

date: 2/11/17**Bible Passage: 1 Kings 19:1–18**
(Elijah)

God Is Our Safe Place

REMEMBER VERSE

Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your
good Spirit lead me on level ground.

Psalm 143:10

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

In a home in Southern California, a man—now a father—began to put the dream of his youth for a classic wood ski boat into plans. The design was beautiful, and his craftsmanship was seemingly flawless. This boat was one of a kind. She was built using deep African mahogany. The leather interior and sports car-like dash panel perfectly accented the era this boat was designed to represent.

For seven years, I watched my father build this boat. As I watched, I learned. There was purpose behind every curve in the wood. In every detail, I saw a part of my dad, and how the events of the past had shaped who he had become. He approaches life much as he approached this boat. He is purposeful with the things that matter most. When I look at this boat, I don't just see an incredible work of art; I see a representation of my dad's story. Understanding some of the truest things about him has directly impacted my relationship with him. My perspective is no longer one of a child, but an adult. Knowing his story has brought deeper understanding and appreciation to our relationship.

I'm reminded of my relationship with the Lord. When I understand the truth of who He is, I'm able to know Him personally and run to Him as my safe place. I am able to trust the character of who He is and disregard anything that's contrary to His Word. My connection with Jesus is true and real.

Cristi Thomas
Tru Team

Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

God's people had once again turned their hearts from Him. Israel was under the rule of King Ahab, who had followed in the footsteps of his father before him. Both kings did evil in the sight of the Lord. However, none provoked the anger of God more than King Ahab (1 Kings 16:33).

The Lord sent His prophet Elijah to give a clear message to the king: Not one drop of moisture would fall on the land until He sent word ending the drought. After Elijah delivered the message, the Lord sent Elijah into hiding to protect him from what was to come. In this time, the Lord provided for Elijah by directing ravens to bring him bread and meat.

After three years, God revealed His plan to end the drought. Once again, the Lord sent Elijah to King Ahab, challenging the king. Ahab was to gather the people of Israel, the 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah (a Canaanite goddess) whose worship was associated with Queen Jezebel's influence, and meet him on Mount Carmel. After many failed attempts of the pagan prophets to summon their false gods, Elijah called the people to come near as he repaired the altar of the Lord. An offering was prepared for the Lord and placed in pieces on the altar, then doused with water. Elijah prayed, asking God to show the people that He was, in fact, the Lord Almighty. Scripture tells us that immediately God responded to Elijah's prayer. The fire of the Lord fell down, consuming not only the sacrifice, but the wood, the stones, the soil, and licking up every drop of water around the altar. The people fell on their faces professing that the Lord was God!

Elijah seized the prophets of Baal and executed them. He then went to the top of Mount Carmel and bowed down, waiting on the Lord. God sent rain upon the land. After hearing all that had happened, Jezebel made an oath to have Elijah killed. Elijah fled for his life to Mount Horeb, or the mountain of God (also referred to as Mount Sinai, where Moses met with God and was given the Law for the people). On the mountain of God, the Lord came to Elijah—in a calm whisper. Here God helped Elijah to know Him and trust Him to be his safe place.

Support

What defines safety for you? Where do you feel protected and free from any risk or danger? Where do you seek refuge and covering in times of distress? What gives you confidence when you face opposition?

We see from Elijah's story that he considered the Lord God his refuge and protection. Because of his confidence in the protection of the Lord, he was able to boldly stand against the prophets of Baal. God provided a safe place for Elijah to face his fears. As he met with God and learned to know Him in a new and deeper way, Elijah was prepared to step out in faith again.

God is trustworthy. He is strong. As we see God's interactions with Elijah, we see His heart. We know the truth of God. When we look at Jesus, we see God. He constantly reveals Himself to us so we may know Him and He may be our safe place. God can handle anything you bring to Him. He will be your shelter; He will cover you in His love. Lean into Him, and He will bring you strength and rest. God can be your safe place, and He will show His great love for you.

EXPLORE::: 10 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day's portion of The Big God Story.



Blanket Fort

Children will be able to play and explore inside a blanket fort—a safe place to engage.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- Bedsheets (flat, king- or queen-size)
- Basket
- Crayons
- Paper (1 sheet per child)
- Optional: Book or magazine (1 per child)

SET UP

Fill the basket with crayons and paper. Create a simple fort using tables and chairs as the rectangular frame for the fort, and drape big flat sheets or fabric over the top. (For safety reasons, be sure you're able to see inside the fort from all angles.) Place the basket inside the fort.

RELATE

Encourage children to explore the blanket fort. Once a few children have gathered inside, join them by sitting in the entrance. **We've built a safe and cozy place here today! If you were going to build a place to invite God, what would it look like?** Encourage kids to draw and color what they'd want their meeting place to look like. If your space is carpeted, children can use the book or magazine as a hard drawing surface for their paper.

