

Elijah Is Carried to Heaven

Level D Teacher Overview

Key Message: The Lord can raise us up to heaven.

Text: II Kings 2:1-18

Activity Options (choose 2 or 3)

1. Talk About It
2. Look Closer: Putting on the Mantle
3. Act It Out: Elijah, Elisha, and the Passing of the Mantle
4. Meditate and Activate



II Kings 2:11,13

Suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire...and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.... And Elisha took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen.

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: Putting on the Mantle
- Act It Out: Elijah, Elisha, and the Passing of the Mantle
- Meditate and Activate

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

- Talk About It
- Look Closer: Putting on the Mantle
- Act It Out: Elijah, Elisha, and the Passing of the Mantle
- Meditate and Activate

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

Talk About It

II Kings 2:1-18: Elijah Is Carried to Heaven

1. Today's story is the last story about Elijah the prophet. Who was Elijah's successor? (Elisha)
2. People and places that are found in the stories of the Word represent deeper truths about our lives. Elijah and Elisha are the Lord with us—especially as He is in the truths of the Word.
3. At the end of Elijah's life he walked through the land with Elisha, going from the heart of the land and eventually crossing over the river Jordan at the border. The deeper spiritual meaning of this journey pictures the spiritual journeys we make in our own lives.
4. The journey starts in the hills. Elevation in the Word signals a time when our thoughts are raised up. What are some ideals you might have at a time like this? (truthfulness, commitment to marriage, trusting others, etc.)
5. Moving forward on our journey we develop moral behaviors based on these ideals, and then put them into action. What might this look like? (speaking with integrity, sharing appropriate friendships, refusing to act in ways that compromise our ideals)
6. Elisha refused to leave Elijah. ("As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!") This pictures refusing to abandon our ideals. We hold on to our dreams, intending to make them our reality.
7. And then, miraculously, Elijah was lifted up to heaven in a fiery chariot with horses of fire. The principles we have practiced are filled with the Lord's fire (love) and raised up out of our conscious minds—so that we no longer have to work at thinking consciously about each thing we do. Our actions become part of our deepest mind, and we do them unconsciously.
8. Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. In ancient Israel, the eldest son in a family would inherit a double portion as the true heir. In receiving the double portion, Elisha knew that he was the true heir. How did he know this? (He struck the river Jordan with Elijah's mantle and it parted.)
9. Miraculously, Elijah's body was not found. Who else in the Word rose to heaven without leaving a body behind? (Jesus Christ)

Look Closer: Putting on the Mantle

II Kings 2:1-18: Elijah Is Carried to Heaven

Teacher Background

Every detail in the stories of the Word pictures an aspect of the life of our spirit. Each object or event represents a specific spiritual quality. The prophets Elijah and Elisha represent the Lord as we see Him in the stories of the Word.

Elijah's earthly mantle protected him, keeping him warm at night and cool in the hot sun. Just as Elijah's mantle would be the first thing a person saw when they looked at him, the literal stories of the Word are the first thing we see when we read the Lord's Word. They are the outermost "clothing" of God's message. Elijah's mantle protected his body in a way similar to the way that truths of the Word can protect us when we use them to clothe our minds, e.g. by knowing that life continues after death, we are protected against a false sense of grief that someone's life is over when they die. Like Elisha we are invited to take up this "mantle" and clothe our spirits by learning its truths, and grow spiritually by putting the truth into action in our lives. Today's activity focuses on moving forward with the truth.



