

Elijah Defeats The Prophets Of Baal

1 Kings 18:1-40

MEMORY VERSE

1 KINGS 18:39

“Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, ‘The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!’”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A list of 10 – 15 statements about God; some true and some false (false questions can range between sounding absurd and being close to the truth).

Picture of an altar (check a Bible encyclopedia or dictionary), construction paper, glue, regular crackers, red, yellow and orange crayons.

A copy of the curriculum template (provided with the curriculum) for each child, red construction paper, glue stick, scissors, clear contact paper and magnetic strips with adhesive backing.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

True or False Game

Before class come up with a list of 10 – 15 statements about God. Make some of them true and some of them false. You can make some sound absurd and some that aren't true, but sound close to the truth.

When class time begins tell your class that you are going to be reading several statements to them about God. The class will then “vote” on whether the statement is true or false. With each question record how many votes for true and how many votes for false.

At the end of your list of questions read through the questions again and give the right answers. Ask the children if there were any surprises. In today's lesson we will be learning about true prophets and false prophets. We have to be careful of false prophets because they want to deceive us. We are going to see what God does when 450 false prophets try to gang up on 1 of God's prophets.

LESSON TIME!

How many of you have ever had a contest? Maybe you've had a contest to see who was the strongest or the fastest? How did you do? In today's lesson we are going to see a contest that God has with all of the false idols in the land of Israel. Who do you think wins? We will find out in our story today.

Ahab was the king in the land of Israel (10 northern tribes). His wife is named Jezebel and was a princess from another nation. Jezebel was a very evil woman. She worshiped a god by the name of Baal. All the people from her country worshiped Baal and she brought prophets from there and began to convince King Ahab to build temples for Baal in Israel. She was a very beautiful and convincing queen.

Ahab went along with her and they promoted Baal worship in Israel. Ahab and Jezebel were very bad leaders and they led the people of Israel away from worshiping the Lord. It was a very sad time in Israel's history because there weren't very many people who worshiped the Lord any more.

But God still loved His people even though they were sinning against Him. So He sent Elijah to turn their hearts back again. Elijah told them that they couldn't worship both God and Baal. He told them they would have to choose whom they would follow. If God is Lord, follow Him, but if Baal is Lord, follow him.

We too, have to choose whom we are going to follow, either God and His ways or the world and its ways. We can't have both. The world has its own gods. As Christians we can be distracted by the gods of this world. We may not bow down to wooden or stone statues, but we certainly can give all of our time, energy and money to things that don't glorify the Lord. Even if the whole world is following other gods we need to be committed to serving the one true God! **The world's gods are powerless, but our God is awesome and powerful.**

1 KINGS 18:17-21

Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?"

And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals.

"Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel.

And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word.

Elijah had previously been critical of King Ahab because Ahab was leading the people into sin. When Ahab saw Elijah he tried to put the blame on Elijah by calling him a troublemaker. Elijah answered that Ahab and his family was really the troublemakers because they were promoting the worship of false gods.

Sometimes the people who are willing to stand up for what is right, like Elijah, are the ones who are called troublemakers. If you stand up for what is right you may not be the most popular person around. Sadly, because of sin, the world twists things around and will call sin good and call what is right bad. But we can't let this keep us from serving the Lord and doing what is right.

Elijah told King Ahab to gather the people and the prophets of Baal and to meet him on Mount Carmel. Elijah asked the people why they were wavering from one religion to the other. He told them to choose whom they would follow. They couldn't have it both ways. But the people wouldn't decide so they didn't answer.

When Joshua came into the Promised Land with the children of Israel they were tempted to start serving the gods in that land. But Joshua made a stand for what is right. He told the people to choose whom they would serve, but for him and his family they had decided to serve the Lord (Joshua 24:15). We need to make the same kind of commitment in our lives. Are we going to serve the true and the living God, or will we serve the world's gods? **The world's gods are powerless, but our God is awesome and powerful.**

1 KINGS 18:22-24

Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.

"Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it.

"Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God." So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken."

Elijah suggested a contest between God and Baal. He said that he was the only one left to represent God. There were 450 prophets to represent Baal. He suggested that each side would prepare a sacrifice with a bull cut into pieces, placed on wood on an altar but they were not to start a fire. The prophets were to pray to Baal and Elijah would pray to God. The one who would send fire from heaven to burn the sacrifice would prove to be the one true God. The people agreed.

So many times the Lord will do great things even when it seems like He is outnumbered. God only had one representative there on Mt. Carmel - Elijah. There were 450 prophets of Baal. But it was in the middle of this situation that God was going to greatly demonstrate His power to His people. **The world's gods are powerless, but our God is awesome and powerful.**

Why would God want to do a contest like this one? He loved His people so much that He was willing to do whatever it would take to bring their hearts back to Him. They had left God to go after false gods. Those false gods would never answer the people when they called on them. But God was just waiting and wanting His people to return to Him so that He could bless them.

1 KINGS 18:25-26

Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare it first, for you are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it."

So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, "O Baal, hear us!" But there was no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made.

The 450 prophets of Baal prepared their sacrifice. They prayed to their god to send the fire to burn it. They started dancing around their sacrifice. They were jumping up and down, turning in circles and yelling loudly to get their god's attention but nothing happened.

Baal was an idol, a false god. This is what makes this story so sad. If you worship something that you can make with your own hands then there is no way that it can help you. Wood or stone can never answer back or set a sacrifice on fire. Baal would never answer because he could never answer. **The world's gods are powerless, but our God is awesome and powerful.**

When we have a problem in our lives, if we rely on anyone or anything other than the Lord, we will be let down. Nothing else can help us except for the Lord. He wants to help us and will help us when we follow Him.

Elijah's Altar

For this craft you will need a picture of an altar (check a Bible encyclopedia or dictionary), construction paper, glue, saltine crackers, red, yellow and orange crayons.

Review the story and talk about altars. What were they used for? How were they built, etc.? Use a picture of an altar to help to describe it. Explain to the children that they will be making a picture of an altar.

Glue the crackers onto the paper to form an altar shape. You can place four crackers in a row on the bottom of a sheet of construction paper. On top of that row place three crackers and on top of the second row place two crackers. Center the crackers on each row. On top of the altar, use red, yellow and orange crayons to make fire. Allow the children to be creative and draw Elijah if they like or even a trough of water like in the story.

1 KINGS 18:27-29

And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened."

So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them.

And when midday was past, they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention.

Elijah started making fun of them and their gods. He asked them if their god was too busy to answer and began to laugh at them. It is pretty silly to worship wood, metal or stone statues. But unfortunately people still worship all kinds of things other than God today. Anything that we give all of our focus or attention to other than God is an idol. So even though we may not bow down to a hunk of metal, we still have to be careful not to let anything else take all of our attention.

Elijah was questioning whether their god was real at all. Then the Baal prophets started dancing and jumping even harder. They began to cut themselves with swords and spears while they chanted to their gods. They tried all day to get their god to send the fire to burn their sacrifice. Because their god was not real, there was no answer.

It would seem that the prophets of Baal really believed that their god would answer. They thought that by hurting themselves that this would somehow please Baal and then he would answer. Isn't it great that our God will answer and we never have to hurt ourselves? God wants only good for us. He loves us and wants to help us.

Even though the prophets of Baal believed it didn't matter, they had put their trust in the wrong god, a false god. We need to put all of our trust and faith in the "true and the living God" like Elijah did. **The world's gods are powerless, but our God is awesome and powerful.**

1 KINGS 18:30-35

Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.

And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name."

Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed.

And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood, and said, "Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood."

Then he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time; and he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time.

So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.

Elijah prepared his sacrifice explaining the significance of each step as he built the altar, cut the bull, and put it on the wood. Then he told the people to pour water on the sacrifice. Have you ever tried to light a fire with wet wood? All you get is a little bit of smoke. It just won't burn.

