



“Challenges” are wildly popular on YouTube and social media. This series captures some of the family friendly fun to teach kids about following Jesus. Children will love these game-based lessons that points them back to the ultimate challenge – deciding to follow Jesus and live a life devoted to God.

This curriculum is flexible enough to handle a wide range of age groups in even the smallest Sunday school. We have included “more than enough” with each lesson to help you adapt to every teaching situation. Use what you can to teach the main idea, even if your class time does not allow for all activities.

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We are praying for you and your ministry. Please reach out if you have any concerns or advice to improve our curriculum. May God continue to bless your service to His kids.

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8-Week Curriculum Overview

Lesson #1: The Whisper Challenge

- Big Idea: Many people believe that God's voice is booming down from Heaven like a mighty wind, but often God speaks to us in a whisper. Key Passage: 1 Kings 19:9-18 Elijah's encounter with God. Elijah is being hunted for being devoted to God. The word of the Lord comes to him and he commands him to go to the mountain to wait for God. Although he thinks his voice and presence will be like an earthquake or fire, it is just a whisper.

Lesson #2: The Try Not to Laugh Challenge

- Big Idea: As humans we cannot fathom the power of God. We sometimes don't understand God's big plan. So, it is important to be content (happy, joyful) while we wait for God's guidance. Key Passage: Ecclesiastes 3 There's a time for everything under the heavens. This passage tells us that God has made everything beautiful in its time. The best we can do is enjoy the journey and strive to be good.

Lesson #3: The Seven Seconds Challenge

- Big Idea: The number 7 is a significant digit to God. He uses this number in the Bible to make his point. Key Passage: Joshua 6 The Battle of Jericho. The Lord tells Joshua that he has delivered Jericho into his hands and then commands him to march around the city seven times. His directions eventually lead to Joshua's victory in the battle.

Lesson #4: The Blindfolded Drawing Challenge

- Big Idea: It is difficult to move forward when we don't know what will happen. But God wants us to have faith that he will guide us through life and reward us for that faith. Key Passages: Mark 10:46-52 Blind Bartimaeus. Read through this passage and talk about the faith Bartimaeus had to walk into the arms of Jesus without seeing where he was going. God rewarded his faith with the gift of sight.

Lesson #5: The "What's in the Box?" Challenge

- Big Idea: When we put our hands in a box and don't know what we'll pull out, it's sort of like living your life for God and not knowing what will happen to you. Key Passages: Acts 20 Paul's farewell to Ephesian elders. In Paul's time, the price of following God was steep. It could mean prison or even death. But Paul knew God was asking him to Jerusalem, and he had to face this journey even if he was afraid.

Lesson #6: The "Brand Name" vs. "Off-Brand" Challenge

- Big Idea: Buying "off-brand" products at the grocery store is a common practice when you want to save a few dollars. But there's no "off-brand" God. He is the real deal and there's no imitation. Key Passage: Deuteronomy 5 Moses and the 10 commandments. Moses has received the commandments from God and is explaining them to the Israelites. The first of which is "you shall not have any Gods before me." God cannot be replicated nor replaced.

Lesson #7: The "Pause" Challenge

- Big Idea: It is easy to want to do things in our own time. We want what we want when we want it. But God wants us to pause and listen to what he has to say before we act on our own will. Key Passage: Esther 5:1-8 Esther's patience. Instead of jumping at the chance to talk to King Xerxes about saving her people, she waited for God's guidance to speak at the right time. Her patience proved to be a saving grace for her people.

Lesson #8: The Decision Challenge

- Big Idea: We can choose to follow Jesus even when we are faced with challenges. God gives us instructions to follow to be saved and spend eternity with Him in Heaven. Key Passage: Acts 16:16-40. Paul and Silas in prison. The two Christ-followers are thrown into jail because of their beliefs. They begin singing and an earthquake rips through the prison. The jailer asks Paul what he must do to be saved and Paul tells him he must believe in the Lord.



LESSON 1

1 Kings 19:11-12

“The Lord said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.”



