

Session 18

Power to amaze

Our 5 to 8s probably think of power as being something large and impressive. Help them to understand that God's power can be quiet as well as loud, and can help them in their daily lives.

To plan your session... Choose a selection of *Opening*, *Into the Bible* and *Living the life* activities to make your session fun and memorable.

Options to open your session...

Let's remember

Activity time: 5–10 minutes

Aim: to remember how God showed his power to Elijah

You will need: maps from pages 123 and 129

- 1 Before the session cut the 'doors' on the map from page 129 so they can be opened. Attach this over the map from page 123. Make enough copies for one per child.
- 2 Ask the children to find the Cherith Brook door on the map. Challenge them to say how God showed his power to Elijah there. Invite a child to open the door to see if they are right, and recap that bit of the story (1 Kings 17:1–7).
- 3 Now do the same with Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8–16).
- 4 Say that in today's story God shows even more of his amazing power. Next session they will open more of the doors. (Keep the maps for Sessions 19 and 20.)

Worship

Activity time: 5–10 minutes

Aim: to worship our all-powerful God

You will need: pictures of powerful things such as a waterfall, a king or queen, a volcano, a strong man, a policeman

- 1 Look together at the pictures. Ask the children about the types of power shown – power in nature, power to make and enforce rules and power as strength. Challenge them to think of other examples of power.
- 2 Lead the children in a prayer. Encourage them to finish the phrase with their own words: 'Amazing God, you are more powerful than... [the highest waterfall, and so on].'
- 3 Say that today they will hear how God showed his power in an amazing way.

Aim
To recognise God as the one and only all-powerful Lord

Bible passage

1 Kings 18

Ready to use activity

Chat

Activity time: 10 minutes

Aim: to introduce the concept of Elijah being God's prophet

- 1 Tell the children that today they'll be looking at a story about a prophet. Ask them what they think a prophet is. Encourage them to chat with you about this. Find out if they remember anyone else in the Bible who was a prophet. You could refer to stories about Jonah or Samuel.
- 2 At an appropriate moment, explain that a prophet is someone who receives and passes on messages from God.
- 3 Challenge the children to remember what Elijah told King Ahab (1 Kings 17:1). Introduce today's Bible story by reading 1 Kings 18:1.

Into the Bible - options based on the Bible passage...

Ready to use activity

Bible story and drama

Activity time: 20–30 minutes

Aim: to recognise God as the one all-powerful Lord

You will need: a digital camera, three large sheets of paper (both optional)

1 Preparation

In advance, make three posters with the headings: 'Baal', 'The one all-powerful God' and 'Choose!'

The children will explore this story by producing a series of 'stills' – a piece of action from the story in which the characters are frozen. This can be as simple or elaborate as you want to make it, depending on the time available, your facilities and the size of the group. If you have a digital camera, these stills can be photographed and then printed. (Make sure you have permission to photograph the children.) Not everyone in the group needs to be an actor – you will need 'ideas people', directors and photographers.

Help the children to think and discuss how they want to interpret the Bible verses, by asking the questions given with each scene description. Some suggestions for stills are given, but the children's ideas will probably be much more inventive!

2 Act it out

For each scene, read the verses from a child-friendly Bible and ask the questions. Then get the children to make the 'still'.

Scene 1: SU Bible Timeline.

How could you illustrate where this story comes in the Old Testament?

Suggestion for still: Point to Elijah's name on the *Timeline*.

Scene 2: 1 Kings 18:16b–19. Elijah and Ahab meet. How is Ahab feeling during this meeting? Is Elijah afraid of Ahab?

Suggestion for still: Ahab scowling and threatening Elijah. Elijah points at Mount Carmel.

Scene 3: 1 Kings 18:20–24. Elijah challenges the people. (*You will need to explain that in those days burning animals on a fire was a way of showing respect to God. It was a bit like giving him a present.*) What is the choice that Elijah gives to the people? How would the competition show who is the one all-powerful God?

Suggestion for still: Three children, one holding a poster saying 'Baal', one with a poster saying 'The one all-powerful God' and one in the middle with a poster saying 'Choose!'

Scene 4: 1 Kings 18:25–29. No one's listening! (*You will need to explain that in those days people thought that cutting themselves would make gods listen to them.*) What did the people do to make their god listen to them? How did they feel when nothing happened?

Suggestion for still: Children in a circle 'frozen' in frenzied 'begging' shapes.

Scene 5: 1 Kings 18:30–35. Elijah builds an altar. What would the people watching have thought as they watched Elijah soak the sacrifice with water? What does this action tell us about what Elijah believes about God?

Suggestion for still: Child 'pouring' a bucket while onlookers look amazed.

Scene 6: 1 Kings 18:36,37. Elijah prays. What is the difference between Elijah's prayer and those of the prophets of Baal? Why did Elijah want God to answer his prayer?

