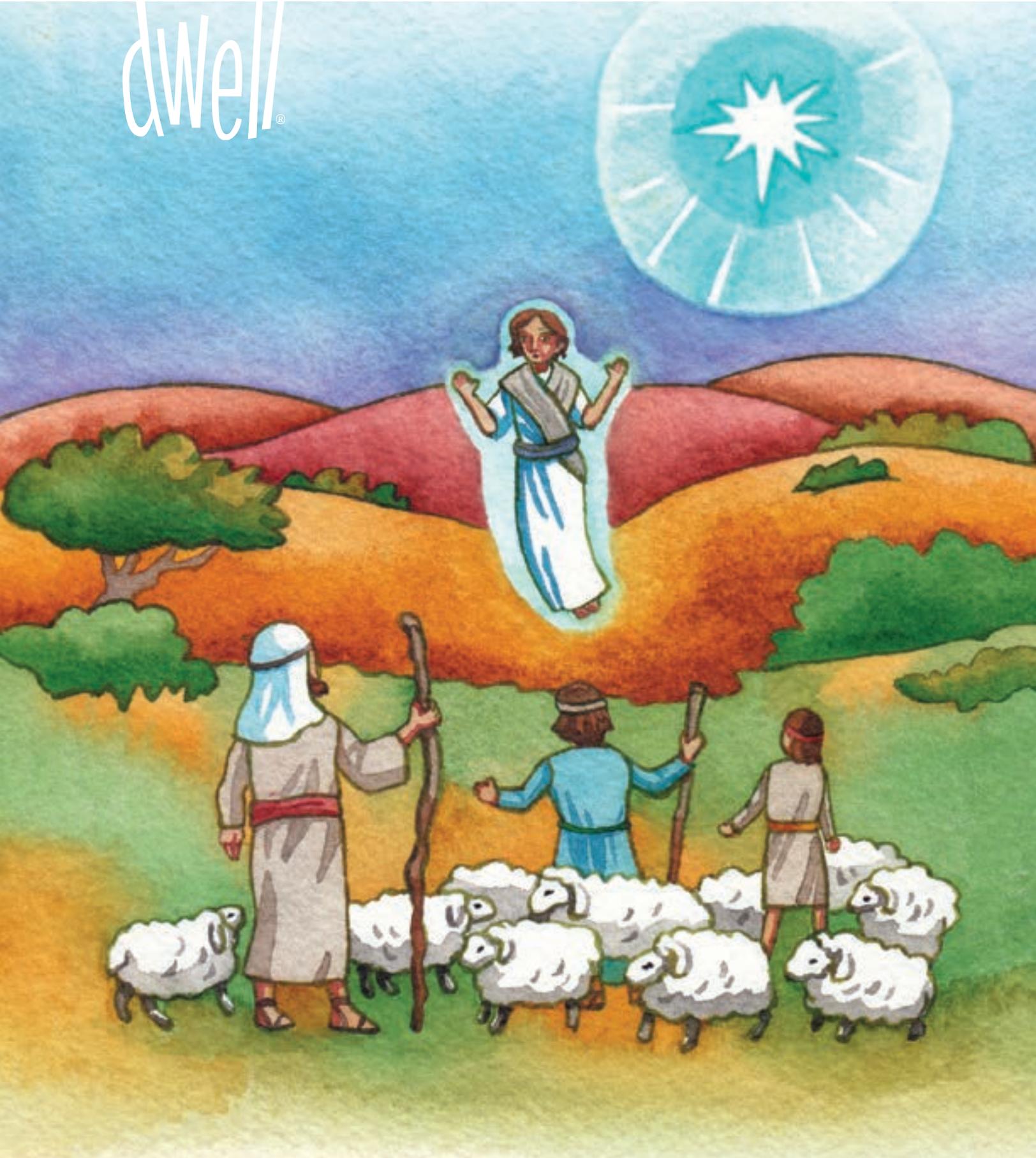


dwell[®]



Dear Family,

I look forward to exploring with your child the remarkable stories from this unit in the weeks to come. At some point in our time together, we will marvel at the miraculous birth of our Savior Jesus through the Christmas session.

In our other sessions we will take a look at dramatic Old Testament stories of thievery, murder, blazing chariots, hope for the hurting, and an amazing healing. Here is what our schedule looks like:

Date: _____ Celebrate Jesus' Birth 

Date: _____ The Stolen Vineyard 

Date: _____ Micaiah Tells the Truth 

Date: _____ Elijah Taken Up to Heaven 

Date: _____ The Widow Who Needed Help 

Date: _____ The Amazing Healing of Naaman 

Our Memory Challenge for this unit is Isaiah 40:29-31. Feel free to talk with your child in the upcoming weeks about how these verses relate to your lives and to learn them together. A great way to make this passage part of your life would be to download the Memory Challenge song "Soar Like Eagles" from our website at faithaliveresources.org. Simply type the song title into the search box.

