Elisha Raises a Boy from the Dead



Scripture Reference: 2 Kings 4:8-37

Suggested Theme: Help and encourage people who preach the word of God.

Memory Verse: “Anyone who is learning the teaching of God should share all the good things he has with his teacher.” Galatians 6:6, ICB

Story Overview:

A wealthy woman had an extra room built onto her house and furnished it comfortably for Elisha. Elisha and his servant used the room whenever they passed through the area of Shunem. In thanks for her help in preaching the word of God, Elisha told the woman that she would give birth to a son even though her husband was very old. She did give birth to a son, but after a few years, he died. The woman placed the boy’s body in Elisha’s special room and then went to find Elisha. Elisha came and raised her son from the dead.

Background Study:

As Elisha, the prophet, travelled from town to town, there must have been many times when it was difficult to find lodging. Israelite travellers (especially an Israelite going into a town of Israel) could expect to be invited into someone’s home for a meal. The traveller would be asked to spend the night if it were evening. The Shunammite woman’s request that Elisha have a meal and spend the night did not come as a shock to Elisha. After that, whenever he was in Shunem, he visited and stayed with them.

The woman’s husband must have been as hospitable as she. Her husband agreed when she suggested they build an extra room in their home for Elisha. This family was wealthy. Even for a wealthy person, it was no small matter to build an extra room onto a house, plus there was the added expense of furnishing it. They did all this for a man who only visited with them from time to time.

Elisha was impressed and touched by the generosity of these godly people. He wanted to do something for them to show his gratitude. When he asked the woman what she needed, she replied that she had everything. It was Elisha’s servant, Gehazi, who realized what the perfect gift would be – a son. Elisha called the woman and prophesied that she would bear a son within the year.

The prophecy came to pass, but some years later, the boy suffered from an illness while helping his father in the fields. The boy died a few hours later. The woman immediately asked her husband to let her go to Elisha. He agreed even though he did not understand why she wanted to go.

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When the woman saw Elisha, she did not berate him. She stated that she did not ask for a son but was given one, and now he had been taken away from her. She believed that Elisha could do something to help her son, and he did.

Elisha instructed his servant to hurry to the child. Gehazi did not greet anyone but lay his staff on the boy's face. The staff did not revive the child.

When Elisha arrived, he went into the room with the dead child, shut the door, prayed, stretched himself on the child to warm him, and prayed. God heard his prayer and restored the life of the child! The woman bowed in humble gratitude before Elisha, then took her cherished son and left the room.

Elisha continued to see this family as the years went by (2 Kings 8:1-6).

Like Elisha, those who preach the message of God need our support. Preaching the word is often not popular or profitable. Those who work full-time for the church often spend so much of their time and energy caring for those in and out of the church that they have little time for themselves. Kindness from Christian brothers and sisters towards preachers and teachers of the word is an important way to build up the church.
Background Information on the Divided Kingdom.

Way to Introduce the Story:

Ask the children what a preacher (or missionary or church worker) does. Discuss ways that they help the church. (You may want to investigate this yourself before the session). You might talk about preaching, teaching, counselling, visiting the sick, evangelising, studying God's word, praying for the church, being hospitable, preaching for funerals and weddings, helping others learn to study, etc. How could we help preachers? "In today's story, we are going to learn about a woman who helped Elisha when he needed a place to stay."

The Story:

Elisha and his helper, Gehazi, travelled around Israel. They went from town to town. Elisha preached to people about God. He wanted everyone to learn to love God and to obey Him.

It was very tiring to travel around Israel preaching to people. When he went to a new town, Elisha always had to find a place to stay. When tired, he was always happy to find a comfortable bed.

When Elisha came to the town of Shunam, he was very hungry. A very rich woman asked him to come and eat at her house. The food was delicious. From that day onward, every time Elisha and Gehazi passed through Shunam, they stopped to eat at the rich woman's house.

After a while, the woman had a good idea. She said to her husband, "Elisha is a good man. He always helps people and tries to get them to obey God. He comes to our town often. He is always hungry and needs a place to stay. Why don't we make a small room on the roof for him? We have plenty of room since we don't have any children. We can put a bed and table in the room. We could also add a chair and a lamp. Then he could stay here every time. He could sleep on the bed and study and eat at the table. If we did this for him, then he could have more time to teach people about God."