Suggestion for still: Elijah praying.

Scene 7: 1 Kings 18:38,39. People worship the one true God. Why did the people fall on their knees and worship God when Elijah's prayer was answered?

Suggestion for still: Everyone on their knees to show they are worshipping God.

3 Response

Ask the children to freeze into their own 'still' to express how this story makes them feel about God.

Tip for Leaders: Think about the children in your group and choose the activity that you think will best suit their learning styles from the two *Into the Bible* activities provided here.

Bible story with objects

Activity time: 15 minutes

Aim: to recognise God as the one all-powerful Lord

You will need: the following items in a box: a shrivelled plant, a large stone, a spade, a bucket, a piece of flame-coloured fabric

1 Story

Say that today they will hear how Elijah showed God's power to King Ahab and the people.

Take the withered plant from your box.

For three long years God had sent no rain, just as Elijah had said. However, this didn't make King Ahab change his ways. All it did was make him very angry! So when Elijah met with him, Ahab roared, 'There you are, you troublemaker! This is all your fault!'

'You're the one who has made God angry,' retorted Elijah. 'Meet me at Mount Carmel with the people and all the followers of Baal.'

Take the stone out of the box.

Once everyone gathered, Elijah challenged the people: 'It's time to choose! You can't worship both my God and Baal! We'll each build an altar with stones and sticks. Then lay the meat from a bull on the sticks, but don't light a fire. You pray to your gods and I'll pray to mine. The god who lights a fire under the bull will prove to be the one all-powerful God.'

In those days burning animals on a fire was a way of showing respect to God. It was a bit like giving him a present.

'You go first, seeing as there are more of you,' said Elijah. All morning the prophets prayed. 'O Baal, answer us!' they pleaded. But nothing happened. Then they started dancing and jumping around the altar.

By midday still nothing had happened. 'Pray louder,' teased Elijah. 'Maybe your god's off on holiday! Maybe he's asleep and you need to wake him up!'

The prophets went mad! They yelled and screamed and even cut themselves with knives because they thought that would make their god listen. But it didn't matter what they did, nothing happened.

'Enough!' said Elijah at last. 'Now it's my turn.'

Take the spade and bucket from the box.

Carefully Elijah built a pile of 12 stones and then he dug a ditch all the way round it. He laid the firewood on top of the stones and the meat on top of that. Then he did something very strange. 'Fill four buckets with water and pour it over everything,' he said. Then another eight buckets were poured over until the whole thing was drenched and dripping, and the ditch was full of water.

'It'll never light now,' muttered the people to each other. 'Nobody can make water burn!'

'Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,' prayed Elijah quietly, 'please answer my prayer so that these people will know that you are the Lord God and will turn back to you.'

Take the fabric from the box and throw it over the other objects.

Immediately a sheet of fire came out of nowhere and burnt up the meat, the wood, the stones and even the water in the ditch!

'Wow!' yelled the people. 'It's amazing! It's true! The Lord is God! The Lord is God!'

2 Worship

Give the children time to tell God quietly how this story makes them feel about him.

More on this theme . . .

If you want to do a short series with your group, other sessions that work well with this one are:

Session 17 Power to provide, 1 Kings 17

Session 19 Power to protect, 1 Kings 19

Session 20 Power to judge, 1 Kings 21:1-19; 22:29-40

Living the life - options to help live God's way...

Speech bubbles

Activity time: 15 minutes

Aim: to respond to our all-powerful God

You will need: copies of the *Splash!* sheets from pages 130 and 131

- 1 Give out copies of the *Splash!* sheet from page 130 and encourage the children to complete the cartoon story of Elijah by cutting out and sticking the speech bubbles in the correct places.
- 2 Give everyone a copy of the *Splash!* sheet from page 131 and invite them to write or draw a prayer, telling God how they feel about him, in today's speech bubble.
- 3 Encourage them to take it in turns to say their prayer out loud now.
- 4 Suggest that the children write or draw a prayer each day this week in one of the speech bubbles, and say it out loud to God.



Creative prayer

Activity time: 10 minutes

Aim: to ask for God's power to work in our lives

You will need: a parachute

- 1 Ask the children to think about situations in their lives where they need God's power to help them, such as making friends with someone who is unpopular or being strong when they are tempted to lose their temper.
- 2 Invite them to write about or draw the situations they have thought of on sheets of paper. Place the sheets in the centre of the parachute.
- 3 Say together, 'All-powerful God, hear our prayers!' and toss the prayers into the air.
- 4 As the prayers fall back into the parachute, say together, 'Thank you, God, that you will help.'

