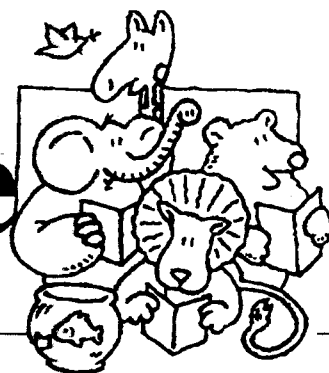


SKY

Saving Faith
Series 4—Lesson 3

StoryTime



His Eye Is on the Sparrow

Primary 3-7

Bible Text:

1 Kings 17:8-16

Lesson Aim:

To teach children that
generosity to others
pleases God.

Memory Verse:

"Every man shall give
as he is able"

(Deuteronomy 16:17).

Words to Learn:

- Generous
- Share
- Starve

Always Close in Prayer

The Teacher's Bible Study

Service to God consists of many things. Many people will voice the desire to serve God but don't seek the means of doing so. The book of James tells us that Christian love consists of MORE than phony concern and sweet platitudes. It would be like rising from a wonderful meal in your warm and cozy home and opening the door to tell a shivering, hungry person standing there that you'll pray they get food and clothing. This is counterfeit Christianity.

God is the greatest giver. He has set the supreme example of GIVING by SUPPLYING WHAT COULD NEVER BE REPAID, and GIVING IT TO THOSE WHO COULD NEVER RETURN THE FAVOR. Giving is at the heart of Christian love. We ALL receive blessings from God, and in turn we should show our appreciation by offering thanks and contributing what we can to God and to our fellow man.

God is pleased with us when we give generously and share with others. The key to generosity is to give from the heart, freely, lovingly, and without expectation of reward. Giving is also not only money, goods, and services, it is also kindness, patience, and time. And whether we are rich or poor, we all can give.

I'll Take That, and That, and That...

In a society that offers a plethora of food, entertainment, and possessions, how do we cultivate a generous giving nature in our children? Our senses are constantly bombarded with the blatant messages of "get this," and "get that," so how do we learn to give?

Stories, such as the one in this lesson, helps; and there are many more like it in the Bible. Look for ways you can generously help those in need in your community and in your church. Our children imitate what they see and therein lies our hope. Be constant in your generous giving.

The prophet Elijah lived during the reigns of the wicked kings: Ahab, his son Ahaziah, and his grandson Jehoram. Elijah's story begins in 1 Kings 17 where he told King Ahab that there would be no rain and that the crops would fail. Famine did come, and food and water was scarce. It was difficult for man, beast, and all living things—and especially hard on the poor and those without family. In this story a lone widow and her son were at the

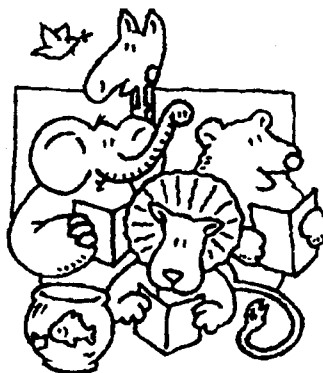
end of their food supply and facing starvation. It was a law in Israel that the wife of a man who died was to be taken in by the husband's family and cared for. In this particular case there were none to help her. Widows were generally poor. When times became hard, widows were among the first to suffer. With no family to help her, a woman found herself at the mercy of a society that tries to ignore the unpleasant.

The oven used by the widow to bake the bread may have been called a *tannur*. This was an oven shaped like a pottery jar. Sticks were placed inside the jar and lit; the dough was plastered on the outside and baked. It was small, portable, and efficient little device for someone who moved about, from place to place.

God cared for Elijah during the drought. He sent him first to the brook *Cherith* (KEE-righ), where ravens brought him food. When the brook dried up, God sent Elijah to a town called Zarephath to find his bed and board. He was to go find a widow residing there. He went and found the widow preparing to make a last meal for herself and her young son. Then they would starve and die. This woman showed an amazing capacity to share with another hungry person the last of her meager store of food and water. It is an amazing example of generosity and faith in a time of scarcity and hopelessness.

God provided for Elijah, the widow, and her son until the famine ended. During this time, their supplies never ran out, for God is forever faithful...□

Simple as 1,2,3...



1. Additional Reading for Teacher Study

Psalm 40:1-6; 143:1-12

2. Are You Listening?

After you read or tell the story you may ask the following questions:

1. *True or false:* Ahab told Elijah to go to Zarephath—**FALSE**
2. *True or false:* A drought hurts man, bird, and beast—**TRUE**
3. *True or false:* The opposite of *generous* is *selfish*—**TRUE**
4. *True or false:* Elijah was not really hungry or thirsty—**FALSE**
5. *True or false:* The widow had enough flour and oil for only one cake, but she was willing to share with Elijah—**TRUE**
6. *True or false:* God fed Elijah, the widow, and her son for as long as the drought lasted—**TRUE**
7. *True or false:* God says He watches over even little birds—**TRUE**
8. *True or false:* God is very good and generous—**TRUE**

3. Word Definitions

These definitions were taken from *Webster's New World Dictionary*.

- **Generous**—unselfish in giving and sharing
- **Share**—to divide a portion with another
- **Starve**—to weaken and die from lack of food

SKY Story Time

His Eye Is on the Sparrow

A hot, dry wind gusted along the dry creek bed, rattling the withering leaves of the bushes that grew there. Dust had begun to coat everything.

A severe drought was upon the land. God had decided to withhold the rain because of a very wicked king of Israel named Ahab.