The Whisper Challenge

Lesson Summary

- **Big Idea:** Many people believe that God's voice is booming down from Heaven like a mighty wind, but often God speaks to us in a whisper.
- **Key Passage: 1 Kings 19:9-18. Elijah's encounter with God.** Elijah is being hunted for being devoted to God. The word of the Lord comes to him and he commands him to go to the mountain to wait for God. Although he thinks his voice and presence will be like an earthquake or fire, it is just a whisper.
- **Memory Verse: 1 Kings 19:11-12.** "The Lord said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.'"
- **Key Life Application:** As you go through this lesson, you will want to emphasize that God's voice doesn't always come to us in big way. Sometimes we hear God's voice as a whisper when we are quiet and still.

Gospel Connection: Hearing God's voice is essential as kids grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ. We need to listen up since the Holy Spirit is already working to help us know our living God. Even though this process is very personal to each child, we can encourage them to always be listening and learning to trust in Jesus.

Full List of Supplies Needed to Complete Entire Lesson

- Headphones (with listening device optional) for every other child
- List of phrases to whisper (a different set for each partner)
- Piece of paper to tally correct guesses
- Pen or pencil to make tally marks
- Masking/painter's tape
- Open space for children to spread out
- White piece of paper for each student
- Several sheets of patterned scrapbook paper cut into fourths (you can divide the sheets among the students)
- Washable watercolor paints
- Cup of water/moistened sponge (less messy) for each child
- Paintbrushes
- Glue
- Pens or markers

Memory Verse Activity

Hand Motions

Say: "The Lord said..."

Make an "L" with your thumb and forefinger and cross your chest from left to right. Then wag your pointer finger as if making a point.

"Go out..."

Use your thumb to point behind you.

"and stand on the mountain..."

Jump in place and then make a mountain shape with your hands.

"in the presence of the Lord..."

Spread your arms open wide, look up and sway back forth as if worshipping.

"for the Lord ...

Make an "L" with your thumb and forefinger and cross your chest from left to right.

"is about to pass by....

Make your right hand fly past your body like it is passing by.

"1 Kings..."

Make a number one gesture with your pointer finger and then pretend to put on a crown.

"19:11-12."

Make each number with your fingers (i.e., one, nine, two ones for eleven, and then a one and a two for twelve).

Let's Do The Whisper Challenge!

Below you will find a sample script to help you lead the children through the Whisper Challenge. These are only suggestions. Feel free to make changes.

For an example of this game, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tGU8E5TjgA>

Good morning, everyone. For the next few weeks, we will be facing challenges! How does that make you feel? Do you like challenges? Are challenges something easy or difficult? They can be difficult. We often have challenges to face in our lives that aren't fun to deal with, like starting a new school or learning a new skill in math. But there are also fun challenges like learning how to ride a bike. There is also another kind of challenge that we're going to start with today. Can anybody tell me about another kind of challenge? (Allow children to answer.) What about YouTube challenges? Has anyone ever tried a YouTube challenge? Well, today we're going to try the Whisper Challenge.

Let me explain the rules: In a minute, we will choose partners. For the first round, one of you will be the whisperer and one will be the listener. The listener will be given headphones to make our challenge a little more "challenging." The whisperer will be given a list of phrases to whisper to the listener. Make a tally mark on a piece of paper for each phrase the listener gets right. You'll have five minutes to try to get your partner to guess all of the phrases on your paper. When the five minutes is up, you will switch places. At the end of the game, see which group had the most correct.

Supplies:

- Headphones (with listening device optional) for every other child
- List of phrases to whisper (a different set for each partner)
- Piece of paper to tally correct guesses
- Pen or pencil to make tally marks

List of Phrases:

Partner #1

- "What are you doing here?"
- Elijah on the mountain
- First Kings
- Powerful Wind
- Gentle Whisper

Partner #2

- "Go and stand on the mountain"
- Great and powerful wind
- After the earthquake
- God was not in the fire
- Elijah heard the whisper

Large Group Lesson Discussion

After completing the challenge, lead the following discussion.