Yours in Christ,

Memory Challenge

He gives strength to the weary
and increases the power of the weak.
Even youths grow tired and weary,
and young men stumble and fall;
but those who hope in the LORD
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.

—Isaiah 40:29-31, NIV

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He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

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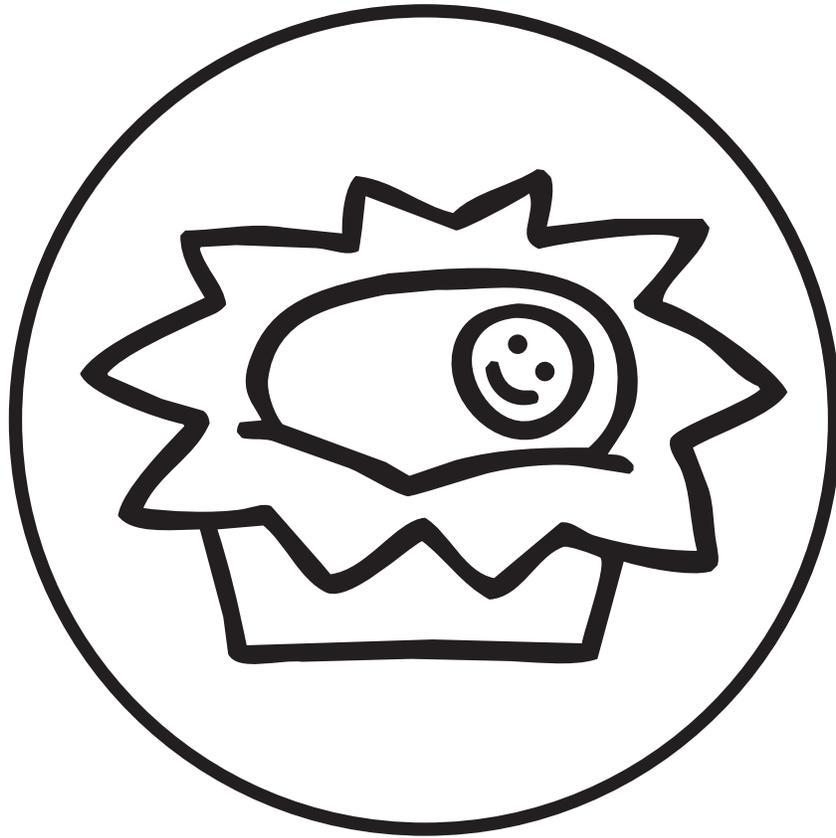
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Marvel Year 2, Unit 3, Christmas Session