After a few moments, continue the discussion. **Tell me about your pictures. How big is your meeting place? Where is it located? What colors did you choose? What do you like about those colors? Are there people inside your meeting place? If so, who are they? Is there a picture of God inside your meeting place?** There are no right or wrong answers. This is simply a time of exploration for the children. Have fun!

DISCOVER:: 25 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Ponder Point

God Is Our Safe Place

Chloe's Rules

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Chloe's Rules videos](#)
- Worship music (suggestions: "Everybody, Everywhere" and "Thank You," TruWorship *Sincerely Yours*)

RELATE

Welcome children as they're entering the large group meeting area. *Tech: Cue Chloe's Rules video.* The theme song

will play as the Worship Leader/Host enters and makes his way up front, welcoming and greeting children along the way. This should be a high-energy entrance. *Tech: Cue preschool program theme song.* Choose and play two upbeat worship songs of your choice from a worship album that complements the theme and focus of the lesson.

Mail Time

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Mail Time intro clip and image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [Remember Verse image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [Remember Verse cards \(see Resources\)](#)
- [Mail Time envelope](#)
- Bibles (your personal and large children's)
- Mailbox

PREPARE AHEAD

Print or copy the Mail Time envelope art and attach to a large envelope. Print or copy one Remember Verse card and put it inside the envelope.

RELATE

Tech: Cue the Mail Time intro clip and image. Choose one volunteer to hide the mail and another to find the mail. Have the "Seeker" close her eyes while the "Hider" finds a good place to hide the Remember Verse. Once the mail has been hidden, the Seeker will begin to look for the mail while the children give clues to its whereabouts by calling out "hot" and "cold."

Once the Seeker finds the mail, the Host invites her to pull out the enclosed Remember Verse. Next, the Host should find the Remember Verse in his Bible and read the words aloud. Talk about the meaning of the verse while interacting with the children.

Lead the children in reciting the Remember Verse several times together using a variety of engaging methods. Hand motions, different voices, various speeds, and character integration are all great ways to help commit the Scripture to memory. For longer verses, approach the verse one section at a time, increasing what the children repeat back each week.

REMEMBER VERSE

**Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your
good Spirit lead me on level ground.**

Psalm 143:10

REMEMBER VERSE DEFINITIONS

Will: order or command

Level: even or flat

REMEMBER VERSE MOTIONS

Teach me: Point thumbs to self.

to do your will: Place right hand over middle of chest and move outward.

for you are my God: Point index fingers to the sky and then cross both arms over chest.

may your good Spirit: Spread arms out wide.

lead me on level ground: Pull arms back in, palms facing down, and push arms forward.

Wardrobe of Wonder

Storyteller/Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Wardrobe of Wonder intro clip and image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [What'slt: Whisper \(see optional sound effect and image in Resources\)](#)
- Wardrobe of Wonder
- Small stools or chairs (2)

What'slt: Whisper

While on the mountain of the Lord, Elijah experienced a mighty wind, a great earthquake, and a fire. But the Lord wasn't in any of these. Then came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he knew it was the Lord. He covered his face and went to meet with Him. God is tender and gentle with His children. He is our safe place and continually shows His love for us.

RELATE

Tech: Cue the *Wardrobe of Wonder* intro clip and image. Invite a child volunteer to “spy” on the What'slt by peeking into the wardrobe. Each time the wardrobe door opens, cue the *Wardrobe of Wonder* sound effect. Have him whisper the identity of the What'slt in your ear to ensure he knows what it is.

Invite your assistant to sit on the stools with you. Then lead the group in asking the assistant yes-or-no questions about the What'slt. Once the children have guessed correctly, ask your assistant to retrieve the What'slt from the wardrobe and bring it to you. Thank your volunteer and encourage him to sit with his small group.

ASK

What was in the Wardrobe of Wonder? Children respond. **A whisper, yes! Do you hear a whisper when you're being noisy or when you're being quiet and listening carefully? I wonder why we have a whisper in the Wardrobe of Wonder today. Do you have any ideas?** Allow time for responses. **Yes, I think you're right, it's probably in The Big God Story. Let's take a look, because it's time for ...**

The Big God Story

1 Kings 19:1–18

God Is Our Safe Place

Storytelling Technique: Props and Sound Effects

SUPPLIES

- [The Big God Story intro clip and image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [Sound effects: Wind, Earthquake, Fire \(see Resources\)](#)
- Storyteller prop (item from home to represent safety; example: teddy bear or blanket)

Leader Tip

As the Storyteller, you've been encouraged to bring a personal item from home that represents safety to you (or made you feel safe as a child). This item should be something young children will be able to relate to. In the lesson, we'll be using a teddy bear along with a personal story from the author. You may choose to use this story, or modify it with your own

experiences.