Ready to use activity

Game

Activity time: 10–15 minutes

Aim: to think about who has power in our lives

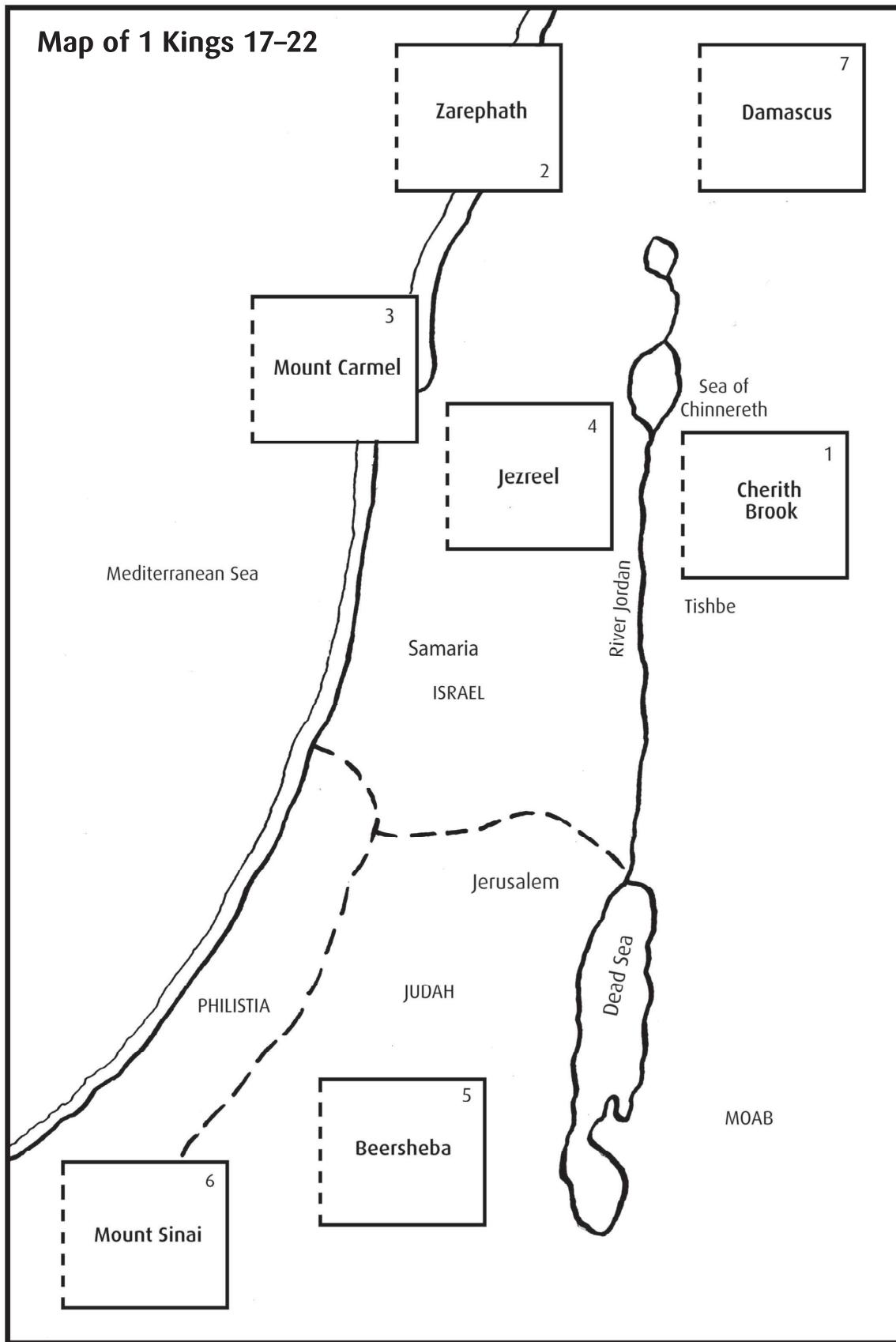
- 1 Put sheets of paper with the numbers '1', '2' and '3' up around the room.
- 2 Explain that you are going to name three people, allocating a number to each one. Challenge the children to decide which person is the most powerful and run to that person's number. If there is time, allow the children to explain the reasons for their choices, as, apart from the last set, there are no right answers.
 - Set 1:** adult, baby, teenager.
 - Set 2:** cleaner, doctor, nurse.
 - Set 3:** teacher, pupil, dinner lady.
 - Set 4:** prime minister, the queen, policeman.
 - Set 5:** Baal, lucky mascot, God.If you do not have room to run around, give each child a set of numbered labels to hold up.
- 3 When you come to the final choice, talk about the importance of Christians trusting only in our one all-powerful God.

Extra ideas for the session, and beyond...

Play the track from Mendelssohn's *Elijah* entitled 'Baal, we cry to thee' as you tell the story.

Create a collage of images from magazines and old calendars that illustrate God's amazing power.

Splash!
Red Compendium



Carefully cut along the bold lines so that the doors fold open easily

Splash!



