

BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

52. ELIJAH

*This assembly has been adapted, with permission, from a KS1 assembly 'Carmel Competition' published by Scripture Union and available from:
www.biblebasedassemblies.com.*

Bible Base: 1 Kings 18: 1-40

Key Christian Belief: God says: 'I am the true and living God.'

Aim: To help children understand that Christians believe the God of the Bible is the true and living God, that He is the greatest and that He is real!

You will need:

- some items which the children are likely to have had to choose between - e.g. an apple or an orange, a DVD or a computer game, a tube of Smarties or a packet of Fruit Pastilles;
- a few simple props for the story - e.g. a crown for Ahab, a cloak for Elijah, a spade and a bucket.

Introduction

Discuss with the children times when they have had to make choices. Show them the items you have brought, which they may have had to choose between. Have there been times when they have found it difficult to choose? Talk about a time when you found it hard to choose and perhaps kept changing your mind. You might say that you used to be indecisive but now you're not so sure... (!!)

Today's story is about a time when God's people, the Israelites, had an important choice to make but they weren't sure what to choose and kept changing their minds.

Bible Story

Explain to the children that after the time of David, the people of Israel had many bad kings, one after the other. Probably the worst was King Ahab along with his wife Jezebel who was even nastier than him! Ahab did not care about God. Jezebel worshipped a false god called Baal and taught the people to do the same. Some, like Elijah, continued to worship the true and living God but others began to worship Baal. Most of the people, however, just didn't know what to believe and couldn't make up their minds.

In those days when God had something to say to someone, He would give the message to one of His special messengers - the prophets - to pass on to them. (Remember how Samuel heard God speak and passed the message on to Eli?) Anyhow, in the days of King Ahab, Elijah was one of God's special messengers. God had already sent him to King Ahab to try to make him see sense but he wouldn't listen.

After that, there had been no rain for three years and Ahab was in a foul mood when God sent Elijah to speak to him again.

Choose volunteers to act as King Ahab, Elijah and some of the prophets of Baal as you tell the story. All the other children in the assembly will be the crowd watching what happens. Have Ahab and Elijah standing facing one another.

When Ahab and Elijah met, Ahab was so angry he could hardly keep still. He was twitching and shaking with anger. *(Have Ahab shake with rage.)*

‘You have caused this trouble!’ Ahab shrieked, his voice shrill and squeaking.

‘It’s not my fault,’ said Elijah. ‘You have forgotten the true and living God, and taught His people to worship a made-up god instead. You have told them lies and now He wants them to know the truth. Get all the prophets of Baal together on Mount Carmel. Then get all the people to gather there too. There’s going to be a competition.’

Soon, a huge crowd of people had gathered along with 450 prophets of Baal, all ready for a big competition. *(Have Elijah face the rest of the children.)*

‘Listen,’ said Elijah to the people. ‘You’ve got to make up your minds. You can’t follow both God and Baal. You’ve got to choose one or the other. Which one will it be?’

But the people said nothing.

‘OK’ said Elijah. ‘Slaughter two bulls and bring them here.’ In those days the meat from bulls and other animals was burned as a sacrifice to God - to show Him respect.

Choose volunteers to mime bringing out the sacrifices and leaving them one on either side of the stage.

‘The competition will be to see which god, the God of our ancestors, whom I serve, or Baal, sends fire to burn the sacrifice’ said Elijah. ‘The one that answers is the true and living God and we will follow Him. The other is just make-believe. Do you agree?’

The prophets of Baal stamped and shouted and whooped and made a great noise. (The prophets of Baal stamp, shout, whoop, etc.)

‘Is that a yes?’ said Elijah.

‘Yes!’ they roared.

Have the prophets and Elijah mime appropriately as the story continues.

The prophets went over to their bull, built a pile of stones, put wood on top and then lifted their bull on to it. Then they started to pray. ‘Baal, hear us! Baal, hear us! Send us fire and make it hot!’ *(The prophets could say this after you.)* But nothing happened.

So they yelled all the louder, ‘Baal, hear us! Baal, hear us! Send us fire and make it hot!’ But again nothing happened.

‘Perhaps he’s out? Or sleeping? Or on the loo?’ suggested Elijah, smiling. The prophets of Baal went crazy: dancing, leaping, shouting and screaming. But still nothing happened.

Hours passed. Then at last Elijah told the people very quietly to gather round. And they did. He built a pile of twelve stones, put the wood on top and lifted his bull on to it. Then he dug a deep ditch round the stones and asked for a bucket of water.

‘Water?’ said the people. ‘He’s definitely crazy.’

Elijah poured water over the bull.

‘Doesn’t he realise?’ said a little old woman. ‘It will never cook like that!’

Elijah poured on water a second time. And a third time. Now the bull was soaking wet. Water trickled down into the deep ditch below.

‘Now Lord,’ he said. ‘Show these people that you are the true and living God, that you are the greatest and that you are real!’

Almost at once, fire came down and licked up the water like a hungry beast. Flames roared round the stones, the wood, the meat and leapt red and yellow into the sky. When all the people saw this they jumped up in surprise.

‘Wow!’ they yelled. ‘That’s amazing!’

Then they knelt down.

‘It’s true’ they whispered in awe. Elijah’s God is the true and living God. He is the greatest - and He is real! From now on we will follow Him.’

Exploring Christian Belief

Ask the children to think about the story they have just heard and seen and about what they will decide, or may have already decided, about God.

Lots of people these days have different ideas about whether or not there is a God and, if there is, what He is like. Just as it was for the people in Elijah’s day it can be hard for us to know what to believe. How are we to know the truth?

Christians believe that the God of the Bible is the true and living God. He has shown His power in creation. As we look around we can see all the amazing things that God has made and that helps me to know that He is real.

He has shown His power in history too. There are many stories written down for us in the Bible, telling us about the amazing things God did for His people long ago and Christians believe these stories - such as the one we heard today - are true.

He has shown His power through Jesus. Jesus did many amazing things when He was on earth. He said that He had come from God and that God had given Him the power to do all these things. Most of all, the Bible teaches us that God showed His power by raising Jesus from death to life so that we would know for sure that He really is God’s Son.

And finally Christians believe that God wants to show His power in our lives too and many of us can tell you about the amazing things He has done for us.

But what about you? What do you believe? Each of us has to make up our own minds. If you believe the God of the Bible is the true and living God then make up your mind to follow Him and I believe you will discover for yourself the amazing things that He can do for you.

Prayer

Invite the children to join in this prayer by saying 'Amen' at the end if they agree.

Dear God, help us to know that you are real and with us even though we can't see you with our eyes, hear you with our ears or touch you with our hands. Thank you that you are the one true God, the greatest, the real thing. Amen.