Supplies Needed for the Class

- piece of fabric large enough to drape over the shoulders like a mantle that may be cut into pieces and sent home with each student
- quotes from the Word (see attached)
- safety pins or tape to attach quotes from the Word to the mantle
- sharp scissors

Teacher Preparation

- print and cut out the quotes
- attach the quotes all over the fabric



Page 2 - Putting on the Mantle

Warm-up Discussion

- When one person takes up a job that has been done by another person, e.g. a new president comes into office, we sometimes say that they are “taking up the mantle” of another person. Where does the expression “to take up the mantle” come from?
- Today we might call a mantle a cloak or a coat. It is a protective outer covering. We can take it off completely if we are hot, or pull it tight about our shoulders to keep ourselves warm.
- The Word also has a protective outer covering. It is the literal stories that we read there. If we look deeply into the stories of the Word we can find out what the Lord is like, how He loves us, and what He wants for us.
- Elijah represents the Lord in relation to the Word. His mantle—his outermost clothing—is like the stories there. The Lord Himself is veiled inside the stories.
- Elijah’s mantle had the Lord’s power in it. Both he and Elisha used it to part the Jordan River. The stories in the Word have the Lord’s power within them so that He may do miracles in our lives.

Activity

1. Invite the students to sit in a circle.
2. Show them the “mantle” you have prepared.
3. Pass the mantle around, inviting each student to first wrap the mantle around their shoulders, and then choose a quote to read aloud to the group.
4. When all of the students have taken a turn, pass the mantle around again with a sharp pair of scissors and invite each student to choose a quote that they would like to take home with them.
5. Invite them to cut out the part of the fabric that their chosen quote is pinned to.
6. The mantle will then be passed to the next member of the group.
7. Repeat until all students have a piece of the mantle



Wrap-up

1. Elisha received the mantle from Elijah after following him faithfully from place to place. He went wherever Elijah went.
2. Take the truth that you have chosen and try to follow it faithfully this week. Think about the truth you have chosen in the morning and evening and bring it to mind when an issue comes up during the day.
3. Complete the process with a prayer (see attached prayers for ideas).

He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And what does the Lord require of you,
But to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk
humbly with your God?

Micah 6:8

"If you love Me, keep My commandments.
He who has My commandments and keeps
them, it is he who loves Me. If anyone
loves Me, he will keep My word. He who
does not love Me does not keep My word."

John 14:15, 21, 23-24

"You shall love the LORD your God with
all your heart, with all your soul, and with
all your mind. This is the first and great
commandment. And the second is like it:
You shall love your neighbor as yourself.
On these two commandments hang all the
Law and the Prophets."

Matthew 22:37-40

"If you abide in My word, you are My
disciples indeed, and you shall know the
truth and the truth shall make you free."

John 8:31-32

The steps of a good man are ordered by the
Lord, And He delights in his way.
Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast
down; For the Lord upholds him with His
hand...

The law of his God is in his heart;
None of his steps shall slide...
Wait on the Lord, And keep His way;
And He shall exalt you to inherit the land.

Psalms 37:23-25, 31, 34

"Behold, I send an Angel before you to
keep you in the way and to bring you into
the place which I have prepared."

Exodus 23:20

"I am the resurrection and the life.
He who believes in Me, though he may die,
he shall live. And whoever lives and
believes in Me shall never die"

John 11:25-26

The Lord leads a person as if by the hand,
permitting and withholding as far as a he is
willing to follow in freedom. If a person
looks to the Lord, he is brought by
continual steps out of hell up towards
heaven and into heaven.

Apocalypse Explained 1174:2

The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want.
He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.
He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.

Psalm 23:1-3

“Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.”

Matthew 6:13

The salvation of the righteous is from the
Lord;
He is their strength in the time of trouble.
And the Lord shall help them and deliver
them;
He shall deliver them from the wicked,
And save them,
Because they trust in Him.

Psalm 37:39-40

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’...But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

Matthew 6:31,33

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Psalm 51:10

Trust in the Lord, and do good....
Commit your way to the Lord,
Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring it to pass.

Psalm 37:3, 5

Give me understanding, and I shall keep
Your law;
Indeed, I shall observe it with my whole
heart.
Make me walk in the path of Your
commandments,
For I delight in it.

