s voice?** Allow response time, then say: **Our message for today is:**



I WILL LISTEN TO GOD’S GENTLE WHISPER.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise

Any
Time



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Review the memory verse and allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

"Into My Heart" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 125)

"God Is in This Place" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 46)

"Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 90)

"Teach Me, Lord" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 110)



Mission

Use a story from *Children's Mission*.



Offering

As you collect the offering, ask for ideas on how people in the countries that will receive the mission offering can hear God's gentle whisper of love. (Christian radio and TV, listening to preaching, reading the Bible, Christian friends, etc.) Pray that the offering will help to that end.

You Need:

- offering container



Prayer

Use the prayer notebook. Invite the children to share their prayer requests and answers to prayer. Form a circle and invite the children to pray about their requests and to thank God for answered prayer. Encourage the children to remember the requests in their daily prayers at home. Then sing together "Teach Me, Lord" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 110).

You Need:

- prayer notebook

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- Bible-times costume for Elijah
- adult male
- brown blanket or sheet to drape over furniture to make a cave
- drum or metal pans
- red, orange, and yellow streamers for children to wave
- sign that says "Wind"

Experiencing the Story

Have an adult in costume act the part of Elijah. The adult tells the story from Elijah's point of view.

Special effects:

1. A drum or pans that someone beats for five to 10 seconds when the earthquake comes
2. Red, orange, and yellow streamers
3. Hidden voice to speak through a megaphone made from rolled paper
God's voice should sound gentle and loving, loud at first, then nearly a whisper after the fire.

Read or tell the story.

[Enter from the back of the room. Run in, looking over your shoulder. Run to the center of the class. Look surprised to see people. Put your fingers to your lips. Begin the story in a stage whisper, gradually getting louder.]

ELIJAH: Shh! Hello, I am the prophet Elijah. I am running for my life. King Ahab's wife, wicked Queen Jezebel, is trying to kill me.

I've witnessed God do some pretty amazing things. He gave life back to a little boy that I prayed for. So why am I running away? *[Throw up your hands; scratch your head.]* That's a good question. Why *am* I running? *[Rub your chin.]* Because I don't want to be killed. I know she can't catch me here—40 days and hundreds of miles (kilometers) away.

[Look around.] Sure is dry here, though. Like a desert, even here on Mount Horeb. They call this place the mountain of God. In Moses' day, it was called Mount Sinai. Well, excuse me. I'll feel safer in the cave. *[Crawl into the cave and then poke your head out.]*

HIDDEN VOICE: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

ELIJAH *[sounding scared and sorry for himself]*: I have been very zealous for You, Lord. The people in Israel have rejected You. They have broken down Your altars and killed Your prophets. *[Loudly:]* I am the only one left. *[Gets out of the cave, raises his arms to God.]*

HIDDEN VOICE: Elijah, go stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by. Come, I want to talk to you.

SPECIAL EFFECTS: *[Elijah stands up straight, looks around. Adult helper holds up "wind" sign, and the children blow like the wind.]*

ELIJAH: God, I know You were not in the wind. *[Elijah rocks back and forth.]* Hang on; it's an earthquake!

SPECIAL EFFECTS: *[Elijah hides his head again. The drummer pounds on the drum, beginning softly and building to a crescendo. After five to 10 seconds the drumming stops.]*

ELIJAH *[raising his head]*: I didn't hear God in the earthquake, did you?

SPECIAL EFFECTS: *[The children wave the streamers.]*

ELIJAH *[raising his head]*: I still didn't hear God's voice. God was not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire. I am still waiting for it.

HIDDEN VOICE *[in a gentle whisper]*: Elijah?

ELIJAH: Lord, is that You? *[Looks all around.]* Just a "still small voice"? You were not in the wind, earthquake, or fire. Just in that gentle whisper. I like that. You don't go scaring people, do You? Speak, Lord, I'm paying attention. *[He pulls his coat over his face and goes to stand at the entrance of the cave, facing out, to listen.]*

HIDDEN VOICE *[gently]*: What are you doing here, Elijah?

ELIJAH: I have been very zealous for You, Lord. The people in Israel have rejected You. They have broken down Your altars and killed Your prophets. *[Loudly:]* I am the only one left. *[In a scared voice:]* Now they're trying to kill me, too.

HIDDEN VOICE: Go back the way you came, Elijah. I still have a work for you to do. And by the way, I still have 7,000 faithful people in Israel who have not bowed to Baal.

ELIJAH: Me? You still trust me, Lord? *[Pause as if listening.]* Yes! *[Reach up and make a fist, then pull it quickly down.]* God still wants me. *[Waves to audience, turns and hurries joyfully away.]*

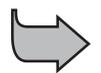
Debriefing

Explain the inner voice in terms of God's small voice speaking to their conscience. Encourage them to listen when their conscience tells them, "This is not right."

