

Know Your Gifts

1 KINGS 17:8-16

3



GOAL

Youth explore the story of Elijah meeting a widow, and learn to use their gifts to welcome others.

- A** Art
- AM** Active/Movement
- AT** Abstract Thinking
- C** Conversation
- CT** Concrete Thinking
- D** Drama
- G** Game
- M** Music
- QC** Quiet/Contemplative
- S** Service
- T** Technology
- X** Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

Gracious God, help me to see my blind spots when it comes to welcoming others, so that I can be a better example to the youth I teach. Amen.

THIS SESSION

Each one of us possesses gifts that can be used to welcome others. This session invites us to consider how we can use our individual gifts to show hospitality to others. Additionally, our unique gifts are strengthened when we work together, allowing us to extend a warmer welcome.

THE BIBLE STORY

In 1 Kings 17, after Elijah has traveled for some time with no food or water, the Lord directs him to a town. The Lord says a woman will be there to feed him. Elijah meets the woman and asks her for food, but she has very little to offer. Because of her poverty, the woman is sure that she and her son will soon die. Elijah accepts her hospitality and prophesies that, because of her obedience, she and her son will never go hungry again.

This session teaches that, no matter how small, everyone has something to offer to show hospitality. God takes our little and makes much! And God will often send others to help us when we cannot make it on our own.

CONNECTIONS WITH YOUTH

Most youth struggle with self-doubt and insecurity about their strengths and gifts. As they work to find their place among peers and in society, they wonder about what they have to offer. Many may not recognize the depths of their strengths, or they may not know how to deal with weaknesses. This session encourages self-affirmation, self-awareness, and teamwork. Hopefully, youth will also learn that, while their gifts are important, others also have gifts that are different and just as important.

SESSION PREPARATION

- “Working Together” (p. 22): Resource Page 2 is a jigsaw puzzle that will need to be cut out ahead of time. Consider printing it on thicker paper. Since the puzzle needs to be divided among two or more teams, be sure to group the pieces so that each team can complete a section of the puzzle, but not the whole puzzle. You may wish to store pieces in ziplock plastic bags.

GETTING STARTED

- Paper
- Pens

IDENTIFYING YOUR STRENGTHS

Welcome youth as they arrive and give them a piece of paper and a pen. Invite them to sit for a few minutes and think about something they enjoy doing and are good at. Have them write down the activity or activities and list the qualities they possess that make them good at the activity. Some examples may include sports, a particular class they enjoy, cooking, design, and so forth.

INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

DISCUSSING STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Have a discussion about strengths and weaknesses. You may wish to tie this activity to the “Getting Started” activity. Invite youth to respond to the following prompts: “I am really good at . . .” and “I usually need help when . . .” Ask them to take note of the strengths and weaknesses of their peers. Are there youth whose strengths complement the weaknesses of other youth? Encourage the youth to build on their strengths and learn how to improve or live with any weaknesses. Remind them that weaknesses are not necessarily a bad thing. Weaknesses are a reminder of our humanity and an opportunity to collaborate with others.

PRAYER

Invite the youth to pray this prayer with you:

Creator God, thank you for all the different gifts you have given each one of us. Help us to learn how we might use our gifts to help others and glorify you. Amen.

RECAP

Invite volunteers who attended the previous session to tell what they remember about seeing Christ in others. How were they able to practice being more hospitable during the past week?



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

Choose one or both options.

- Bibles

THE BIBLE STORY

Read 1 Kings 17:8–16 together. Invite youth to ask questions or share what the story brings up for them. Consider one or more of these questions for discussion:

-  Why did Elijah go to see the woman?
-  Why did the woman give Elijah what he asked for? Did she do it simply because he asked, or is there some other reason? How would you respond if you were in her position?

- ➔ In this story, who is the host and who is the guest? Are these categories always clearly defined?
- ➔ What does this story teach us about hospitality? What does it teach us about God?

IDENTIFYING GIFTS IN THE STORY

G C AT CT

Four Bibles

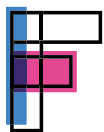
Form teams of two or more persons and provide each team with a Bible. Have each team work together to identify as many instances as they can of something being given in 1 Kings 17:8–16. Encourage youth to be creative! The team that can identify the most instances wins.



You may adapt this activity to be an individual activity. If you have too few participants to form teams, you may also do this activity as one group.

For your reference, here are some example of things given in the story:

- God gave Elijah instructions
- God gave Elijah a promise
- Elijah gave the widow a request
- The widow gave Elijah water and bread
- The widow gave her son a meal
- The widow gave Elijah her plan
- Elijah gave the widow a prophecy
- God gave the widow and her son an abundance of flour and oil



FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Choose one or both options.

CHURCHES WORKING TOGETHER

T C

Internet-enabled device

Watch a video about a group of churches coming together to provide food during the COVID-19 pandemic (bit.ly/FMChurchesWorkTogether, 1:39). Have a discussion about the video using the following questions:

- ➔ How did the churches use their gifts to help others?
- ➔ Why was it important for them to work together?
- ➔ What can we learn from this group of churches?

