

# The Widow Feeds Elijah

## Level D Teacher Overview

**Key Message:** Witness the Lord's Presence in your life.

**Text:** I Kings 17:7-15 The Widow Feeds Elijah

### Activity Options (choose 2 or 3)

1. Talk About It
2. Look Closer: Mistakes and Habits
3. Look Closer: The Difference Between Heaven and Hell
4. Meditate and Activate



### I Kings 17:14

“The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth.”

Dear Teacher,

Please take a moment to fill out the Feedback Report on the next page. The information you share will help us continue to meet your needs in the future.

With gratitude,  
Office of Education Sunday School Staff

# Sunday School Teacher's Feedback Report - Level D

Please give this report to your Youth Program Director, or send it directly to the Office of Education by one of the means listed below. Thank you.

**Fax:** 267.502.4935

**Email:** sundayschool@newchurch.org

**Mail:** Office of Education, P.O. Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009 USA. Thank you.

**Name of Congregation, Group, etc.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of students in your group today** \_\_\_\_\_

**Materials Used in Class (check all that apply)**

- Talk About It
- Look Closer: Mistakes and Habits
- Look Closer: The Difference Between Heaven and Hell
- Meditate and Activate

**Materials used as "Take-Home" Activities (check all that apply)**

- Talk About It
- Look Closer: Mistakes and Habits
- Look Closer: The Difference Between Heaven and Hell
- Meditate and Activate

**Comments:** We welcome your feedback. Let us know what worked for you.

# Talk About It

## Kings 17:7-16: The Widow Feeds Elijah

1. This story contains an amazing miracle! Today we will think about a miracle that each person experiences daily.
2. How much food is in your house right now? Think about what is in your cupboards or your refrigerator. How long would it take to eat it all before running out? Can you store enough food for the rest of your life? (no—we need fresh food, and food spoils)
3. The widow had just enough for one day. She expected to cook what she had and then die. But then the Lord gave her food—how much was there? (just enough to keep two vessels filled—not a house full)
4. The food source of our minds is like the food the widow had. The vessel of flour is like our thoughts, and the vessel of oil is like our feelings. Thoughts and feelings flow in to our minds at every second--and yet we only experience one at a time. This is like the constant filling of the oil and flour. As soon as one thought leaves, a new one comes. This never stops—just as the oil and flour did not cease. It is a miracle that the Lord does for each human being, every day. \*
5. What sacrifice did the widow make? (She fed Elijah first when she was very hungry herself.) How difficult would this have been, given her circumstances? Would you be willing to feed the Lord, a family member, a friend, or a stranger if you were starving? When and how does the Lord ask similar things of us? (Two Great Commandments—love the Lord, love our neighbor as ourself.)
6. Give an example of what loving the Lord might look like in your life. (e.g. doing what is honest instead of what is dishonest because you know it is what the Lord asks, or supporting the lives of others instead of demeaning them because you know it is what the Lord asks.)
7. Give an example of what loving others might look like in your life.
8. The widow's reward for serving Elijah was food during famine. What reward does the Lord offer us if we do what He asks? (heaven)

\*Thanks to Rev. John Odhner for ideas included in this discussion.

# Look Closer: Mistakes and Habits

## I Kings 17:7-15: The Widow Feeds Elijah

Each choice we make in life paves the way for future choices. Today's reading and discussion /reflection activity leads students to consider each choice they make in terms of their future.

### *Supplies Needed for Each Student*

- copy of "Mistakes and Habits" (see attached sheet)
- pencil and paper
- *optional*: recorded music to use as a background for follow-up activity

### *Activity*

1. Read "Mistakes and Habits" aloud with the group.
2. Do the "Discussion and Reflection" section aloud with the group.
3. Distribute paper and pencils and encourage students to find their own space and complete the follow-up activity. *Optional*: play quiet background music as students write their responses.
4. Wrap up the activity by gathering the group together and offering each student an opportunity to share a response.



# Mistakes and Habits

(Adapted from *From the Top of the Yardstick* by Donnette Alfelt)  
I Kings 17: 7-15 The Widow Feeds Elijah

We all make mistakes. Your parents and grandparents made mistakes. Your ministers and teachers make mistakes and you have made and will make mistakes. These are inevitable as we are required to make big and small choices hourly. World leaders make world changing choices every day, but in terms of eternity, their choices are no more or no less important than those you must make. In God's eyes we are all equally important. Life is about practicing to do what is right—and it does take a lifetime of practice. The most important part of all of us is what other people cannot see—that is, what goes on in our hearts and minds.

Some mistakes that seem large in your mind may not appear that way to others, and may be too small to even seem significant in the grand scheme of life. But big or small, you can learn from your errors and start each new day knowing it holds new possibilities for change and progress.

A merciful loving God created you free to make choices, knowing you would not always make the correct ones. He is merciful, and at every moment provides opportunities for new choices and growth.

## **Every time you do something, good or bad, you are practicing to do it again**

Beware of establishing habits that interfere with the quality of your future experience. Make an effort to practice good habits which, when established, will make life easier. Consider how life even in the near future may be affected by today's choices. Consider who and where you want to be at the end of your life, and what will help you to get there.

