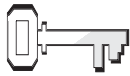


Up, Up, and Away



References

2 Kings 2:1-15;
Prophets and Kings,
pp. 225-228



Memory Verse

"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23, NIV).



Objectives

The children will:

Know grace is the gift of eternal life.

Feel a desire to accept Jesus' gift of life.

Respond by acting in faith that they have eternal life now.



The Message

God's grace is the gift of eternal life.

Monthly Theme

Grace is the gift of life.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

God is about to take Elijah to heaven. His helper, Elisha, is with Elijah as he makes a final visit to the schools of the prophets. Elisha determines not to let Elijah out of his sight. Elijah hits the Jordan River with his cloak, and it parts. They cross on dry ground, and then Elijah asks Elisha, "What can I do for you before I am taken from you?" Elisha asks for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Elijah is taken up to heaven in a chariot pulled by horses of fire. Elisha picks up the coat that Elijah left, walks away, and uses it to part the Jordan River as Elijah had done.

This is a lesson about grace.

Because of God's grace, His children will someday be taken to heaven to live eternally with Him. They will either be translated without seeing death, or resurrected from their graves, when Jesus comes to take them home.

Teacher Enrichment

"Elijah was a type of the saints who will be living on the earth at the time of the second advent of Christ and who will be 'changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump,' without tasting of death. 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 227).

"When Elisha asked that the spirit of Elijah might rest on him, he was offering the kind of prayer that will always be answered. . . . The best, i.e., the spiritual gifts, can always be ours if we earnestly desire and fervently pray for them. . . . Prayer would be given new meaning for us if, when we are told to ask what we will, we should pray that more of God's Holy Spirit may be ours" (*The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 3 [New York: Abingdon Press, 1954], p. 194).

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	<i>A. What Is Forever?</i> <i>B. How Many Years?</i>	rock, small paintbrush or soft cloth, Bible long piece of string, measuring tape or meter stick, Bible
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> basket or bowl with "John 3:16" sign, Bible chariot and horse cutout on red, yellow, or orange construction paper for each child (see p. 143)
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	Bible-times costumes, blue plastic or cloth Bible Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>A. Gifts for You</i> <i>B. What Would You Like?</i>	chalkboard or whiteboard chalk or marker gift cutouts (see p. 144); pencils, pens, markers or crayons, Bible
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Forever Coins</i>	two round coins for each child

***Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Give directions for the Readiness Activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- rock
- small paintbrush or very soft cloth
- Bible

A. What Is Forever?

Bring in a fist-sized rock and a small paintbrush or very soft cloth. Let each child brush the rock once, pretend that ten years have passed, then give the rock to the next child to brush. As the rock makes its way around the room, count the imaginary years and ask how long it would take for the rock to wear out from too much brushing. Explain that forever is even longer than that.

Debriefing

Read aloud Romans 6:23. **God wants to give us life forever. Why?** (Because He loves us.) **How do you feel about living forever?** Accept all responses. **Living forever with God is a gift He wants to give us. That's what today's message is about:**



GOD'S GRACE IS THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- very long length of string
- measuring tape or meter stick
- Bible

B. How Many Years?

Bring a very long length of string to class. Mark spots in 18" (45 cm) or 24" (60 cm) intervals for as many children in the class. Ask each child to find a place on the string and to hold their spot. Stretch the string around the room. Say: **Imagine each spot is a 100-year interval.** (After every child has found a spot, there should still be a *lot* of string left.)

Debriefing

Say: **Eternity is even longer than what we can see now. And just as you are all holding on to the string, God's love binds us to Him forever.** Read Psalm 23:6 aloud. **Because God loves us, He wants us to live with Him in heaven forever. He is preparing a home in heaven for each of us right now. He wants to give us a very special gift. What is your part in receiving God's gift of eternal life in heaven?** (You must accept God's gift of eternal life by accepting Jesus as your own Saviour. Nothing that you do will earn this gift. He will help you to show your gratitude for this gift as you live your life for Him on this earth.) **And that leads me to today's message:**



GOD'S GRACE IS THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise

Any
Time



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Review the memory verse and allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study. Give a special warm greeting to visitors and introduce each by name. Acknowledge birthdays or special events.



Suggested Songs

- "Redeemed!" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 68)
- "Do, Lord" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 91)
- "Thank You, Jesus" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 101)
- "God Is So Good" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 13)



Mission

Use a story from *Children's Mission*.



Offering

Before the offering is taken, read or repeat together John 3:16. Say: **God gave Jesus to our world to save us from sin, so we can have eternal life. Now you can give back to God an offering that will be used to help other people learn about Him—so they can also be saved and live forever.**

You Need:

- basket or bowl with a sign that reads "John 3:16"
- Bible



Prayer

Each child writes on the chariot/horse cutout the name of one person who does not know Jesus. A group comes up front (small church: everyone participates) and each child prays for the person they wrote on their cutout—that this person will accept Jesus and live with Him forever. Adult helpers assist as needed. Close with a teacher praying for the children's special requests.