What did you think of that challenge? Was it difficult or easy to understand what the person was whispering to you? If you had yelled as loud as a powerful wind or earthquake, do you think it would have been easier to hear the voice of your partner? Of course! But when you couldn't hear your partner very well, you listened and focused on what they were trying to tell you. That's how God wants us to listen to his voice. He wants us to focus intently on hearing him. Let's open our Bibles to 1 Kings 19 and find out what happened when Elijah was listening for God's voice.

Read 1 Kings as a class.

The verses we're focusing on today open with Elijah receiving a word from the Lord. I think this word was not in the form of a voice booming from Heaven, but maybe a thought in Elijah's head and heart. He heard in his mind and heart the Lord asking him why he was there. Elijah tells the Lord all about how faithful he has been even when those around him have not been. God knows Elijah's heart and that he is desperate to hear from Him. So, he tells Elijah to go stand where? (*Allow children to answer.*) Yes, on the mountain. The Lord tells him that He will soon pass by.

While Elijah is standing on the mountain, he experiences some extraordinary things. First, there was a great and powerful wind that tears the mountain apart and shatters the rocks. That is a pretty strong wind if it could do all that. We know God is very powerful, so it would make sense that Elijah might think that the Lord was in this powerful wind. But was He? No.

The next thing Elijah experiences is an earthquake. Have you ever lived through an earthquake or seen a video of what it does to buildings and bridges? It is a great force of nature that causes a lot of damage. So, already Elijah has lived through the mighty wind and then this earthquake. But still the Lord has not spoken to him. I think I would be pretty scared if I had experienced those two things. I might say, "Okay, Lord, I'll catch you next time. I don't want to go through anything else." But did Elijah leave in fear? No. He stayed. He had faith that the Lord would speak to him, even after experiencing the first two things. The next thing Elijah experiences is a fire. If you've ever been near a campfire or a fireplace, you know that it can heat up quickly. I'm sure this was not comfortable for Elijah. And he wasn't standing next to a team of firefighters, so he was probably worried that this fire would overtake him. But still he stayed and waited for God's voice.

Then came a gentle whisper, and this was the Lord. And God gave Elijah specific instructions that he might not have heard if he had not been listening for God's voice. Do you think God was waiting for Elijah to be focused completely before he spoke to him? I think He did. It's just like when we took the Whisper Challenge. We had to tune out all of the noise we were hearing to focus completely on what our partners were trying to tell us. If we do that with the "noise" in the world—like TV, electronics, etc.—we will have a better chance of hearing God's voice.



So, your CHALLENGE for this week is to spend some quiet time listening for God's gentle whisper. You never know what He might be guiding you to do.

Let's go over our memory verse so we can be reminded of how to listen for God's voice.

Memory Verse: "The Lord said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.'" **1 Kings 19:11-12.**

Note: Motions for Memory Verse are provided above page.

Kindergarten to 2nd Grade Small Group or Sunday School Discussion & Prayer

Discussion Questions:

Let's open our Bibles and look at **1 Kings 19:9-18**.

1. Who is waiting to hear God's voice?

Answer: Elijah.

2. What does Elijah tell God when God asks why Elijah is there?

Answer: He tells God how faithful he has been even when others were not.

3. Where does God tell Elijah to go to hear His voice?

Answer: To the top of a mountain.

4. What are the three things that Elijah experiences while he's up on the mountain?

Answer: A powerful wind, an earthquake, and a fire.

5. How do you think Elijah felt when he finally heard God's voice in a gentle whisper?

Answer: He probably felt happy that he was finally able to hear the Lord and feel His presence. He probably felt good that he had been faithful enough to wait on the Lord.

Let's say a prayer to help us remember to listen for God's voice.

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for always wanting to speak to Your children. We pray that we can be still and quiet and listen for Your gentle whisper. Help us to remember to tune out the noise we hear around us and focus on hearing Your words for us. We love You, Lord and offer our praise to You while we wait to hear from You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

3rd to 5th Grade Small Group or Sunday School Discussion & Prayer

Note: Allow children to tell you what they think. Multiple answers could apply.

Discussion Questions:

Let's open our Bibles (or refer to printout) and look at Genesis 3.