Say: **God's voice comes from the Bible and may also come from our parents, teachers, and pastors. God's inner voice assures us of what is right. We need to listen to that voice.**

Ask: **Have you ever heard God's gentle voice speak to you? What has that voice said to you?** (Affirm what they say.) **Is God's voice ever angry at you?** (No, never—be emphatic about this.) **Satan wants us to think that God is mad at us, but God loves us. He might feel sorry about what we choose to do, but God is never angry at us. God's voice always encourages us to do good.**

If you really mean it, say today's message with me:



I WILL LISTEN TO GOD'S GENTLE WHISPER.

Memory Verse

Before class, write each word of the verse on a separate card or paper and

attach them, in order, with clothespins to a length of nylon cord. Read aloud the memory verse in Isaiah 30:21: **"Your ears will hear a voice . . . saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.'"** Have the children read the words as you point. Remove one card at a time. Each time, the class reads the verse again, remembering which words go in the blank spaces. Repeat until all cards are gone. Repeat as needed.

Bible Study

Say: **Let's read some other Bible verses about God's (God the Father's or Jesus') voice speaking to someone. Try to discover who is being spoken to and where they are.** Adults assist as needed. Use the following texts:

Exodus 19:19 (to Moses on Mount Sinai)

Matthew 3:13-17 (to Jesus in the Jordan River at His baptism)

Matthew 17:1-5 (to Jesus on the mountain at His transfiguration)

Acts 9:1-6 (to Saul on the way to Damascus)

John 5:25; 1 Thessalonians 4:16 (to people at the resurrection)

Revelation 3:20 (to anyone today who will listen and invite Jesus to be part of his/her life)

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Did all these people immediately realize that it was God who was talking to them?** (No.) **Why not?** (They expected God to talk in a different way.) **In what ways do we expect God to speak to us? Are there other ways? God speaks in many different ways, but often we hear Him best in a quiet whisper to our minds. Let's say our message:**



I WILL LISTEN TO GOD'S GENTLE WHISPER.

You Need:

- index cards
- clothespins
- nylon cord
- Bible

You Need:

- Bibles

3

Applying the Lesson

True Listening

True listening is not just auditory but includes paying attention to what is being said and acting on it.

Have the children take turns role-playing each scenario, then, after each, discuss who was the true listener or whether there was true listening.

1. Two friends are sitting on the front porch. Mother tells the children, the car could be damaged if it ran over the balls and toys in the driveway. One says, "Yes, right." The other child goes to pick up the toys.

2. One child is doing homework, another is watching television. Father says, "It's five minutes until bedtime." They both say, "Thanks for the reminder." The child watching the television turns it off and goes to their room.

3. The teacher says, "Please pay attention to this; it will be on a test." One student looks steadily at the teacher while thinking about playing a game. Another student makes a check beside the information needed for the test.

4. Some children are sitting around by a tree after a hike in the woods. Everybody says, "I'm hungry!" Then all the children take out of their lunch something to eat, except for one whose parents forgot to make a lunch for him. After a bit, one of the children asks the one without a lunch if he would like something out of his. The rest keep on eating.

Debriefing

After discussion of each scenario, ask: **Who was the true listener? Was there true listening? What did you learn about listening to God?** (When God asks us to do something, do it.) **How do you feel when God tells you what to do?** (happy, unhappy, forced, thankful for His guidance) **Can you remember a time God told you to do something, and you did it? Share this with your class.**

What do we want to remember about this lesson? (To listen to God's voice; God sometimes speaks in a quiet voice.) **If you really mean it, say today's message with me:**



I WILL LISTEN TO GOD'S GENTLE WHISPER.

4

Sharing the Lesson

Listening Path

If possible, take the children outside and ask them to stand quietly and listen for two minutes. Return to the classroom and ask: **What did you hear?** (Allow response time.) **Are there noises that help you listen to God or do they block Him out? What are some other sounds that might block out God's voice?** (TV, radio, playground noises, quarreling, teasing, etc.)

What can you do to be sure you can hear God's voice speaking to you? (Listen carefully, stay away from quarrels or teasing, think about God or Jesus, turn off the TV or radio, spend time in a quiet place.)

Say: **This week, plan to invite someone to go with you on a listening path. Stand quietly together for a few minutes. Listen to all the sounds and notice whether they are loud or soft. Tell the person with you what it means to listen for God's gentle whisper.**

Ask the children to tell something about a person they want to invite to join them on their listening path walk.

Debriefing

Ask: **Do you feel closer to God when you are outdoors quietly enjoying the things He has made?** Most children will say yes. **Why?** (Because what He has made is all around us; there are fewer distractions from noise and things that people made, etc.)

How can you hear God's voice when you are enjoying what He has created? (By listening to sounds He gave to birds, animals, brooks, wind, etc. A quiet place helps us pay more attention to thoughts He puts in our minds.)

If you really want to hear what God says to you in His quiet way, say today's message with me:



I WILL LISTEN TO GOD'S GENTLE WHISPER.

Closing

Stand in a circle and ask the children to quietly whisper a prayer for the person to their right. Close with a whispered prayer, asking God to help the children listen for His gentle whisper every day.