HOW HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENTS ARE CONNECTED

C CT

Copies of Resource Page 1

Distribute copies of Resource Page 1 and allow youth to spend a couple of minutes looking at it. Invite volunteers to read each of the boxes and briefly discuss. Tell them that past and present movements for human rights and social justice are related. Discuss:

- ➔ How many of the movements and facts were you aware of prior to reading the sheet?
- ➔ What does history teach us is the best way to create lasting, positive change?



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

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- Newsprint
 - Marker

GIFTS IN YOUR CHURCH

C AT

Invite youth to think about all the people in your worship community, not just their group. Have them call out various strengths of your church and the people who come to mind. List these on the newsprint as they say them. Then ask them to consider what gifts are missing in your church. Together, brainstorm ways the community might enhance the gifts that are present and draw in what's missing.

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- Resource Page 2 with pieces cut out

WORKING TOGETHER

G AM

Form teams and distribute the pieces of a single puzzle equally among the groups (there are 24 pieces in the puzzle). Make sure to divide the puzzle in a way that every group can fully assemble a discernible part of the whole puzzle.

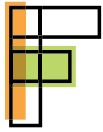
Introduce this activity in the following way: “The goal of this activity is for each team to assemble the jigsaw puzzle as quickly as possible using the pieces provided. I will not give any additional instructions.” The groups will think that they are competing against each other, but they must figure out that the only way to complete the entire puzzle is for the teams to work together. (If you begin to run out of time, and the teams have not realized they should be working together, you may encourage them to “think outside of the box” or even “think outside of their team.”)

Have a brief discussion about the activity. Remind them that the woman in the Bible story we read could not survive on her own; nor could Elijah survive on his own. But when they put what they had together (the woman's flour/oil and Elijah's faith in God), they both survived—even thrived. In short, when we work together, we get a clearer picture of God's plan for us. The same goes for our gifts. We need everyone's gifts in order to survive.

SHOWING HOSPITALITY

AM

Ask youth to commit to finding one person in the church or in their school whom they do not know well or at all and speak to them. Perhaps it is a first-time guest or a family that joined the church recently. Get to know them and think of ways to show hospitality to them.



FOLLOWING JESUS

CLOSING ACTIVITY AND PRAYER

Have the youth stand in a line (shoulder to shoulder rather than one behind the other). With the pitcher/large cup of water, pour into the first person's cup, close to full. Then that person will pour most (but not all) of the water from their cup to the next person until everyone has water in their cup. As each person pours, they should give an affirmation to the person whose cup they fill and allow the person who receives to respond with an affirmation or word of thanks. Remind youth that one of the ways we can show hospitality is by simply giving kind words. If they run out of water before everyone has water in their cup, discuss why that might be and try the exercise again.

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- Pitcher or large cup of water
 - Smaller cups



Instead of using water and cups, you may use a piece of paper—that is, have the first person tear off a piece of the page before handing it to the next person until all youth have a piece of the page. You may also do the activity with just words of affirmation and no additional supplies.

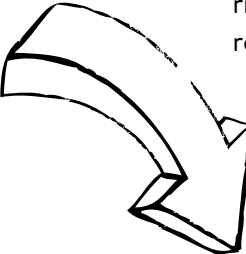
Lead the group in prayer: Dear God, because you give so much to us, we promise to give to others. Thank you for the gifts of love and kindness. Amen.

Examples of Human Rights

What do all these human rights examples have in common? It usually takes a prolonged movement, fighting for the rights of oppressed people, to achieve the result of laws that protect them.

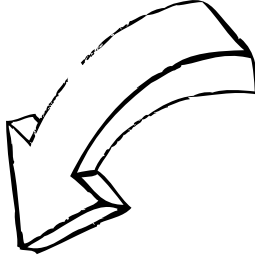
Abolitionism
(slavery)

Results in passage of the 13th Amendment in 1863, which formally ended slavery in the US.



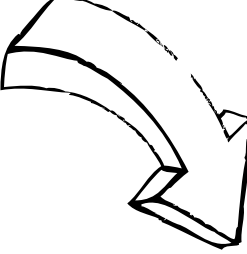
Results in passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920, which gave white women the right to vote.

Women's Suffrage



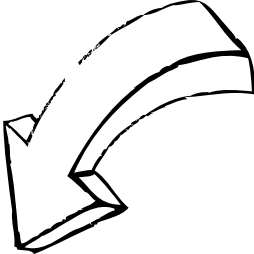
Civil Rights Movement

Results in passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which grants all citizens (including black people) the right to vote and prohibits employers and public places of business from discriminating against people based on race, gender, national origin, or religion.



Results in the 2015 Supreme Court ruling legalizing same-gender marriages nationwide. Also, in 2020, the Supreme Court ruled that the 1964 Civil Rights Act includes protections for LGBTQ+ people.

LGBTQ+ Rights Movement



#BlackLivesMatter Movement

#BlackLivesMatter began as a social media movement in response to the killing of Trayvon Martin, a young black boy whose murderer was acquitted. #BlackLivesMatter has sparked demonstrations around the world against racism and police brutality. The movement is committed to ending all forms of oppression, including sexism, homophobia, and transphobia. In fact, #BlackLivesMatter was founded by black LGBTQ+ women.

Jigsaw Puzzle