1. Why do you think Elijah wanted God to know that he had been faithful even when others had not been?

Answer: Elijah had been through a lot and he wanted to know that God saw that he had been faithful. I think he was also desperate to know how to move forward in a way that would be pleasing to God. So, he wanted God to know that he was ready to receive a word from Him.

2. What does God tell Elijah to do in verse 11?

Answer: He tells him to go stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.

3. What happens to Elijah when he is up on the mountain?

Answer: He experiences a powerful wind, an earthquake, a fire and then a gentle whisper.

4. Why do you think God came to Elijah in a gentle whisper?

Answer: God wanted Elijah to be so focused on his voice through all of the noise of those big natural disasters that he would be able to hear the Lord whispering to him. I think he also wanted to talk to Elijah in a "gentle" way, instead of speaking to him in a loud, booming voice.

5. What does the Lord tell him to do in verses 15-16?

Answer: He tells Elijah to go to the Desert of Damascus and to anoint Hazael, Jehu and Elisha.

Let's say a prayer to help us remember God's love and that it's important to obey.

Prayer:

Dear God, thank You for always wanting to speak to Your children. We pray that we can be still and quiet and listen for Your gentle whisper. Help us to remember to tune out the noise we hear around us and focus on hearing Your words for us. We love You, Lord and offer our praise to You while we wait to hear from You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Hands-on Lesson Review

“Wind, Earthquake, Fire”

Supplies:

- Masking/painter’s tape
- Open space for children to spread out

Directions:

Before you begin, remind children about the three things Elijah experienced on top of the mountain—wind, earthquake, fire. Tell them that this is the basis for the game they will be playing today.

1. Before children arrive, place three lines of masking/painter’s tape on the floor, the length of the room. The lines should be about a foot apart from each other.
2. Tell children that the first line is for wind, the second line is for earthquake and the third line represents fire.
3. Explain that when the game starts, you (or their leader) will be calling out these three things and they will have to choose the right line to be standing on. The trick is, you will be whispering the names, so they will have to listen carefully.
4. Call out wind, earthquake, fire in succession and at different intervals (to try to catch them off guard). When you stop calling out names (wind, earthquake or fire), see who isn’t on the correct line. Those children will be out.
5. Continue the game until there is only one person left or until you run out of time.

Bonus Activity: Torn Paper Mountains with Watercolor Backgrounds

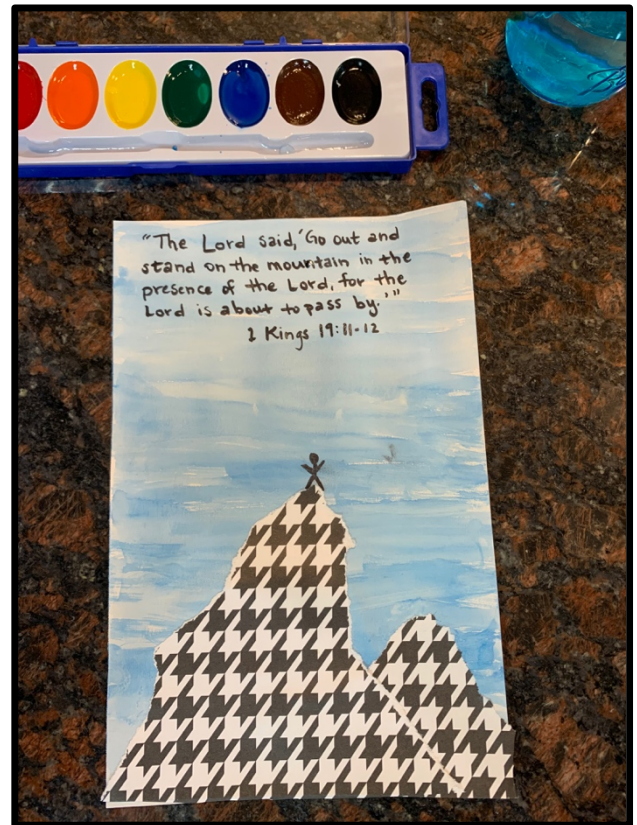
Supplies:

- White piece of paper for each student
- Several sheets of patterned scrapbook paper (you can divide the sheets among the students)
- Washable watercolor paints
- Cup of water/moistened sponge (less messy) for each child
- Paintbrushes
- Glue
- Pens or markers

Directions:

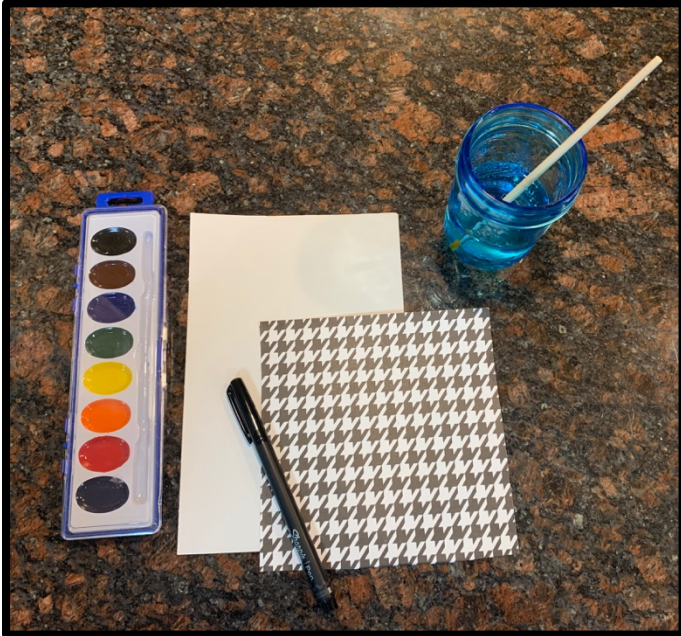
1. Give each child a piece of white paper and a tray of washable watercolor paints with a cup of water (or moistened sponge) and a paintbrush.
2. Have the child paint a watercolor background/sky for the mountains they will create later.
3. Hang or set out the finished background to dry. Write each child's name with pencil so they can find their artwork later on.
4. While the backgrounds are drying, have each child take a square of scrapbook paper. Have the child tear the paper into triangle shapes. These will be the mountains.
5. Once they have created several mountains (enough to fill the bottom of their watercolor paper, set them aside. This might be a good time to step away from the craft and play a game.
6. When the watercolor backgrounds are dry, pass them back out to the correct student.
7. Have each student glue their mountains to their backgrounds.
8. When they are finished, have them write 1 Kings 19:11-12 on their paper with a pen or marker.

Optional: Using pens or markers, have the children decorate their mountains with trees, animals or a picture of what they think Elijah looked like standing on top of the mountain waiting to hear from the Lord.



Mountain Scene Visual Instructions

Step 1



Step 2



Step 3



Step 4



Additional Resources

Song Suggestion (Kindergarten – 2nd Grade):

“Whisper a Prayer”

Link: https://youtu.be/SgC_6GNjGIU

Lyrics:

Whisper a prayer in the morning
Whisper a prayer at noon
Whisper a prayer in the evening
To keep your heart in tune

God answers prayer in the morning
God answers prayer at noon
God answer prayer in the evening
So, keep your heart in tune

Jesus may come in the morning
Jesus may come at noon
Jesus may come in the evening
So, keep your heart in tune

Song Suggestion (3rd – 5th Grade):

“Whisper” by Jason Upton

Link: https://youtu.be/eD_xQNhBlfM

Lyrics:

Jesus when You speak to me
I hope I'm listening to You
Let this heart of mine receive
What is full of grace and truth

Whisper, whisper, whisper in my ear
Tell me words I thought I'd never hear
Show me, show me, show me, what You see
Illuminate what's right in front of me

There's so much more to what we see
Sometimes I'm scared to take it in

Is that You right in front of me?
Are You the stranger or the friend?