Over time, bad habits become firmly rooted and resistant to change. They may threaten our lives. This includes not only obvious ones, like drinking and smoking, but our habitual ways of behaving and relating to others—things that seem trivial, like using sarcasm, gossiping, lying and criticizing.

## **Discussion or Reflection**

Our minds may deny or rationalize our habits to avoid the painful truth of how they are affecting our lives. Choose a harmful habit, *e.g.* smoking, and make an honest list of possible negative effects and long term consequences. Now make a list of rationalizations for continuing and difficulties of stopping. Where can a person with this problem turn for help? Where there is a problem, what is the most loving thing that others might do for this person?

## **Follow Up**

Make a personal inventory of your own habits. Identify ones that might have bad long term consequences. Make a plan to work on one of them. This could include reading the Word for strength and help, prayer, or finding help from other people.

# Look Closer: The Difference Between Heaven and Hell

## 1 Kings 17:7-15 The Widow Feeds Elijah

Adapted from an Asian Folktale

This Asian Folktale illustrates the difference between the heavenly virtue of sharing (as the widow shared her last meal with Elijah) and the selfishness of not sharing. Read and discuss.

*Optional:* Dramatize the reading by taping a spoon to a yardstick (or securing with a rubber band) and offering an attractive bowl of food to eat. Invite the students to eat the food—using only the spoon you have provided. Try this before, during, or following the story telling.

Read “*A Peek into Heaven and Hell*” and then discuss it with the students (see attached sheet).



### Talk About It

1. When faced with almost no food and water, Elijah asked the widow for food. How did she respond? (See 1 Kings 17:12-15)
2. What did Elijah promise her in return for giving him the only food she had?
3. Elijah the prophet represents the Lord with us. In what ways does the Lord challenge us to share spiritual food (goodness) and water (truth) with others?
4. What are the consequences of not sharing this goodness and truth with others? (See the Parable of the Talents, Matthew 25:14-30.)
5. Some day, each one of us will pass into the spiritual world. What questions might you expect the Lord to ask about your life on earth when that day arrives?

# A Peek into Heaven and Hell

I Kings 17:7-15: The Widow Feeds Elijah  
Adapted from an Asian Folktale

*This Asian Folktale illustrates the difference between the heavenly virtue of sharing (as the widow shared her last meal with Elijah) and the selfishness of not sharing.*

---

A devout man prayed to the Lord one day, begging the Lord to show him the difference between heaven and hell. In answer to the prayer, the Lord took him by the hand, leading him to a door.

Gesturing towards the door, the Lord invited him to enter. The smell of good food met his nostrils as he turned the handle and entered a large room. In the center of the room there was a round table with a pot of delicious stew right in the middle. A group of people sat around the table, waiting to eat. As he looked more closely, he saw that their faces were thin and gaunt. Strapped to their arms were spoons so long that they could not get the food from the tables into their mouths. The air became noisy with frustrated and angry shouts as each person tried again and again to feed themselves with the spoons. Their suffering was made worse by the smell and sight of the food. "This is hell!" said the Lord.

Withdrawing from the room, the Lord showed him a second door, bidding him go in. The room looked just like the first: it contained a round table with a pot of fragrant stew on top. The people sitting around the table also had long spoons strapped to their arms, but as he looked at them closely, he could see that they were healthy, well fed and happily enjoying each other's company.

The devout man looked at the Lord in confusion. "What does this mean?" he asked.

"It is simple," said the Lord. "The people in heaven have learned to feed each other. The greedy only think of themselves."

## Meditate & Activate

Thinking or meditating about a passage from God's Word and finding opportunities to put it into action can be a powerful experience. Keep this card intact or cut out the illustrated quotation to use as a bookmark or put up somewhere in your home.

**Meditate:** We cannot see or touch the Lord, so how can we put our love for Him into action? One way is by loving other people. For when we serve others, we are also serving the Lord.

**Activate:** Look for an opportunity to help someone today by doing something you wouldn't usually do. Examples might be spending a few minutes with a lonely person, doing a household chore without being asked, complimenting someone on their work, etc. Be conscious of doing this for the Lord's sake.

Assuredly,  
I say to you, inasmuch as  
you did it to one of the  
least of these My brethren,  
you did it to Me.

Matthew 25:40



To make a stronger bookmark, print this page on heavy paper or cardstock, cut in half and give half to each student.

## Meditate & Activate

Thinking or meditating about a passage from God's Word and finding opportunities to put it into action can be a powerful experience. Keep this card intact or cut out the illustrated quotation to use as a bookmark or put up somewhere in your home.

**Meditate:** We cannot see or touch the Lord, so how can we put our love for Him into action? One way is by loving other people. For when we serve others, we are also serving the Lord.

**Activate:** Look for an opportunity to help someone today by doing something you wouldn't usually do. Examples might be spending a few minutes with a lonely person, doing a household chore without being asked, complimenting someone on their work, etc. Be conscious of doing this for the Lord's sake.

Assuredly,  
I say to you, inasmuch as  
you did it to one of the  
least of these My brethren,  
you did it to Me.

Matthew 25:40