You Need:

- chariot and horse cutout on red, yellow, or orange construction paper for each child (See pattern on page 143.)

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- Bible-times costumes
- 2 lengths of blue plastic or cloth

Experiencing the Story

Characters: Elijah, Elisha, group of prophets, all in Bible-times costumes.

Helpers: An adult to carry Elijah away. Someone to “part” the Jordan.

Props: 2 lengths of blue plastic or cloth for the river (overlap them so that when Elijah slaps them, the upper piece can be folded back to reveal a dry path).

Read or tell the story.

This is a special day for Elisha (*enter Elisha*), Elijah’s assistant. God has gently whispered that something wonderful will happen to Elijah today. God wants to take him straight to heaven without dying first. This is a special honor that God has given to only one other person—Enoch.

(*Enter Elijah.*) And today Elijah is taking Elisha on a last journey to visit God’s schools of the prophets. (*The two prophets walk together to the group of students.*) They stop at a school in Gilgal.

Now, Elijah knows that he will soon be leaving Elisha, so he gives Elisha a test after they visited the prophets at Gilgal. “Stay here,” Elijah says. “The Lord has sent me to Bethel.”

But Elisha shakes his head. He doesn’t want to let Elijah out of his sight. “As surely as the Lord lives . . . I will not leave you,” Elisha says. So the two of them walk on. (*They walk around the room and back to the prophets.*)

Soon they come to Bethel. The prophets at Bethel ask Elisha, “Do you know God is going to take Elijah today?” (*Help the prophets ask this question again.*)

“Yes, I know,” Elisha replies sadly, (*Wait for Elisha to say this again.*)

Then Elijah gives Elisha a test. “Stay

here,” he tells Elisha. “The Lord has sent me to Jericho.”

But Elisha shakes his head. He doesn’t want to let Elijah out of his sight. “As surely as the Lord lives . . . I will not leave you,” Elisha says. So the two of them walk on. (*They walk around the room and back to the prophets.*)

Soon they come to Jericho. The prophets at Jericho ask Elisha, “Do you know God is going to take Elijah today?” (*By now the prophets ask this question without help.*)

“Yes, I know,” Elisha replies sadly.

Now Elijah tests Elisha again. “Stay here,” he tells Elisha. “The Lord has sent me to the Jordan.”

But Elisha shakes his head. He doesn’t want to let Elijah out of his sight. “As surely as the Lord lives . . . I will not leave you,” Elisha says. So the two of them walk on. And the prophets from Jericho follow them. (*They walk around the room and back up front.*)

When they come to the Jordan River, Elijah takes off his coat, rolls it up, and hits the water with it. (*Elijah removes “coat” and “parts” the “water.”*) The water parts and the two men walk across on dry ground. Now the time has come to say goodbye.

“What can I do for you before I am taken from you?” Elijah asks Elisha.

Now, Elisha might ask for money. He can ask to be famous. He can ask for power. But instead, he asks for a special blessing. “Let me inherit a double portion of your Spirit,” he answers. He knows the only way he can carry on Elijah’s work is with extra help from God.

“If you see me when I am taken up from you it will be yours, otherwise not,” Elijah promises. And they keep walking. Then suddenly, a chariot and horses of

fire appear. *(An adult runs in and carries away Elijah, letting his coat fall to the floor.)* Elijah is taken up to heaven in a whirlwind.

Elisha calls after him, "My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" But Elijah is gone.

Then Elisha sees Elijah's coat where it has fallen. He picks it up and walks back to the Jordan River. He rolls up the coat and hits the water with it, just as Elijah had done. Again the waters part and Elisha walks across on dry ground. *(The prophets clap.)* God has indeed given Elisha the gift of His Spirit.

Debriefing

Ask: **What special gift did God give to Elijah?** (He was taken to heaven without dying.) **How did Elisha feel about that? While they were walking, what did Elisha say that he wanted?** (He wanted a double portion of God's Spirit.) **What sign did Elisha see?**

When Elisha went back to the Jordan, what did he do? This showed that he believed that God answered his prayer. You show that you believe that you have eternal life now when you plan to live in heaven with God and Jesus. Remember, God has also promised us the gift of eternal life if we believe in Him and do His will. Our message tells us . . .



GOD'S GRACE IS THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE.

Say that with me.

Memory Verse

Open your Bible and read the memory verse, Romans 6:23 ("**For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord**").

Ask: **According to this text, what is God's gift to us?** (eternal life)

Divide the class into four groups.