Psalm 119:34-35

You shall love the Lord your God with all
your heart, with all your soul,
and with all your strength, and with all
your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.

Luke 10:27

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Matthew 6: 19-21

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Matthew 5:27-28

Show me Your ways, O Lord;
Teach me Your paths.
Lead me in Your truth and teach me,
For You are the God of my salvation;
On You I wait all the day.

Psalm 25:4-5

Asking the Lord a question is done by consulting the Word. For the Word has the Lord present within it. He is present there because the Word consists of Divine Truth that comes from Him.

Arcana Coelestia 10548:2

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him....”

Revelation 3:20

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you....”

John 13:34

“Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets”

Matthew 7:12

“When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me.”

Micah 7:8

“Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

Luke 11:28

Direct my steps by Your word, And let no iniquity have dominion over me.

Psalm 119:133

Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in
the morning,
For in You do I trust;
Cause me to know the way in which I
should walk,
For I lift up my soul to You.

Psalm 143:8

Let us search out and examine our ways,
And turn back to the Lord; Let us lift our
hearts and hands To God in heaven.

Lamentations 3:40-41

Thus says the Lord of hosts: Execute true
justice, Show mercy and compassion
everyone to his brother.

Zechariah 7:9

You shall not hate your brother in your
heart.... You shall not take vengeance,
nor bear any grudge against the children of
your people, but you shall love your
neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

Leviticus 19:17-18

“If one of your brethren becomes poor, and
falls into poverty among you, then you
shall help him, like a stranger or a
sojourner, that he may live with you.”

Leviticus 25:35

Let your light so shine before men, that
they may see your good works and glorify
your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:16

“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 25:34-46

Teach me good judgment and knowledge,
for I believe Your commandments.

Psalm 119:66

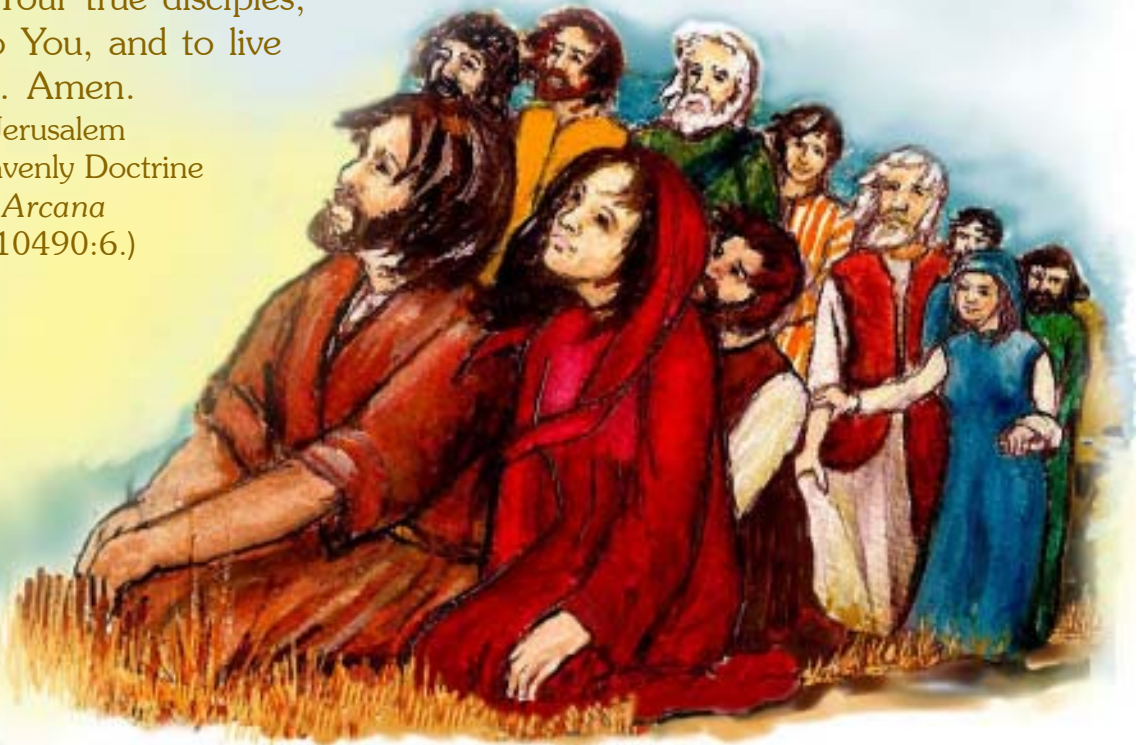
Prayers for Teens on Being True Disciples of the Lord