God's Gentle Whisper

References

1 Kings 19:1-18;
Prophets and Kings,
 pp. 167-176

Memory Verse

"Your ears will hear a voice . . . saying, 'This is the way; walk in it' " (Isaiah 30:21).

The Message

I will listen to God's gentle whisper.

One night Shanika was alone in her bedroom trying to go to sleep. Every shadow seemed to move. She felt afraid. Then her mother came into the room. Her gentle voice helped Shanika calm down.

A long time ago God's prophet Elijah became frightened too. Then God spoke to him in a quiet voice.

Elijah was running for his life. King Ahab's wife, the wicked Queen Jezebel, was trying to kill him. Elijah was so scared that he had forgotten that God could protect him from the wicked queen. Instead, for 40 days he ran hundreds of miles into the desert. Finally he came to Mount Horeb. There he hid in a cave.

"What are you doing here?" God asked him.

You can tell Elijah felt sorry for himself by the way he answered God. "I have worked very hard for You, Lord," he said. "The Israelites have rejected You. They have broken down Your altars and killed Your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they're trying to kill me, too."

Elijah was telling God: "I worked hard

for You. See how tired and discouraged I feel?"

So God replied: "Go stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." This was God's way of saying, "Elijah, come here. I want to talk to you."

Elijah did as God said. Then a great wind tore through the mountains and shattered the rocks. But Elijah didn't get up, because he didn't hear God's voice in the wind. God was not in the strong wind.

Next an earthquake shook the mountain. But Elijah still didn't get up. He didn't hear God in the earthquake. After the earthquake a terrible fire swept by. But still Elijah didn't hear God's voice. God was not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire.

After all those powerful forces of nature, a gentle whisper came. Some Bible translations call it a "still small voice." And in that gentle whisper Elijah recognized God's voice. He pulled his coat over his face. Then he stood at the cave entrance to listen to God.

Again God asked Elijah the same question. "What are you doing here?" And Elijah gave his same "poor-me" answer.

God wasn't angry at Elijah for giving up and running away. God wasn't angry because Elijah forgot to trust Him.

God's gentle whisper spoke of God's love. God loved Elijah, even when he felt sorry for himself. Gently God encouraged the tired prophet. Then He sent him back to work. And God assured Elijah that he was not alone. And he wasn't, for God still had 7,000 faithful worshippers in Israel.



Daily Activities

Sabbath

- Go outdoors with your family to a quiet place. Have someone read the lesson story in a quiet voice. Imagine Elijah listening to God's gentle whisper.
- Then walk down a path together. Ask someone to walk behind you and read your memory verse aloud (Isaiah 30:21). If you were lost, how would your memory verse make you feel?
- Sing together "Anywhere With Jesus" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 45).

Sunday

- During family worship, read the lesson story in 1 Kings 19:1-18.
- Why did Elijah feel afraid and sorry for himself? What did God do to help him feel better? (verses 5-7) Think of a time you felt afraid or sorry for yourself. How did God help you? Act it out. Draw a face of someone who has suddenly heard a loud voice.
- If possible, record your memory verse. If not, whisper it to yourself. Teach the verse to your family.

Monday

- What question did God ask Elijah—twice? With your family read it in 1 Kings 19:9 and 13.
- Make a question mark (?) shaped cutout and write God's question on it. Read Elijah's answer (1 Kings 19:10) with sadness and crying in your voice. Continue Elijah's sad tale of pity in your own words (see 1 Kings 19:11-14).
- Listen to your recorded memory verse with the volume on low—to remind you of God's still, small voice. Whisper it from memory.

Tuesday

- With your family, read 1 Kings 19:11-13 again. Draw pictures of the four great things that happened while Elijah was in the cave.
- Discuss together: If you were Elijah, what would you rather hear? A loud voice or a soft voice?

What does God's way of speaking in this story tell us about His love?

- Whisper your memory verse together.

Wednesday

- During worship today, think of God's gentle whisper. Tell three ways you can hear His voice. Talk about conscience. What is it? How can it help you? Who speaks through your conscience? Does it ever tell you to do wrong? Read in Acts 24:16 what Paul said about his conscience.
- Draw the shape of an ear and write the memory verse on it. Then thank God that you can hear His voice.

Thursday

- Sometimes God speaks in a big way. With your family, read one example in Exodus 19:16-19. Discuss: Do you think God will speak to you in a loud voice? Why? How can you make sure you don't miss God's voice? Have you heard His voice or felt His presence? When and where? Read 1 Kings 19:15-18 together.
- Write or draw about something you heard and acted on today.
- Ask your family to whisper your memory verse with you. Then thank God for speaking gently to you.

Friday

- Start family worship by acting out this week's Bible story. Talk about things that keep you from hearing God's voice. Read together Psalm 46:10. Then play soft music. Ask everyone to close their eyes and say, "Be still, and know that I am God." Pay attention to thoughts God puts in your mind. After a while, stop the music. What did you learn from this quiet time? Was it easier to listen to God's voice? Why?
- Ask your family to whisper your memory verse with you.
- Sing "Teach Me, Lord" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 110) before prayer.