Elijah poured 12 large containers of water on his sacrifice and on the wood under it. It was soaking wet with water standing in a trench all around it. How could it burn? It couldn't! But what is impossible for man can be done by God. With God all things are possible. A miracle is about to happen.

Isn't it amazing how that God will even do the impossible to show us how much He loves us? The prophets of Baal couldn't even get dry wood to start on fire, but God was about to do something pretty amazing with a bunch of wet wood and a drenched sacrifice. **The world's gods are powerless, but our God is awesome and powerful.**

1 KINGS 18:36-38

And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and

Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word.

"Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again."

Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench.

When it was time for the usual evening sacrifice, Elijah called upon the Lord God, of Abraham, Isaac and Israel. The people there would understand these names and what they represent. Elijah stated that he was not the one in charge. God had given him instructions. He gave the glory to God.

What God wanted was for the people's hearts to turn back to true worship. God loved His people very much, even while they were disobeying Him. He wanted to win their hearts back. God loves us in the same way. He loved us enough to send His son, Jesus to die for us on the cross so that we could be saved.

Then God sent fire down from Heaven to burn the wood, sacrifice, the dirt, and to dry up all the water. This proved without a doubt that the Lord is the one true God and there is no other. While Baal didn't even answer, God went above and beyond what was necessary to demonstrate His power to His people. **The world's gods are powerless, but our God is awesome and powerful.**

1 KINGS 18:39

Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!"

The people fell down flat on their faces in true worship. They chose to return to God and repent of their sins, declaring “the Lord, He is God.” What a privilege we have to be able to turn to God and worship Him.

1 KINGS 18:40

And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there.

Elijah had the false prophets of Baal arrested and put to death for the terrible and very evil things that had been done to the people of Israel in the name of religion. They were also guilty of leading God’s people astray.

In our lesson today, God sent Elijah to the people to get them to turn their hearts back to God and to quit sinning by putting other false gods before Him. The question to us today is whom are we going to choose - the ways of God or the ways of the world? The things of the world can seem fun and exciting for a little while but they won’t bring true love and lasting happiness. Only God can make our lives worth while.

God has sent Jesus to us to turn our hearts back to God. He wants our love and worship. Jesus paid the price for our sins and became our sacrifice. If we ask Jesus to come into our hearts and forgive us for our sins, He will always be with us, now and into eternity. The ways of God are always the best for us. Only in Jesus will we find true love and lasting happiness. **The world’s gods are powerless, but our God is awesome and powerful.**

“No Idols!” Magnet

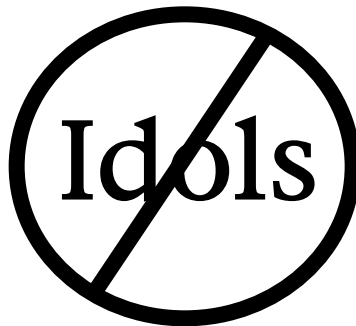
You will need a copy of the curriculum template (provided with the curriculum) for each child, red construction paper, glue stick, scissors, clear contact paper and magnetic strips with adhesive backing.

Copy the template onto white cardstock (1 sheet per child). Using red construction paper have the children cut out a circle, approximately 1/8 to 1/4 inches thick. The circle should be large enough to fit around the word “idols” (the idea is to make a red circle with a line through it to communicate “no idols”). Next cut out a line the same width as the circle which will go from one end of the circle to the other. Glue the circle around the word “idols.”

Next glue the line through the word “idols.” Cut around the outer rim of the circle to cut out the craft. Using clear contact paper stick over front and back of the craft. Next place a small strip of magnet with adhesive onto the back.

Review the lesson and remind the children how important it is to only serve the true and the living God.

Example:



PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to follow the Lord no matter what. Even if the whole world turns away we can still trust in Him. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.

IDDOLS