Divide the verse into phrases, as follows:

"The wages of sin"
"Is death"
"But the gift of God"
"Is eternal life"
"In Christ Jesus"
"Our Lord"

The teacher begins by saying the first phrase loudly. The groups echo the phrase one after the other, each successive group echoing it more softly so that the phrase seems to fade. When the last group has echoed, the teacher begins the next phrase, which is echoed in the same way. Repeat until the students know this verse from memory.

Bible Study

Say: **To receive the gift of the Spirit Elisha had to keep his eyes on Elijah. Let's read about that in 2 Kings 2:2, 4, 6, and 10.** Assist as necessary. **Now let's read Romans 6:23 to find out about the gift God has promised us.** Allow time. Assist as needed. **Whom do we need to keep our eyes on? Why? Let's read one more text. Find 1 John 1:1-3.** Read and discuss the text together.

Debriefing

Ask: **How can we keep our eyes on Jesus?** (Through prayer, reading our Bibles, studying our Bible lessons, etc.) **Name some other people in the Bible who kept their eyes on Jesus.** (Peter walking on water, other disciples and people who followed Jesus.) **Let's thank Jesus for His gift of eternal life and ask Him to help us to keep our eyes on Him.** Pray a short prayer together, then say, **Let's remember our message:**



GOD'S GRACE IS THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE.

Say that with me.

You Need:

• Bible

You Need:

• Bibles

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

- chalkboard or whiteboard
- chalk or marker

A. Gifts for You

Say to the group: **Name some gifts you want for Christmas or your birthday.** Write the gift ideas on the board until you have listed five. Then say, **Let's place a star beside the gift that you think will last the longest.** Wait for the children to indicate which one.

Say: **Eternal means forever. How long is that?** (Children will answer based on what they learned from the story.)

How important is forever life to you? Is it more important than the gifts on our list?

Today's Bible story tells us that to receive God's gifts we have to really want them. Do you really want eternal, forever life?

We also have to ask God for the gift of eternal life, as Elisha asked for his gift. Suggest that everyone kneel and ask God for this gift. Allow time for them to pray their own silent prayer and then pray aloud for all.

B. What Would You Like?

Give each child a cutout of a gift package (see p. 144) and say: **Write or draw on the back of this gift something that you very much want to have.** Allow time. If you have time, let the children decorate or color the "gift" box. When all have finished, have each child tell what they wrote or drew.

You Need:

- gift cutout shape for each child (see p. 144)
- pencils, crayons, or markers
- Bible

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Do you think that you will ever get this present?** (Yes, no, maybe.) **Why? What is the longest time you have ever had to wait for something you really wanted? In today's memory verse we learned that God has a special gift for us. What is it?** (eternal life) **When will we receive this gift?** (When Jesus comes again; when we go to heaven; etc.)

What does "eternal" mean? (forever, unending, never ending, etc.) **Let's read 1 John 2:17 together.** Allow time to find and read the verse aloud. **What does this tell us about eternal life?** (If we love God and do His will, Jesus will give us eternal life when He comes again; we will live forever.)

God offers us the gift of eternal life because He wants us to be together with Him forever. And that is what our message is all about:



GOD'S GRACE IS THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE.

Say that with me.

4

Sharing the Lesson

Forever Coins

Ask: **Why do you think a circle represents eternal life?** (It has no beginning and no end.) **Can you think of some things people use that are round?** (coins, cookies, jar lids, etc.)

Give each child two round coins. Tell the children that coins can be a reminder of living forever. They should keep one coin as a reminder of God's promise of eternal life and give the other coin to someone during the week and say, "God's grace gives us life forever." Then ask that person to do the same and give a coin to someone else.

Debriefing

Discuss to whom they might give a coin. Suggest that they give it to the person that they prayed about during prayer time, if possible. Say: **Let's say our message together one more time:**



GOD'S GRACE IS THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE.

Closing

Ask the children to stand in a circle. Say: **A circle is a symbol of forever. It has no beginning and no end. As we stand in this circle, let's thank God for His gift of forever life with Him.** Offer a short prayer of thanks for the promise of eternal life.

You Need:

- two round coins for each child

Up, Up, and Away

References

2 Kings 2:1-15;
Prophets and Kings,
pp. 225-228

Memory Verse

"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23, NIV).

The Message

God's grace is the gift of eternal life.

"But I don't want to go to bed!" complained David to his older sister.

"You know we need to rest," Martha answered. "We always will in this life. But when we get to heaven, we won't need to rest like we do now."

"How do you know?" asked David.

"Let me tell you what I read in the Bible about Elijah and Elisha, David. Then you will understand too."

God had something wonderful planned for Elijah. God wanted to take him straight to heaven without dying first. This was a special honor that God had given to only one other person—Enoch. Elisha was Elijah's assistant. Elisha knew that soon the prophet Elijah would end his work and it would be Elisha's time to carry on. Many of the prophets who worked with them also knew that Elijah would soon be leaving them. God's gentle voice had told them so.

