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Scripture: 1 Samuel 24:1-22

Theme: We overcome evil with good, not revenge

Jr High (Ages 12-14)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

Lesson Title: "Elijah Still Small Voice , God Speaks Gently" Imagine Elijah had just witnessed an incredible miracle, God parted the Jordan River to let him cross on dry land! But when he got to Mount Horeb, he crashed. Not because he was weak, but because he ran out of options. After fleeing from Jezebel, he'd given up on everything, his friends, his future, even his own strength. He was broken, and in that moment, God didn't call out in a loud, dramatic voice like He had in the wilderness. Instead, He invited him to listen, not just with his ears, but with his whole heart. God spoke in a small whisper, and Elijah had to choose to trust Him again, even when it felt impossible. Why It Matters: God's voice isn't always thunderous, sometimes it's the quietest words we never even notice. Elijah's story shows that when we're overwhelmed or exhausted, God doesn't abandon us. He whispers our names when we can't hear Him, asks us to rest when we're running on empty, and reminds us that even in small answers, He's still working. Life's biggest battles aren't always about strength, but about listening when no one else is listening. Life Application: Ask your students: Where have you felt God's whisper instead of a loud command? How can you practice listening when life feels chaotic? Maybe it's in the middle of a tough season, when they're tempted to quit, or when they're too busy to pause. God doesn't need us to perform miracles, He needs us to choose to hear Him.

Bible Story

Title: "Elijah's Storm and Whisper" (A Story About When God Speaks in a Quiet Voice, And Why That Matters)

The sun burned fiercely over the Israelite desert as Elijah trudged through the scorching sand, his cloak heavy with exhaustion. The king, Ahab, and his wife Jezebel had ordered his death after Elijah publicly exposed their false gods and the injustice in their kingdom. Now, with a dagger in hand, Elijah fled to the rugged mountains of Mount Horeb, praying for escape, or at least for mercy. "Lord, if you're real, let me know," he begged. The winds howled, the earth trembled, and a fire blazed around him, burning up the mountain. But as the fire faded, Elijah thought he'd been

abandoned. Then, nothing. Just silence.

Elijah sat under a lonely brier bush, his heart heavy with doubt. "I'm the worst prophet ever," he muttered. "I've been right all along, but no one listens." His friends had abandoned him, his enemies had chased him, and now God seemed quiet. That night, as the sky stretched black, a whisper slithered through the wind: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Startled, he looked up. A windstorm roared outside, but inside his heart, a whisper replied: "I've been here all along." God didn't answer with thunder or fire, just a gentle question, like a parent checking in instead of shouting at a child. Elijah didn't understand at first, but he knew God's voice was there.

God led Elijah to a cave and told him to wait. When the prophet stepped outside, he gasped, the wind was gone, the fire was gone, the earthquake had stopped. The only sound was the sound of God's voice, soft as a breath: "What are you wearing?" Elijah's eyes widened. "A coat of wool!" he answered. God said, "Put it on." The wind rushed back in, shivering Elijah, and the fire returned, but this time, it was different. The storm was just him, and the quiet voice was still there. God wasn't just speaking; He was redefining Elijah's reality. He called him to a new mission: to anoint a new king and prophet, replacing himself in a world that no longer believed.

Why This Story Matters: Elijah's story isn't just about storms or whispers, it's about facing doubt and learning to listen for God's voice when the world feels loud. You've probably felt the same way: when life feels overwhelming, when friends or teachers dismiss you, or when God feels quiet after you've done your best. The Bible tells us God always speaks, but sometimes it takes a cave, a whisper, or a simple question to remind us. The lesson? When you're discouraged, ask God to show you His voice, not in the loudest noise, but in the quietest word. And when He answers, listen closer.

Life Application: - When life feels chaotic, ask: Where is God in this storm? (Elijah's cave was a place of rest.) - When you're afraid to speak up, remember: God's answer might come in a gentle question, not a dramatic moment. - When people doubt you, trust that God's voice is bigger than the noise around you.

God isn't just calling you to miracles, He's calling you to listen. And sometimes, the quietest voice is the one that changes everything.

