



On your marks

This session is the third of three on *Corking Old Testament Stories*, together with Samson and Esther. I chose this one for the horribly subjective reason that no one told me this story when I was little.

Get set

You'll need (optional) *The Incredibles* DVD and player, digital camera, plus paper, pens, Bibles

Go!

Play **In and Out** using the following words and ideas: Mr Incredible, depressed, Superman, lonely, Elastigirl, doubtful, Violet, despairing, Dash, hopeless. If you prefer, you could play charades with the superheroes' names instead.

If possible, show a clip from *The Incredibles* (where Bob / Mr Incredible has a terrible day at work, comes home and the car falls apart) or talk about the way even Mr Incredible has his ups and downs in the film.

Introduce Elijah - a hairy he-man of a prophet who was trying to be faithful to God at a time when the king (Ahab) was a mean cowardly tyrant married to a wife (Jezebel) who openly worshipped other gods, like Baal and Asherah and was making the people of God worship them too.

Ask the group to work in pairs or threes.

Give each pair one or more sections of the story as below, either working from Bibles or from the summary, and ask them to make a [freeze frame](#) of the moment of their section of the story that they think is most important.

Ask each group in turn to make their frame and you tell the story from what you see in the frames.

Together draw out a map with cartoon scenes of the events of the story and arrows leading from one to the other.

Ask which of all the scenes shows Elijah at the highest point, the most heroic point of his work for God. [Hot-seat](#) him to find out how he was feeling and thinking at this moment.

Ask which was the lowest point for him. Hot-seat him again to find out how he was feeling and thinking then.

Ask:

- I wonder what surprises you about this story?



- I wonder what puzzles you about this story?
- I wonder if you've ever felt like Elijah when he was... here?... Or here? (point to places on the map)
- I wonder why Elijah felt so low when he had been so high?
- I wonder when God loved him most?
- I wonder if God only loves us when we're doing things for him?

If there's time, the group may like to use a digital camera to make a photostory of Elijah's life, based on the cartoons sketched on the map.

Story summary

From 1 Kings 17-19

King Ahab and his queen Jezebel did such terrible things that God's prophet Elijah says that no rain will fall unless he commands it. Then Elijah goes into hiding near the Kerith stream, where God sends ravens to bring him bread and meat every day.

The Kerith stream where Elijah is hiding dries up in the end and God sends Elijah to a widow in a town called Zarephath. The widow is just baking her last loaf of bread before she and her son die of hunger. But Elijah asks her to make him a loaf too, and promises her that her flour and her oil will never run out throughout the drought - and that's what happens!

The son of the widow where Elijah is staying falls sick and dies. The widow is sad and angry with Elijah for letting it happen. But Elijah prays to God and the boy comes to life again.

After three years of no rain, God sends Elijah to meet King Ahab and to challenge the priests of the god Baal to a showdown on Mount Carmel to see whose god is the true god. The 450 priests of Baal sacrifice a bull, put the meat on a pile of wood, then pray to Baal to bring down fire on the sacrifice. They pray all afternoon but nothing happens. Elijah makes fun of them and they pray louder until teatime but nothing happens.

Then Elijah builds an altar, piles it up with wood, digs a trench round it, kills a bull, puts the meat on top and then pours gallons and gallons of water over the whole thing until the water runs into the trench. Then Elijah prays simply to God, asking him to prove that he is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob so that the people will change their minds and follow him again. Straight away a fire comes from heaven and burns up everything - even the stones of the altar. Everyone cries out 'The Lord is God!' and Elijah goes into the valley of Kishon and kills all the priests of Baal.

Elijah climbs back up Mount Carmel and sees the rain coming at last. He tells Ahab to ride home in his chariot before he gets wet, and Elijah is so full of the Holy Spirit that he runs ahead of the chariot all the way back to the palace in Jezreel.

Queen Jezebel hears that Elijah has killed all her priests and swears to kill him too. Elijah runs away. He walks into the desert for a day then sits down under a bush and tells God he - Elijah - is no good, he's had enough and he wants to die. An angel brings him bread and water and he sleeps, but the



angel tells him he needs to carry on with his journey. Elijah walks for forty days and nights to Mount Sinai where he hides in a cave.

Elijah is hiding in the cave on Mount Sinai when he hears God ask him, 'Elijah, why are you here?' Elijah tells God he's done his best for God but that he's scared of being killed. God tells Elijah to go and stand in front of the cave and he will pass by him. There's a roaring wind, which is so strong it breaks rocks apart. But God isn't in the wind. There's a massive earthquake, but God isn't in the earthquake. There's a fire, but God isn't in the fire. Then there's a still small voice. And God speaks to Elijah again and gives him another job to do so that God's work can carry on.