One day Elijah took Elisha on a last journey to visit God's schools of the prophets. The prophets in these schools were asking Elisha, "Did you know God is going to take Elijah today?"

"Yes, I know," Elisha said. The thought of losing Elijah the prophet filled Elisha with sadness. He was probably a little nervous about taking over Elijah's work, too.

Elijah also knew he would soon be leaving Elisha. So he gave his helper a test. At each school they visited, Elijah told Elisha, "Stay here. I need to go on."

But each time Elisha insisted on going too. He didn't want to let Elijah out of his sight. He wanted to be with him till the last moment. "As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you," Elisha said. So the two of them walked on.

Soon they came to the Jordan River. Elijah took off his coat, rolled it up, and hit the water with it. The water parted and the two men walked across on dry ground. On the other side it was time to say goodbye. "What can I do for you before I am taken from you?" Elijah asked Elisha.

Elisha could have asked for a lot of things. He could have asked for money. He could have asked to be famous. But instead, he asked for a special blessing. "Let me inherit a double portion of your Spirit," he answered. He knew that the only way he could do the work he had been called to do was with extra help from God.

"If you see me when I am taken up from you, it will be yours, otherwise not," Elijah said, and they kept walking.

Then suddenly, a chariot and horses of fire appeared and separated the two men. Elijah was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha called after him, "My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" But Elijah was gone. Elisha tore his clothes to show his sorrow at losing his teacher and friend.

Then Elisha saw Elijah's coat where it had fallen. He picked it up and walked back to the Jordan River. Rolling up the coat, Elisha hit the water with it, just as Elijah had done. Again the waters parted, and Elisha walked across on dry ground. God had indeed given Elisha the gift of His Spirit.

God wants to give us good gifts, too. His very best gift is the gift that He gave Elijah, the gift of eternal, forever life. And like Elisha, we have to ask for the gift. We have to keep our eyes on Jesus, just as Elisha had to keep his eyes on Elijah. And we have to believe our prayers have been answered and act in faith. We have to believe just as Elisha did when he hit the water with Elijah's coat.

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- If possible, read the Bible lesson story with your family near a river. Try acting it out. Elisha stayed with Elijah everywhere he went. Whom should we follow today?
- Sing together "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 119). Then ask Jesus to help you follow Him.
- Read Romans 6:23 together and teach the verse to your family.

Sunday

- During family worship, read the lesson story in the Bible (2 Kings 2:1-15).
- Divide a large piece of cardboard into the number of squares equal to the number of words and text in the memory verse. Have a family member help you print one word of the verse in each square. Print the text in a square of its own. Now you can play "Beanbag Toss." Toss a beanbag onto the squares in the correct order of the memory verse. Let your family members have a turn. Play this game all week.

Monday

- For family worship, wrap a gift box with pretty paper and a bow. Label it "Live Forever." Leave it where you can see it all week. Let it remind you of God's gift of eternal life to all who love and follow Jesus.
- In your Bible find and read 1 John 5:11. Together, thank God for offering you such a wonderful gift.
- How many round things can you find in your house? How do they remind you of eternal life?
- Play "Beanbag Toss."

Tuesday

- During worship today, read 2 Kings 2:6, last part. How many times did Elisha repeat his promise, "I will not leave you"? (See 2 Kings 2:2, 4, 6.) Say the promise to each member of your family. Put each person's name at the beginning.

- Discuss with your family: What seems longer to you, an hour doing chores or an hour with your friends? How would you like to be with your friends forever? Eternal life will be like that. Tell God that you choose to be with Him forever.
- Draw a circle. How does a circle remind you of "forever" and "eternal life"? Write the memory verse inside your circle.

Wednesday

- During family worship take turns telling about a time when someone gave you a wonderful gift. Discuss: Why did they give it to you? What kind of a gift does God offer us? Read 1 John 5:11 together. What does this tell you about God? Read 1 John 4:9.
- Play "Beanbag Toss" to review your memory verse.
- Sing, "John 3:16" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 24).

Thursday

- Use today's family worship time to celebrate the reason that we have the gift of eternal life. Read John 3:16 and Philippians 2:8-11. What did you learn about God's greatest gift to us? Sing "O, How He Loves You and Me" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 28).
- To review the memory verse, snap your fingers or clap your hands in rhythm with the words.

Friday

- For Friday evening worship, give each other a special love gift. Stand in a circle and rub each other's backs. Then turn inward and hug each other. While still in this position, say the memory verse.
- Read 2 Kings 2:11 together. Imagine what Elijah did when he first arrived in heaven. Pass the "gift" you made on Monday to a family member. Ask that person to tell what he/she wants to do when first arriving in heaven. That person passes the "gift" to the next person, who does the same thing.
- Thank Jesus for His forever gift of forever life.
- Sing "For God So Loved the World" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 26).