God was very angry with the wickedness of this leader. This king had begun to worship the pagan god Baal, and had married an idolatrous princess named Jezebel. The two of them reigned over God's people brutally and arrogantly. They were leading the people into idolatry and away from their Deliverer and real King.

Ahab did not reverence the God of Israel. In fact he did things to deliberately provoke and belittle the Lord of lords.

God is merciful. He had given Ahab chance after chance to change his behavior. But, he only became more wicked. Finally God said "It is time..."

God had a special servant, Elijah, whom He sent to tell Ahab that there would be no rain or dew upon the ground for several years until the prophet Elijah spoke the word. The king sat and glared at Elijah. Ahab started to pace up and down the room. His servants and aids watched fearfully. They knew his temper was fierce and brutal.

Ahab was outraged. "How dare you threaten me!" he shouted. "I'll have you killed!" The people

surrounding the king rushed in to soothe him, and in the uproar Elijah was able to slip away. Elijah had a trip to make.

God told Elijah to go hide by the brook called Cherith. Ravens would bring Elijah food in the morning and in the evening, and he could drink from the cool waters of the little stream.

It had now been many, many, many dry months. Day-by-day the stream had shrunk within its banks and now it was dry except for a few small muddy pools.

Man, beast, and bird were beginning to suffer.

The Little Widow

One evening the Lord said, "Elijah, there is a widow in the town of Zarephath that will give you food. Go there and stay for a while." God knew that not only Elijah needed food and water, but so did a widow and young boy living there. God was about to perform a miracle for all of them. So Elijah started walking toward the town of Zarephath—it was a long, hot, dusty walk.

When Elijah came into the city, he saw a lone woman gathering sticks. He stopped and wearily sat down nearby, for he was hungry, thirsty, very tired and weak. He asked her, "Lady, would you please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink?" The woman immediately went to get him a drink of her precious water.

As the widow turned to get the water, he called after her, "Could you please bring me a morsel of bread also?"

The poor widow stopped at her door and turned to Elijah. She hesitantly replied, "But sir, I do not have any bread. I have only one handful of flour and a little oil left. In fact, I was gathering this wood to build a fire to bake a small cake for myself and my small son." Tears had begun to fill her eyes. "After that we shall starve and will die." Elijah said, "Do not be afraid, daughter. Make me a small cake first, and afterwards make some for yourself and your son. Your flour bin and your jar of oil will never be used up. God will see to it that you always have what you need."

The woman looked quietly into the face of Elijah and then turned to do just as Elijah had told her. She put the sticks in the little oven and the fire began to burn and warm the oven. Her small son had come to watch hungrily as his mother patted out the small flat bread. His tummy was empty and he felt very, very hungry.

"Mother always gives me the biggest piece," he thought. "She's such a good mommy and when I get big I'll take care of her. I'll give HER the biggest piece!"

His mother knew her small son was hungry. She smiled at him gently and playfully rubbed his head as she browned the small cake. "We have a guest, my son. Take this to the man outside."

She handed him a small tray to carry the water and the warm bread to Elijah. "When you come back I will have YOUR cake ready! Hurry son, for he is very tired and hungry,

too." The little boy cheerfully and with great care went to the stranger sitting outside.

The widow then turned and took the top off the jar she kept her flour in. Can you guess what she saw inside? Yes! Miraculously there was flour! She then looked into the jar that she used for oil. What do you think was there? Oh yes, there was plenty of oil.

With tears streaming down her face she bowed her head and thanked the God of Israel for helping her to be able to feed her little son. He was such a good little boy. He was all she had left since the death of her husband. Her heart was deeply thankful.

She happily made her little son his dinner first, before her own.

Elijah knew that the widow had been kind and generous. Elijah said to the widow, "Because you have been so generous and have shared your last cake with me, God will see to it that you and your son always have plenty of food to eat."

And this is just what happened, for God ALWAYS does what He says He will do.

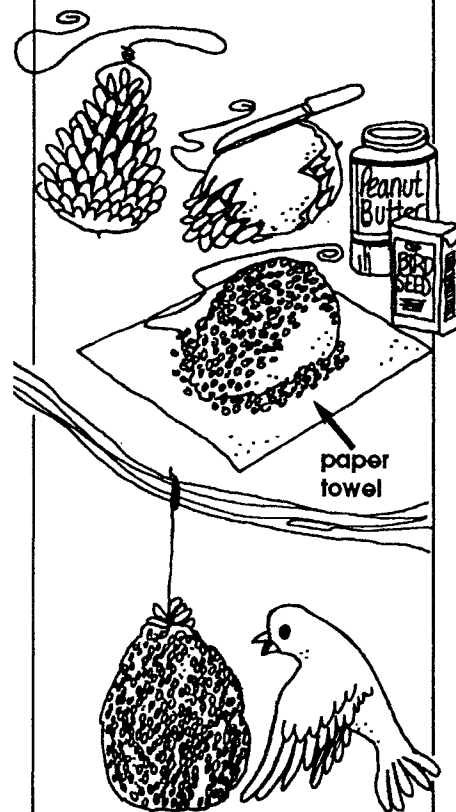
God says He even looks after the littlest bird! And He loves us even more than the most beautiful bird ever! Isn't God wonderful?

Crafty Idea

Attach the string to the pinecone. Using a table knife press a liberal amount of peanut butter into the cone. Roll the coated pinecone in birdseed. Gently press the seed into the peanut butter-filled cone. Hang the feeder outside in the trees or porch and watch the birds enjoy it. God uses us sometimes to take care of His little friends. □

Crafty Ideas

Take Care of others



Materials To Use:

- Pinecones
- Strong string in 8—10 inch lengths
- peanut butter
- birdseed
- Paper towels