Lord, help us to be inspired by Your Word and guided to do what is right, to love one another as You love us, and to follow You so that we may come into Your heavenly kingdom one day and live with You there. Amen.

O Lord God Jesus Christ, teach us to live in the light of Your Word, for then we will be Your disciples. And we will know the truth, and the truth will make us free. For we know that nothing is of more importance to us than to know what the truth is. Amen.
(See John 8:31-32; *Arcana Coelestia* 794:2.)

Lord, You have told us that the life of heaven is made up of the good of love and the truth of faith. To be Your disciples we must be led by You and not by ourselves. For all good and truth come from You. And what is true of the life of heaven is also true of the life of the church. For the church, like heaven, is within us. Help us to be Your true disciples, to look to You, and to live from You. Amen.

(See *New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* 246, 281; *Arcana Coelestia* 10490:6.)



Act It Out: Elijah, Elisha, and the Passing of the Mantle

II Kings 2:1-18: Elijah Is Carried to Heaven

Elijah's miraculous ascent into heaven in a whirlwind concludes a series of dramatic stories in the Word. The drama continues right up to the end of Elijah's life—at which time his power is transferred to his successor, Elisha. This activity centers around the reading of II Kings 2: 1-18 while the students respond to the story through interpretive movement.



Warm-up

- Today's story is about the final events in Elijah's life. Elijah and Elisha took a long journey from the interior of the land of Canaan to the Jordan River, which was at the border of the land. From here they miraculously crossed over to the other side with the help of Elijah's mantle. Elisha begged for a double portion of Elijah's spirit—which would indicate that he was the heir and Elijah's true successor.
- Israelite law declared that the eldest son would inherit a double portion from his father. This does not mean that Elisha would be more powerful than Elijah.
- Symbolically, Elijah's power was passed by means of the mantle, which Elisha picked up and in turn used to part the waters of the Jordan.

Supplies Needed for the Class

- text from II Kings 2: 1-15 (included on separate page)
- space for the group to move freely around
- *optional* scarves to use as props for the whirlwind and as Elijah's mantle

Introduction

1. We are going to start by exploring some of the details in the final story about Elijah. As you listen, try to picture ways in which you might use movement to act out what is being described. Consider whether the places in the story are high or low, whether the tasks are difficult. Pay attention to how closely Elisha sticks to Elijah despite the distances traveled.
2. The story starts in *Gilgal*, in the hill country. This place pictures ideals we have, e.g. being truthful.

Page 2 - Elijah, Elisha, and the Passing of the Mantle

3. From there it moves to *Bethel*. This pictures the way we use our ideals when we try to put them into action.
4. From there the journey takes them to *Jericho*. This depicts the way we develop moral approaches to handling our ideals in our life, e.g. how to let go of resentments.
5. Elijah uses the mantle to part the *Jordan River*. Going through this barrier with the Lord's help represents the way we scatter false ideas that stand in the way of our values.
6. Crossing over into *Gilead* in our lives pictures our lives when we “walk the walk” or *do* what we believe. We consciously refuse to be dishonest and deliberately do what we know is right.

