

# GOD'S MESSENGERS

**Bible Basis:** 1 Kings 17:1–6; 18:1–2, 17–18

**Key Verse:** [Elijah said,] “I serve the Lord. He is the God of Israel.” —1 Kings 17:1, NIV

**Bible Point:** God encouraged Elijah in hard times. God encourages me.

**Resource:** *The Story for Kids*, Chapter 15: “God’s Messengers”

## STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

**Stuff You Need:** 100 or more paper cups, table

Before you get started, arrange about fifty paper cups in several groupings. For instance, you might build a pyramid using stacks of cups. Make a second identical arrangement. Invite a couple of volunteers to come forward. Explain that the task is to transfer the entire arrangement to another spot, which you designate, by moving one cup at a time. Then give a time limit that will be tough to meet, such as ninety seconds. The point is to create frustration and discouragement. Talk about:

- **When you started out, did you think you could do the job? Explain.**
- **How did you feel when you realized you probably weren’t going to make it?**

Say, **We all have experiences when things don’t go the way we want them to. We get discouraged. We may even feel like hiding in a cave! Today’s Bible story is about someone who wished his troubles would go away if he went in a cave.**

## STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

**Stuff You Need:** copies of *The Story for Kids*, Bibles, *The Story Elementary Trading Card 15*, poster board

**Optional:** noisemakers, pompoms

Tell the story from *The Story for Kids*, Chapter 15. You can also have the children find 1 Kings 17 and mark it in their Bibles. Either you or a child in your class can read the Scripture passages listed throughout the story.

### God’s Encouragement

On a poster board, write this cheer:

God says, “Go, go, Elijah.  
I’m with you, you betcha!”

If you're using optional noisemakers and pompoms, distribute them to a group of children who will act as cheerleaders for the large group. (If your group is small, everyone can have props.)

You'll need five children to help you. One will carry the cheer poster across the front of the room to lead all the children in a cheer. Four others will participate in presenting the story. You will pause as indicated during the story to ask a game-style question, and the four contestants will compete to answer first. Have the four contestants stand a distance away from you. When you ask a question, they should run to be first to slap a table or the back of a chair, then answer the question.

**God's people divided into two kingdoms, Judah and Israel. Israel had a series of evil kings. One of the worst was Ahab, whose wife, Jezebel, was even more evil than he was! At the same time, though, there was a man living in Israel who loved God and did God's work. His name was Elijah, and God chose him to speak to King Ahab.**

**Elijah went to Ahab and gave him a message from God. The message said there would be no rain in all of Israel until Elijah said it would rain. Of course, Ahab was not pleased with this message.** *Read 1 Kings 17:2–6.*

*Pause for the helper with the poster to walk across the room and lead the cheer. Then ask a game-style question: **How did God encourage Elijah during years without rain?** Wait for players to answer.*

*Read 1 Kings 18:1–2a.* **Elijah challenged Ahab and his false gods. On a mountain in front of all the people of Israel, Elijah proved that God was the only true God, and the gods Ahab worshiped had no power at all. God showed his power by starting a fire, while Ahab's false gods could do nothing. This made Ahab and Jezebel angry! They were ready to kill God's messenger!**

**Elijah was afraid, so he ran for his life. He ran and ran and ran. Finally he fell down under a tree and said, "Lord, just let me die!" Then he fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat."** *Read 1 Kings 19:6–7.*

*Pause for the helper with the poster to walk across the room and lead the cheer. Then ask a game-style question: **How did God encourage Elijah when he ran for his life?** Wait for players to answer.*

**Elijah walked and walked for forty days and forty nights. He kept going until he came to Horeb, the mountain of God. He felt all alone and afraid that Ahab would hunt him down and kill him. When he found a cave, he went into the cave to spend the night.**

**The Lord said to Elijah, "What are you doing here?" Elijah answered, "The people of Israel have turned their backs on you. I'm the only one left who is doing your work, and they're trying to kill me."**

*Read 1 Kings 19:11–13a.* **God said, "Go back the way you came. I still have work for you to do."**

*Pause for the helper with the poster to walk across the room and lead the cheer. Then ask a game-style question: **How did God encourage Elijah when he was hiding in the cave?** Wait for players to answer.*

