

ZEAL BORN OUT OF FAITH – ELIJAH

Objective

The children find out that God acknowledges himself to zeal born out of faith and prayer.

Contents

- Division of the kingdom into Israel and Judah after Solomon's death.
- Elijah is provided for during a drought (1 Kings 17).
- God's judgement on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18).
- We also want to hold fast to our faith.



Lesson Plan

Lead-In

Discussion

Ask the children what they know about Elijah and what the theme picture means to them.

Implementation

Workbook, Map

With the help of the map in the workbook elaborate on the story of Elijah.

Discussion

Ensure the following points are brought out and, if necessary, supplement the children's knowledge.

[Procedural hint: The numbers in the following text correspond to those on the map found in the workbook.]

- After Solomon's death, around 930 BC, the big kingdom which David had built up disintegrated into two states, the southern state of Judah with Jerusalem as its capital ①, and the northern state of Israel with Shechem, Tirzah and Samaria ② as capitals.
- After a few initial kings, Ahab eventually reigned with his wife Jezebel in the northern state. Many who served the heathen gods Baal and Ashtaroah had come into the land with Jezebel. Baal and Ashtaroah were regarded as gods of fertility and those who served them were called the prophets of Baal and Ashtaroah. King Ahab also worshipped the strange gods and had a temple built in Samaria in honour of Baal. Because of his influence, many Israelites turned away from the living God and worshipped strange gods.
- The prophet Elijah lived in Israel at the time of King Ahab.
- God sent Elijah to Ahab to proclaim to him that he would send a drought. Courageously and filled with great trust in God, Elijah went to Ahab and told him, *"As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word"* (1 Kings 17:1).
- And that is what happened. With the drought, during which nothing could grow, the Lord showed the powerlessness and ineffectiveness of the so-called gods of fertility.
- God told Elijah to hide by the brook Cherith ③. There ravens brought him meat and bread in the morning and evening until the brook dried up because of the drought.

Teacher's Presentation

- God again spoke with Elijah and sent him to Zarephath ④ where he was to be cared for by a widow. When Elijah came to Zarephath, he met a widow at the city gate and asked her for water and bread. The widow told him that she only had a little flour and oil for herself and her son, and that they themselves would then have to die of starvation.
- Elijah told her not to be afraid, but to prepare food first for him, and then for her son and herself, because God had promised that she would have enough flour and oil until it rained again.
- And that is what happened. The widow's faith in Elijah's promise was rewarded because thereafter there was always sufficient flour and oil in the house throughout the drought.
- When the widow's son died, Elijah brought him back to life.

In the third year following the beginning of the drought, God sent Elijah to Ahab for a second time to announce the end of the drought. In the meantime, Jezebel had had all prophets of the Lord she was able to find killed. And the king had looked for Elijah throughout the kingdom. This is when Elijah appeared before the king!

Question Prompt

What are the distinguishing features of Elijah's conduct?

Answers

- Trust in God,
- courage,
- intrepidity,
- etc.

Before God again sent rain, the people were to experience who the true God was. At Elijah's request, Ahab gathered the people of Israel, the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Ashtaroth on top of Mount Carmel ⑤.

Then Elijah stepped forward and said to the people, "*How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him*" (1 Kings 18:21).

The people did not answer!

Then Elijah had two oxen prepared as a burnt offering and again turned to the people.

Workbook, Exercise 1

Read the Bible text in the exercise and give the children time to occupy themselves with the possible reactions of the people.

Discussion

Analyze exercise 1 with the children.

- Elijah had courage born out of faith, because as the prophet of the Lord he stood all alone against the prophets of Baal and Ashtaroath, the king and the people.
- Elijah was filled with zeal for the Lord. For him it was important to prove the might of the living God to the people.
- Elijah possessed surety born out of faith, because he was completely certain that God would acknowledge himself to him.

Question Prompt

What happened on Mount Carmel?

- The prophets of Baal prayed to Baal all day for fire. They danced around the altar they had prepared, and cut themselves with swords and spears to make them bleed, according to their custom. However, no fire came down from heaven.
- Then Elijah built an altar out of 12 stones, placed the ox prepared for the offering on it and had everything doused with water several times. He prayed to God and fire came down. The fire consumed the burnt offering, the pile of wood, the stones, the soil and the water.
- When the people saw this, they fell on their faces and said, “*The Lord, he is the God*” (1 Kings 18:39).
- The prophets of Baal and Ashtaroath were killed.
- After Elijah had prayed again, God again let it rain.

God acknowledged himself to Elijah’s faith. When Elijah prayed

- God sent fire from heaven, and
- let it rain again.

Teacher’s Presentation

Tell the children that the prophet Elijah did not have to die, but went up to heaven in a fiery chariot. Before this he had set Elisha as his successor.

Bible

One of the children reads 2 Kings 2:9–11 aloud:

“And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.”

Discussion

Apply the events about Elijah to our time.

Elijah lived in a time in which unbelief became ever greater. He even felt he was the only one who still stood by God.

Also in many parts of the world today, fewer and fewer people have faith in God, his Son and the Holy Spirit.

Elijah did not allow himself to be detracted from his faith.

We want to cling to our faith.

Conclusion**Workbook, Exercise 2**

The children work on the exercise and compare answers.

Notes