RELATE

Tech: Cue The Big God Story intro clip and image. **Hello, everyone. I brought something to share with you today (take out item). I've had this (item name) since I was little.** Talk with children about item—what it looks like, characteristics, etc. **We've been on many adventures together. When I was little I would tuck him into bed with me at night and hold him so close. You see, having my bear reminded me I was safe. What are some things that help you remember you're safe?** Encourage responses; interact with answers. **Are there special places where you feel safe? Our moms, dads, night lights, blankets, pictures of our families, grandmas, and grandpas can all help us to know we're safe. There's something very special we're going to hear about in The Big God Story. Before we do, let's ask God to be the one to teach us today.** Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

A long time ago, there was a prophet named Elijah. What is a prophet? Take responses. **Yes, you're right! A prophet receives a special message from God to share with God's people. Well, Elijah was a prophet who loved God very much. He knew that God is holy, because God is perfect and there isn't anyone else like Him. One day, God told Elijah to take a message to the king and the people of Israel. The king and queen didn't believe in the one true God—they worshipped pretend gods. But Elijah called all the people together just as God had told him. While everyone was together, God showed He was more powerful than anyone or anything by sending fire down from heaven. He showed them that only He was worthy of their worship.**

The queen was so angry with Elijah that she wanted to kill him. She didn't want to believe the true things that Elijah said about God and the amazing things God had done! So Elijah ran from the city to a place he thought he'd be safe. Okay, friends. Stand up, because we're going to run in place like Elijah. When I say "safe," you're going to stop and cover your head with your arms. Are you ready? Okay, let's run in place. Ready, set, go! Run in place for a few seconds. Safe! Nicely done. You can have a seat.

Elijah ran from the city into the wilderness. After a while, he was so tired that he slept beneath a tree. Encourage children to lie down as if they're sleeping. While Elijah was sleeping, God sent an angel to care for him. The angel of the Lord brought food and water for Elijah. Have children sit up. The special meal gave him enough strength to travel for 40 days and 40 nights without eating another thing! Elijah kept going until he reached a place the people called the mountain of God. When he got there, he found a cave, went inside, and fell asleep again.

When Elijah woke up, the Lord God said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" God listened to everything Elijah said and then told him to meet Him on the mountain. As Elijah stood there, a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. *Tech: Cue Wind sound effect.* Elijah waited. Pause. Then there was a great earthquake. *Tech: Cue Earthquake sound effect.* Elijah waited. Pause. Then there was a fire. *Tech: Cue Fire sound effect.* Elijah waited. Pause. After the fire (lower your voice for emphasis), Elijah heard the sound of a gentle whisper, and he knew *that* was God. He covered his face and went out to meet the Lord. Was God in the windstorm? Children respond. **No, God wasn't in the windstorm. Was He in the earthquake? Children respond. **No, God wasn't in the earthquake. Was He in the fire?** Children respond. **No, God wasn't in the fire. God chose to meet with Elijah in a quieter way.****

Wait a minute! We heard a whisper earlier today! Where did we hear the whisper? In the Wardrobe of Wonder! Our What'sIt was a clue about God speaking to Elijah in a gentle whisper! Throughout Elijah's life, God took care of him. God was always with him. Did Elijah need to go all the way to the mountain for God to be with him? Children respond. **No, he didn't. God was with him everywhere he went. The mountain didn't need to be Elijah's safe place. God was his safe place.**

No matter where you go, or what you do, God is with you. God is your safe place, no matter what. He loves you and wants you to come to Him no matter where you are or what you've done. God always loves you and He is always our safe place!

Wonder Questions

Small Group Enhancements, coloring pages, and discussion questions help your group go deeper into today's portion of The Big God Story.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Wonder Questions coloring pages \(see Resources\)](#)
- [TruWonder Small Group Enhancements timeline and images \(see Resources\)](#)
- Crayons

RELATE

Today in The Big God Story, Elijah became afraid and ran away even though he knew God is mighty and powerful. While he was alone, God met with him and showed Elijah that God is our safe place.

I wonder ... Why is God a safe place?

I wonder ... What do I want to tell God?

I wonder ... What might God want to speak or whisper to me?

BLESS::: 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Remember Verse cards \(see Resources\)](#)

RELATE

Today, send your little ones out with a blessing by praying Scripture over them. Encourage children to place their hands out in front of themselves, palms up as if cupping them together to hold water. This posture demonstrates our willingness to receive what God has for each of us. You may choose to read the following Scripture paraphrase more than once as God's Spirit leads you.

Children, God is a shelter for you, and your strength. He is always ready to help you when you're in trouble or afraid. You don't ever need to be afraid of earthquakes or storms, because God is always with you. Be calm and rest, because He is God. (paraphrase of Psalm 46:1–3, 10)

End with a final blessing over the group:

Children, may you always remember that God is your safe place.