

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year C – Proper 8**  
**Lesson Plans for Older Children**  
*Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One*

**Scripture:** 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14

**Background**

As we continue to walk through “Ordinary Time” it is hard to imagine the lessons from our Old Testament scriptures as “ordinary” days. We hear fantastical accounts of kings, prophets, and courts and they sound so far away. But we are called to remember these stories of times past and to consider how ordinary days of ancestors relate to the ordinary days we face here and now.

**A Notation for This Week’s Scripture**

This week we skip further ahead to the end of Elijah’s ministry. Elisha is a disciple of Elijah who has been following and learning from the prophet. In today’s passage we follow Elisha and Elijah as Elijah reluctantly passes the torch to Elisha and goes to Heaven in a whirlwind. Why Elijah is reluctant, we do not know. Is it too great a burden to pass? Does Elijah feel he still has more work to do? The text doesn’t say. However, like Ruth following her mother Naomi, Elisha refuses to leave Elijah’s side. When asked what Elisha would like to inherit (like a son) Elisha asks only for a “double share” of Elijah’s “spirit.” This seems to be what calms Elijah before he is carried away with chariots, fire, and a whirlwind.

**Theme: Elijah Goes Up in a Whirlwind**

**Before Class:**

You will need:

- Copy of today’s story, written as a script, at the bottom of this lesson
- Two, clear, 2 liter soda bottles with caps
- Electrical or Duct Tape
- Drill and small drill bit
- Lamp Oil (Make sure to get colored oil!)
- \*If you CANNOT get lamp oil substitute a tablespoon full of glitter.
- Water

1. Drill a small hole, in the middle of both bottle caps
2. Tape the two caps together with your electrical or duct tape

**Beginning:** When the children have arrived and settled in, ask them about a time when they needed to say a difficult goodbye. Perhaps a friend was moving away or leaving a special teacher at the end of the year? How did they say goodbye? How did they feel? Today’s story is about an exciting goodbye between two very good friends.

**Opening Prayer:** Dear God of Stillness and of Sound, thank you for coming into our world and showing us your presence. Amen.

**The Story:** 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14

Before reading the story today, ask for three-four volunteers from the group – one to be Elijah and one to be Elisha, and one to two to play the narrator. Have them read the story from the script attached to this lesson plan.

**Reflection Questions:**

- Why wouldn't Elisha leave Elijah?
- Why do you think Elijah kept telling Elisha to leave?
- I wonder what it was like to watch Elijah go up to heaven.
- I wonder what it sounded like when the chariots of fire and horses arrived.
- I wonder why Elijah's mantle fell back down to the ground.
- How do you think Elisha felt at the end of the story?

**Activity:** Today we will do a science experiment to make **Elijah's Whirlwind**.

Ask the children what they know about tornados. Explain that the "whirlwind" which carried Elijah to heaven was like a tornado that stretches all the way from earth to heaven.

1. Take your two soda bottles and invite a student to fill one bottle  $\frac{3}{4}$  full with water.
2. Next, invite another student to pour a bit of the lamp oil in the bottle with the water (until the bottle is no more than  $\frac{7}{8}$  full.)
3. After the liquids are in the bottle, note that the oil is floating on top of the water – they cannot mix.
4. Screw on the double soda cap (with the holes) that you created at home. Show the kids the cap before you put it on.
5. Screw the second, empty bottle onto the top of the first, using the conjoined cap.
6. After the bottles are screwed together, talk to the children about the bottle caps symbolizing Elisha's bond to Elijah. No matter how many times Elijah told Elisha to turn and go back, Elisha refused. They were bound for life. It is through that bond the whirlwind came and brought Elijah to heaven.
7. Now, turn the bottles upside down so that the empty bottle is on the bottom and the full bottle is on the top. At first, nothing will happen because the air in the bottom bottle has formed a vacuum.
8. After all have seen it, take the bottles by the middle connecting caps and move them quickly in a circular motion to create a centrifugal spin. This spin will cause the water to form a "whirlwind" motion in the bottles as it opens up the vacuum from below.
9. The oil will form the primary whirlwind illustrating the key image from the story.

**Getting Closure:** Give each class member a chance to "create the whirlwind" with the bottle you've made. As each child takes his or her turn, invite each of them to send a prayer up to heaven in the whirlwind by saying one thing they are grateful for today.

**Closing Prayer:** God of Wonders, thank you for your servants Elijah and Elisha. Help me to follow your path as they did. Amen.

## APPENDIX: STORY SCRIPT

### 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14

**Narrator:** Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. <sup>2</sup>Elijah said to Elisha,

**Elijah:** ‘Stay here; for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel.’

**Narrator:** But Elisha said,

**Elisha:** ‘As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.’

**Narrator:** So they went down to Bethel. Then Elijah said to him,

**Elijah:** ‘Stay here; for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan.’

**Narrator:** But Elisha said,

**Elisha:** ‘As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.’

**Narrator:** So the two of them went on. Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.

When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha,

**Elijah:** ‘Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.’

**Narrator:** Elisha said,

**Elisha:** ‘Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.’

**Narrator:** He responded,

**Elijah:** ‘You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.’

**Narrator:** As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha kept watching and crying out,

**Elisha:** ‘Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!’

**Narrator:** But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

Elisha picked up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. He took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying,

**Elisha:** ‘Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?’

**Narrator:** When he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over.

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