Whisper, whisper, whisper in my ear
Tell me words I thought I'd never hear
Show me show me show me what You see
Illuminate what's right in front of me

What you whisper in my ear
Let it find room in my heart
Like a garden let Your words begin to grow
When my faith is prone to fear
Remind me of Your love
Remind me that You'll never let me go
I will not forget
I will not forget
All You've done for me

Whisper, whisper, whisper in my ear
Tell me words I thought I'd never hear
Show me show me show me what You see
Illuminate what's right in front of me



Parent Page

Title: The Whisper Challenge

- **Big Idea:** Many people believe that God's voice is booming down from Heaven like a mighty wind, but often God speaks to us in a whisper.
- **Key Passage: 1 Kings 19:9-18. Elijah's encounter with God.** Elijah is being hunted for being devoted to God. The word of the Lord comes to Elijah and God commands him to go to the mountain to wait for Him. Although he thinks God's voice and presence will be like an earthquake or fire, it is just a whisper.
- **Memory Verse: 1 Kings 19:11-12.** "The Lord said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.'"
- **Challenge:** Spend some quiet time, listening for God's gentle whisper.

Today, we talked about Elijah and how he heard the Lord's voice as a gentle whisper. We used the popular YouTube challenge – [The Whisper Challenge](#) – as a fun way to introduce the children to the idea that God speaks to us when we are listening intently and blocking out the "noise" of the world. Here are some questions you can use to talk to your children about what they learned this week.

1. Who is waiting to hear God's voice?

Answer: Elijah.

2. What does Elijah tell God when God asks why Elijah is there?

Answer: He tells God how faithful he has been even when others were not.

3. Where does God tell Elijah to go to hear His voice?

Answer: To the top of a mountain.

4. What are the three things that Elijah experiences while he's up on the mountain?

Answer: A powerful wind, an earthquake, and a fire.

5. How do you think Elijah felt when he finally heard God's voice in a gentle whisper?

Answer: He probably felt happy that he was finally able to hear the Lord and feel His presence. He probably felt good that he had been faithful enough to wait on the Lord.

Family Activity:

The Whisper Challenge

Check out [the Whisper Challenge - Kids Edition](https://youtu.be/4tGU8E5TjgA) (see <https://youtu.be/4tGU8E5TjgA>) and see how many phrases your family can guess correctly.

Supplies:

- Headphones (with listening device optional) for every other person
- List of phrases to whisper (a different set for each partner)
- Piece of paper to tally correct guesses
- Pen or pencil to make tally marks

Directions:

For the first round, one person will be the whisperer and one will be the listener. The listener will be given headphones to make the challenge a little more “challenging.” The whisperer will be given a list of phrases to whisper to the listener. Make a tally mark on a piece of paper for each phrase the listener gets right. You’ll have five minutes to try to get your partner to guess all of the phrases on your paper. When the five minutes is up, you will switch places. At the end of the game, determine which partner had the most correctly guessed phrases.

Teacher's Tips

I want you to enjoy these lessons as much as the children in your class! So, here are some tips for making the teaching process more enjoyable for all involved.

Why I Have Children Use Their Bibles During Lessons

I have worked in children's ministry for many years, and I have found that children (especially those who are new to Christianity or to the church environment) can sometimes be intimidated to open or use a Bible. So, it is important that you as the leader make the process as simple and engaging as possible. You want children to know the Bible and feel like it is their best friend, not some outdated book that is too hard to understand. That is why it is essential that they use their Bibles when they are learning and discovering during their lessons. Having them search for verses and find truth on their own is going to give them a wonderful foundation to draw upon for years to come.

Tips for Using the Bible

- Make sure there are enough Bibles for every child in case they don't bring theirs to class.
- Once every few weeks (maybe before beginning a new series), go over with the children how to find books in the Bible. Show them the contents page and talk about which books are in the Old Testament and which are in the New Testament.
- I also like to give them helpful hints like Genesis is at the beginning, Revelation is at the end and Psalms are in the middle.
- Have youth group members or leaders stand by to assist younger children during searching activities to assure children can find the verses you'll be covering.

Tips for Engaging Children in These Lessons

- Even though there are detailed discussion questions and questions throughout the Large Group Lesson, feel free to ask questions.
- Try to have materials and crafts ready to go before children arrive so there's not a lot of lag time between activities. This will help those who become easily distracted to stay on task.
- Sit with the children when they are completing their crafts or working on something independently. This might give more introverted children the chance to ask questions or share their hearts more openly.