Key Verse

1 Samuel 24:19

Here's a heartfelt explanation of 1 Kings 19:12 for junior high students, simple, relatable, and packed with life lessons: "After the fire came a gentle whisper." Imagine this: Elijah, the super-famous prophet, just ran way away after a giant storm because he felt so tired, scared, and alone. God doesn't send him a loud, dramatic voice like thunder, nope! Instead, He whispers in a soft, quiet moment. That's when God speaks to our hearts, not just our ears. Sometimes we're so busy fighting the storms (failing tests, heartbreak, or feeling stuck) that we forget He's right there, whispering encouragement. The lesson? God's not always loud, He's there when we're alone, waiting for us to listen to what He's really saying in our souls. And that whisper? It's usually love, hope, or a nudge to keep going. Real question? "Why does God whisper instead of yell?" Great question! Think of it like this: A parent gives you a tiny hug when you're sad instead of slapping you, soft love is still love. God's not angry; He just knows you need Him in the quiet. Life app? Next time you're overwhelmed, try this: Pause, close your eyes, and listen, He might just whisper "You're not alone."

Activities

Activity 1:

1. Set Up the Scene (3 min)
2. Explain: "Elijah was running from trouble and felt overwhelmed. God spoke to him in a small voice after all the big noises (wind, earthquake). How do you think we can hear God's voice even when things feel loud?"
3. Distribute paper bags and ask students to draw a simple puppet (e.g., Elijah, the wind, an earthquake) on one side and a quiet voice (like a whisper) on the other.

4. Create the Puppets (7 min)
5. Have students fold their paper bag in half and cut out eyes, a mouth, and arms for their puppets. Glue on the drawn images.
6. Assign roles: One group acts out the wind/earthquake, another the small voice, and another narrates the story from 1 Kings 19.
7. Shadow Puppet Performance (5 min)
8. Use a flashlight to cast shadows on a wall (or even a tablecloth) while students act out the story.
9. Pause after each "storm" and ask: "How does God's voice stand out after all the noise? What can we learn about listening?"
10. LIFE APPLICATION:
11. "Elijah's story shows God doesn't always speak in big, dramatic ways, but even when we feel overwhelmed, we can find Him in the quiet moments. How can we practice listening for God's voice today?"
12. Activity: "Small Voice, Big Impact" (Debate & Reflection Cards)
13. Discussion Prompt (5 min)
14. Read 1 Kings 19:11, 12 aloud: "The Lord said, 'Go outside and stand on the mountain. I'll pass by, and you can hear my voice.'"
15. Ask: "Have you ever felt God speak to you in a small, quiet way? What was it like?"
16. Small Group Debate (7 min)
17. Split into groups of 3, 4. Give each group a question to discuss:
18. "When was the last time you heard God's voice, even if it was small?"
19. "Why do you think God chooses to speak gently sometimes?"
20. Encourage sharing with the class after each group.
21. Write & Share Reflection Cards (3 min)
22. Distribute index cards and have students write:
23. "One time God spoke to me quietly..." + how it made them feel.
24. "How can I listen for God's voice more?"
25. Invite volunteers to share with the group.
26. LIFE APPLICATION:
27. "God's voice is often small, but it's powerful. Today, let's practice noticing the quiet things He might be telling us. How can we be more open to hearing Him?"
28. Bonus Tip: After either activity, end with prayer or a Bible verse like Matthew 11:28 ("Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened...").
29. Both activities keep it interactive, use minimal supplies, and help students connect the lesson to their own lives! Let me know if you'd like adjustments.

Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions designed to spark deep reflection, curiosity, and life application from junior high students, rooted in the story of Elijah and God's gentle voice in 1 Kings 19. These questions encourage them to explore God's character, their own fears, and how we respond when He speaks to us in ways that feel small.
- 1. The Wind, the Earthquake, and the Fire: When Was Elijah's Heart Most Broken?
- Elijah had just witnessed the false prophets of Baal being destroyed (1 Kings 18), only to later face betrayal by Queen Jezebel and a deep, overwhelming sense of failure. He fled to the wilderness, where God met him in a dream-like silence, a whisper in the wind. But before this, he had seen three powerful signs of God's presence: a wind that shattered rocks, an earthquake, and a fire. Yet God chose to speak in a gentle voice, the smallest sound

Elijah had ever heard.

- Question for Discussion:

- "Elijah was so afraid that he wanted to run away. But what do you think made his heart really heavy? Was it just the threats from Jezebel, or was there something deeper, like doubt about his own strength, fear of failure, or even anger toward God? How do you think Elijah's emotions changed as he ran from the desert to Horeb? What was the hardest part of his story that you can relate to?"

- Life Application:

- "God doesn't always answer us in big, dramatic ways, sometimes He speaks in quiet moments when we're alone, when we're tired, or even when we feel like giving up. Where in your life have you felt God's voice the smallest, but still heard it? How does it change when you realize He's not abandoning you?"