Activity

- Take a few moments to think about how you might act out the story. You may wish to do this as individuals—because this is a journey each individual makes in their lifetime. Or you may do it with a friend—because the Lord is always with us through others we meet along our journey. (*Give the students about 5 minutes.*)
- *Optional:* distribute props.
- Read the story while the students do interpretive movement to the reading. Pause if they need more time to complete something.

Wrap-up

- Today's story concludes the present series of lessons. What were the highlights for you?
- Suggest one way in which you might take one of these highlights with you and use it on your journey.

Reading from II Kings 2: 1-15

¹ And it came to pass, when the Lord was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. ² Then Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here, please, for the Lord has sent me on to Bethel.” But Elisha said, “As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!” So they went down to Bethel.

³ Now the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, “Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?” And he said, “Yes, I know; keep silent!”

⁴ Then Elijah said to him, “Elisha, stay here, please, for the Lord has sent me on to Jericho.” But he said, “As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!” So they came to Jericho.

⁵ Now the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, “Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?” So he answered, “Yes, I know; keep silent!”

⁶ Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here, please, for the Lord has sent me on to the Jordan.” But he said, “As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!” So the two of them went on. ⁷ And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood facing them at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan.

⁸ Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the water; and it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

⁹ And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?” Elisha said, “Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.” ¹⁰ So he said, “You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so.”

¹¹ Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. ¹² And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!” So he saw him no more.

And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces. ¹³ He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan. ¹⁴ Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, “Where is the Lord God of Elijah?” And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over.

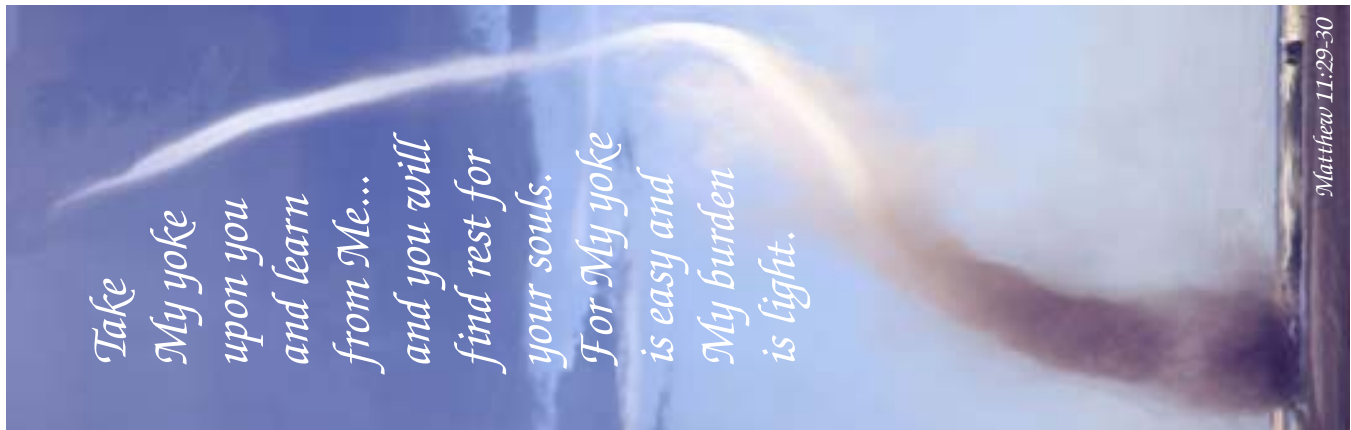
¹⁵ Now when the sons of the prophets who were from Jericho saw him, they said, “The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.” And they came to meet him, and bowed to the ground before him.

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: Does it seem hard or easy to follow the Lord? A yoke is a tool used to aid in work. Often it joins two or more horses or oxen together so that they can pull a heavy load together as a team.

Activate: Think of something you can do to take up the challenge of serving the Lord and your neighbors and find opportunities to do it with another person. For example, volunteer with a friend or read the Word with a family member. Find ways to both give and get support in following the Lord.



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

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