**Elijah obeyed God once again. He went out of the cave and walked down off the mountain to keep doing the work God gave him to do. He met Elisha, a young man God had chosen to be a new prophet. Elijah’s job now was to teach Elisha about giving the people God’s message. Finally, Elijah was getting really old, and God decided it was time for Elisha to be the main prophet. So Elisha and Elijah traveled together. They kept walking and talking together. Suddenly a chariot and horses appeared. Fire was all around them! The chariot and horses came between Elijah and Elisha, and Elijah went to heaven in a strong wind. Elijah’s long life of serving God was over—and he got to go to heaven without dying first!**

*Pause for the helper with the poster to walk across the room and lead the cheer. Then ask a game-style question: **How did God encourage Elijah when his life was over?** Wait for players to answer.*

After you have told the Bible story, give each child a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 15*. Ask children to look at the picture and tell you about some of the things that Elijah did and how Elijah went to heaven. As a class, read the key verse from the back of the card or from the Bible. Ask:

- **What made Elijah so discouraged?**
- **How did God encourage Elijah?**

Say, **Elijah’s story reminds us that God knows what we feel and he wants to encourage us.**

Collect the cards for now. You’ll send them home with the children later.

### **STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE**

Choose any or all of these activity options to help your class explore the lesson further.

#### **OPTION 1: ENCOURAGEMENT BIBLE VERSE HUNT**

**Stuff You Need:** copies of Encouragement Bible Verse Hunt Activity Sheet, Bibles, chairs or small tables, pencils

Ahead of time, set Bibles on chairs or tables around the room. Say, **We all face discouragement. The good news is God’s Word is one way that God encourages us. Let’s look at some verses and find out how.** Give an activity sheet to each child. Explain that each chair or table has a Bible. Children should visit each station individually or in small groups, look up one of the verses on the activity sheet, read it, and fill out the corresponding area of the activity sheet. Gather to review results. Then talk about:

- **Tell me about a time when someone encouraged you.**
- **Tell me some ways that God encourages you.**

Say, **If we open our eyes wide, we'll find ways every single day that we can encourage another person. Perhaps you'll be able to share one of these Bible verses with someone.**

## **OPTION 2: ENCOURAGEMENT CARDS**

**Stuff You Need:** Encouragement Card Activity Sheet, Encouragement Verses Activity Sheet, scissors, glue, other card-making supplies

If possible, duplicate the Encouragement Card activity sheet on colorful card stock. Say, **Giving someone a card can be a great encouragement. Today we are going to make cards with some verses from the Bible to encourage someone who may be going through a difficult time. Think about someone you'd like to encourage with a card.** Give each child a copy of the activity sheets. Have the children cut the interlocking card shape on the heavy black lines of the Encouragement Card Activity Sheet. Fold on the dashed lines. Lock the two pieces of the front together by cutting slits as marked. Then choose one of the verses from the Encouragement Verses Activity Sheet and glue it on the inside of the card. Use any available supplies to decorate the card further. Say:

- **Tell me about the person who needs your card.**
- **Tell me about a time when someone encouraged you.**

Say, **God knows when we feel discouraged. Let's open our hearts to the ways he sends encouragement into our lives.**

## **OPTION 3: NEVER FEEL DISCOURAGED!**

**Stuff You Need:** Never Feel Discouraged Activity Sheet, pens or pencils

Give an activity sheet to each child. Remind your class that God never wants us to fail or feel like we cannot do something that needs to get done. He is our constant encouragement and will never fail us. Look for words of encouragement in the Never Feel Discouraged! puzzle. Use five of the words in encouraging sentences you might say to a friend that needs your help!

## **OPTION 4: ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER**

**Stuff You Need:** poster board or card stock, markers, art supplies

Talk to your class about encouragement:

- **Have you ever had to do something difficult and felt that no one was being supportive? What did you do? How did the situation turn out?**
- **Have you ever had to do something difficult and had someone cheering for you and supporting you the entire way?**
- **How did that situation turn out? Was it a more positive experience?**
- **Name some of the comments that were made that were encouraging.**

Have several options of people or groups within the church community that need encouragement. It may be someone who is ill, a family who is adopting a child, a group going on a mission trip or to camp, adults going on a retreat.

Assign small groups to make posters or cards that encourage the people or person who has a challenge or something to do. Include Bible verses or other encouraging words. Follow through and make sure the posters get delivered or post them in the church sanctuary or hall for all to see and add their encouragement.

## **STEP 4: GOING HOME**

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Pray in groups of two or three about discouraging situations children may know of and ask for opportunities to encourage others this week. Make sure each child takes home a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 15*, *Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts*, and the *Parents' Page*.