- 2. The Comfort of a Blanket: What Does God's Whisper Mean for Us When We Feel Alone?

- After Elijah's emotional collapse, God didn't scold him. Instead, He invited him to lie down, rest, and listen. God then spoke through an angel, who fed him food and told him to keep going. But before that, God appeared as a gentle breeze (sometimes translated as a "soft wind" or "still small voice"). In our culture, we often associate God with thunder and lightning, something strong and loud. But in this story, God's power was revealed through gentleness.

- Question for Discussion:

- "When was the last time you felt like God was 'too small' in your life, maybe when you prayed for something big and got an answer that felt tiny (like a text, a dream, or even just a feeling in your gut)? How did you react? Did you think, 'God must not care,' or did you trust that He's still speaking? Why do you think God chose to show His power through a quiet voice rather than a storm? What does this teach us about how God wants to be known?"

- Life Application:

- "God's power isn't always about grand miracles, it's about presence. Sometimes, He speaks in the quiet moments when you're tired, discouraged, or even just sitting in silence. What's one way you can practice listening for God's voice when it feels small?"

- 3. The "I'm Just Not Enough" Trap: How Does Elijah's Story Challenge Us to Trust God?

- Elijah had a huge job, he was God's prophet, he had just saved Israel from idolatry, but he was terrified. He thought, "I'm the only one left!" and believed he couldn't keep going. God's response? "I've got this." But Elijah still asked, "What if I'm not enough?" (1 Kings 19:10).

- Question for Discussion:

- "Elijah's story reminds us that even when we're doing big things for God, we can still feel like we're failing. Where in your life have you felt like you're the only one trying to make things right? Maybe in school, with friends, or even with faith, have you ever prayed, 'I just want to be good enough,' or 'I'm not sure I can handle this'? How does it feel to realize that God doesn't need our perfection, He just needs our trust?"

- Life Application:

- "God doesn't call us to be flawless; He calls us to obey. Even when we mess up, He says, 'I've got you.' What's one area where you've been trying to do everything on your own, and how can you trust God to be with you, even when things feel overwhelming?"

- 4. The Storm vs. the Stillness: How Do We Learn to Hear God's Voice in Our Everyday Noise?

- Elijah's world was chaotic, storms, earthquakes, fires, but God chose the quiet to speak. Today, we live in a world full of distractions: phone buzzes, social media, family chaos, school pressures. How do we actually listen for God's gentle voice?

- Question for Discussion:

- "Think about a time when you actually heard God's voice, maybe in a prayer, a dream, or just a quiet moment in nature. How did you recognize it was Him, not just your own thoughts? Now, think about a time when you missed His voice because you were too busy with noise, maybe you were scrolling on your phone, watching TV, or even just distracted by your own worries. How can we train ourselves to listen more carefully, especially when God speaks in small ways?"
- Life Application:
 - "Practice deliberate silence. Maybe it's 5 minutes before bed, or a quiet walk outside, or just closing your eyes and asking, 'Lord, where are You speaking to me today?' God doesn't need us to be perfect, He just needs us to try. What's one small step you can take this week to listen for Him more than you used to?"
- Why These Questions Work for Junior Highers:
 - Relatable Fears , They address common struggles (fear of failure, feeling alone, distractions).
 - Encourages Reflection , Instead of just answering, students explain their thoughts.
 - Connects to Life , Each question ties back to real-life decisions and daily choices.
 - Invites Trust , They help students see that God's voice is always worth listening to, even when it feels small.
 - Would you like any of these adjusted for a specific group (e.g., more focus on anxiety, faith struggles, or creativity)?

Prayer Focus

Prayer Focus: "Where's Your First Whisper?" "Friends, let's pause for a second, what if God's voice isn't always the loudest thunderstorm, but the quietest whisper in your heart? Like Elijah after the storm, sometimes God speaks in stillness, calling us to listen more than we shout. Today, let's ask: Where in my life am I so busy chasing loud answers that I miss the small voice He's trying to speak? Help us learn to hear Him, not just when things are big, but when they're tiny, like a breeze through the leaves. And when we do hear, let's trust, even if it feels small. Amen."

>> Missions Spotlight

Among the Tibetan people, who live in the shadow of the Himalayas, the concept of stillness and meditation is deeply valued. Missionaries share Elijah's story to show that the true God speaks in the stillness, and His name is Jesus.

-> To the Cross

God was not in the wind, earthquake, or fire, He was in a gentle whisper. Jesus often spoke gently, to children, to sinners, to the broken. God's power is made perfect in gentleness. The cross was both the most powerful and most gentle act in history.