**GROWING TOGETHER:** FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Session 2 of 4

# Elijah

### MEETING AIM

To explore how even when we feel we’ve failed, God can set us on our feet to start again.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

1 Kings 19

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in-person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your situation.

Elijah, one of the greatest fathers of the faith is, in this passage, brought low. Here we discover his vulnerability, his sense of failure, his need for physical rest and recovery, and his need to start again. This session explores how even when we feel that we have failed, God can put us back on our feet, ready to walk a different path with him.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Start your time together with some simple refreshments. Ask the group to think about how we measure success or failure. What recent successes have you enjoyed? (Scoring a goal for the team, getting a place in the school choir etc.) What about failures? Do we like to share these or would we rather keep them to ourselves?

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** the song [‘Get back up again’](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7aYOGUPabd8) from the film Trolls and the means to play it

Explain to the group where this song comes in the film. Despite all the danger facing the trolls, Princess Poppy, the eternal optimist, goes off on her solo journey in her quest to save the trolls. Play the song and challenge the children to think about whether Poppy’s attitude is realistic or even helpful. Explain that today, we are going to be looking at the story of one character in the Bible whose response was quite different.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** materials to create a cave, such as a table, blankets, rugs and cushions; a large rug, blanket or sheet; a large pot plant

Before the session, build the cave in one corner of our space. Lay out the desert in the middle and put the plant on the edge of the desert furthest from the cave. If you have lots of time, you could get the children to help you do this at the start of your Bible time. Gather the children in the desert and begin the story:

Elijah, God’s messenger was on the run. He had delivered a message from God to the people and the people hadn’t liked it. The queen had threatened his life and he had run away. Now he found himself alone in the desert, exhausted, scared and feeling let down by God. He found a large bush, laid under it, begged God to let him die! Then he fell asleep. *Invite the children to sit by the plant.*

Suddenly, an angel woke Elijah, gave him water to drink and bread to eat. The angel cared for Elijah until he was ready to move on, out of the desert. Soon, Elijah was feeling better. So much so that he walked across the desert for 40 days. He reached Mount Horeb and rested in a cave. *Walk the group around the desert and then sit down by the cave.*

Here God called out to Elijah: “What are you doing here?”

Elijah was still feeling hurt and frustrated. He told God how he felt let down by God, how wrong it was that God would let these people chase him down, even after all he had done to serve God. Why didn’t God punish them and protect Elijah? Elijah wanted to stop his work as God’s messenger.

But God didn’t want Elijah to stop working for him. Instead, he had looked after Elijah. He had sent the angel to care for him, he had given him safe places to rest in the desert, he had given him the rest he needed.

Now, here at the mountain, God gave Elijah the chance to share his frustrations. Then God appeared to Elijah, not as someone you could see, but as a gentle whisper that Elijah could feel and be reminded that God was right with him.

God would give Elijah new work to do, and a helper to go with him. Elijah was struggling, but he was not beaten. God was with him.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

* What is your favourite part of this story?
* What challenges you about this story?
* How would you have felt, if you were Elijah?
* What would you like to say to Elijah?
* If you were Elijah, what would you say to God?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** Lego and Lego baseboards; marbles; sticky labels; pens

The children could work together in pairs or small groups to complete this activity. Distribute the Lego baseboards and Lego and invite the children to create marble mazes. Give them a marble to test out their mazes, before exchanging mazes with one another to test them out.

As you create, improve, develop and test the marble mazes. Talk about how we sometimes feel ‘stopped in our tracks’, as the marble is in the maze and as Elijah felt in the story. How does life feel like a dead end? What things might we struggle with along the way? Give the children sticky labels and pens and invite them to label some of the ‘dead ends’ perhaps with the things Elijah struggled with, or perhaps some of their own feelings of reaching the ‘end’ of a track.

Remind the group that God didn’t allow Elijah to stay stuck in the ‘dead end’. Talk about how God set Elijah back on track again. Ask the group what this may mean for us.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

As you pray, invite the children to create some actions for the words: struggle, dead end, rest and new path. Then pray this prayer:

‘Father God, sometimes life feels like a struggle. We may feel like we’ve reached a dead end, worn out by the challenges that bring us down. Help us to rest in you. Set us on a new path, following the life you want us to live. Amen.’

Make yourself available to talk about any particular challenges the children may be facing, to pray about these and to support the children in getting any further support they may need.

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