The woman's husband agreed and began preparing the room. The next time Elisha came to Shunam, the woman invited him to stay in the new room.

Elisha was very happy. He was glad the woman and her husband wanted to do something for him. Now, he wanted to do something good for her. What could he do? When he asked her, she said that she did not need anything. She had everything she needed.

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Elisha's servant, Gehazi, had an idea: "The woman's husband is very old and they have no children. Why don't you ask God to give them a son?"

Elisha thought this was a great idea! He told the woman she would have a baby before a year passed. The woman was very happy. Things happened just as Elisha said, and she had a baby before the year passed.

Then a terrible thing happened! One day, the little boy got a terrible headache. He ran out to the field where his father was working. "My head, my head," he screamed as he held his head. His father did not know what was wrong, so he told a servant to take the boy back to the house to his mother. The mother took care of the little boy, but he died.

The parents were very sad. Then, the boy's mother had an idea. She said to her husband, "Let me go to Elisha. He can help us." Then she rode a donkey all the way to the town where Elisha and Gehazi were staying.

When she asked Elisha for help, he told Gehazi to run ahead and try to help the boy. Gehazi left, but the woman waited. She wanted Elisha to be the one to help her son.

Gehazi tried to help the boy, but he could not. When Elisha arrived, he went to the boy's bedroom. He prayed to God, and he tried to make the boy warm.

Then Elisha heard something. What was it? No one was in the room with him except the dead boy. Then he heard it again. It was the sound of sneezing. The boy was coming alive! He sneezed again. In total, he sneezed seven times before opening his eyes!

Elisha was so happy! He quickly called the boy's mother into the room. She was very happy to see her little boy alive again. The woman was very happy that Elisha was a man of God. She was happy that she had been kind to Elisha, too.

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible, but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.

View this slideshow and download it from the original source: http://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/elisha-boy/

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Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child's spiritual development and help them connect to God. Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.

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Review:

- What did the rich woman and her husband do for Elisha? (Built an extra room so he could stay there whenever he wanted)
- What did Elisha tell the woman would happen to her? (She would have a son even though her husband was old)
- Why was the woman able to have a baby? (Elisha was grateful for the room she and her husband had built for him and asked God to give her a son as a way to express gratitude)
- What did the little boy say when he ran to the field where his father was? (My head, my head!)
- What did the boy's mother do when he died? (She went and got Elisha for help)
- What was the first thing the boy did when Elisha brought him back to life? (He sneezed seven times)
- What did you learn about prayer from this story?
- What did you learn about God from this story?

Reflection:

- What question would you ask God about this story?
- What do you think Elisha's room looked, felt, or smelled like?
- Why do you think Gehazi couldn't raise the boy from death?
- How do you think the boy felt when he cried, "my head, my head!" to his father?
- How do you think the boy's mother felt when the boy died?
- If you were the boy in the story, what would you be thinking when you first came back alive?
- Who do you think had the most faith in this story?
- Have you ever had a Christian traveller or church worker stay in your home?
- How can you show gratitude this week to someone who has helped you?

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a lifelong friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. A variety of prayer methods are found here.

Song Suggestions:

- I've Got Peace Like a River Song
- My God is So Big Song
- Refer to the Song Page on this website for more song options.

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Activities and Crafts:

- How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.

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- Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.

Activities:

- Look up the word “miracle” in a bible dictionary and discuss its meaning.
- Write notes of encouragement to those who preach the gospel (preachers, teachers, missionaries, etc.)
- Plan and host an appreciation supper for preachers or teachers.
- Invite the preacher to your gathering to discuss his work and how people have helped him.
- Use a bible encyclopaedia to learn about houses in Elisha’s time.
- Find Shunem on a map or Bible Atlas.
- Younger children can practice making a bed for Elisha and then act out by showing him the bed and inviting him to rest. You can also use the same bed to act out the woman’s son coming back to life.

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable “God’s Story” printable reflection page. Free printables for this story.

Crafts:

- Print bookmarks, trading cards or timelines (printable pages).
- Make a small model of a room like the one the woman might have made for Elisha to stay in.

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. Free printables for this story.

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Other Online Resources:

- Colouring page and puzzle worksheets (Calvary Curriculum)

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