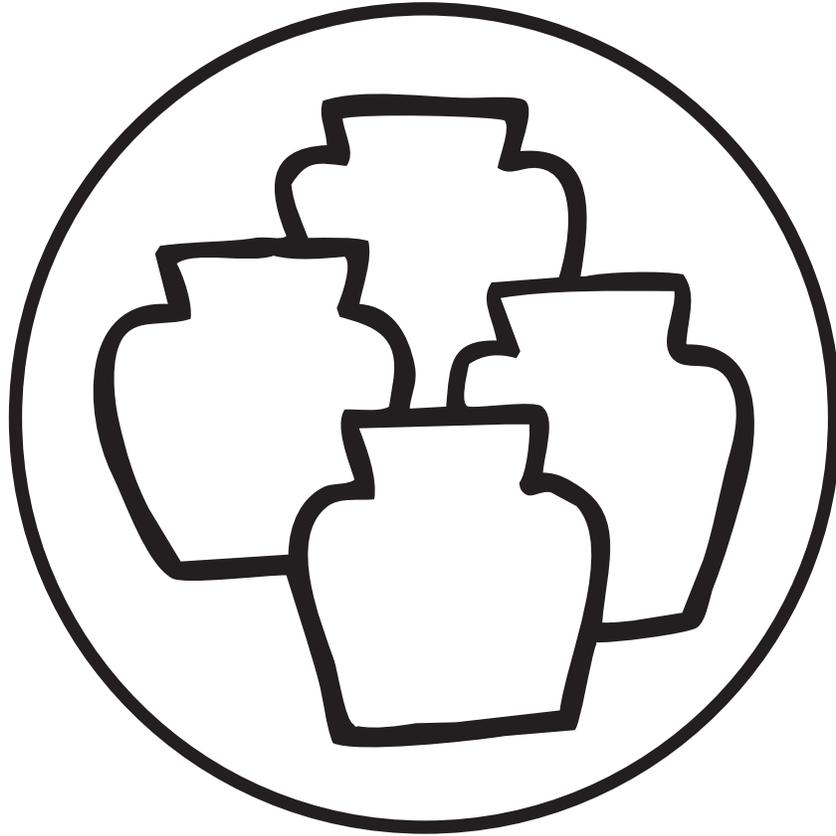
Marvel Year 2, Unit 3, Session 1



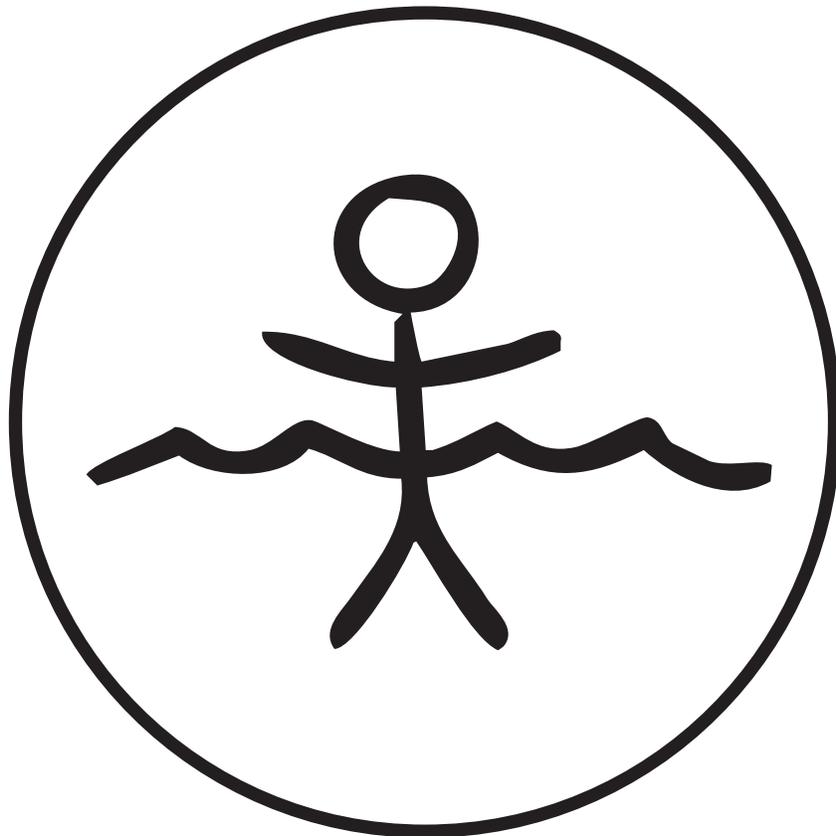
Marvel Year 2, Unit 3, Session 2



Marvel Year 2, Unit 3, Session 3



Marvel Year 2, Unit 3, Session 4



Marvel Year 2, Unit 3, Session 5

For to Us a Child Is Born

Reader 1: Lord Jesus, we come into your presence with great joy today.

Reader 2: We come looking forward to the celebration of your birth.

Everyone: (*very quietly—almost a whisper*) For to us a child is born.

Reader 1: We remember today that you came to earth and were born to Mary and Joseph.

Everyone: (*getting louder*) For to us a child is born.

Reader 2: We remember that you were born in a stable—a place where animals lived.

Everyone: (*getting louder*) For to us a child is born.

Reader 1: We remember that angels came and sang about your birth to shepherds.

Everyone: (*getting louder*) For to us a child is born.

Reader 2: We remember that after the shepherds heard the angels, they ran to see you there in the manger.

Everyone: (*very loudly, with great enthusiasm*) For to us a child is born.

Reader 1: We remember that you were born for us!

Everyone: (*very loudly, with great enthusiasm*) For to us a child is born.

I Was There: A Shepherd's Perspective

Hello, my name is _____, and you won't believe what happened to me and my friends last night!

My friends and I are shepherds, and we were camping out in the fields near Bethlehem, keeping watch over our flocks. I was lying on my back with my hands behind my head, gazing into the night sky. There was a cool breeze, and the stars sparkled so beautifully. The moon was round and bright, and I nearly drifted off to sleep listening to the soft sound of the crickets singing in the grass.

But suddenly it was as light as day! We covered our eyes because we could hardly stand to look at the brightness. It was an angel—one of God's own angels. At first we were terrified—we didn't know what was happening! But the angel spoke to us and said, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that is for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

After the angel spoke, more angels appeared as well—more than any of us could count! Their shining brightness filled the sky brighter than day, and they began to sing:

"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to all on whom his favor rests."

My friends and I all stood speechless, staring at the most amazing sight our eyes had ever seen and listening to the most amazing sound our ears had ever heard. Then, just as quickly as they had come, the angels were gone. It was dark and quiet again, and we started wondering about what had just happened. Did we all see what we thought we saw, or were we somehow all dreaming? Soon my friend Josiah broke the silence: "Let's go see this baby ourselves!"

We all left our sheep and ran to Bethlehem as fast as our feet could carry us. When we got there, we found a young couple named Joseph and Mary. They're the parents of the King, the Messiah who came to save the world from sin! The baby was wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger—just as the angel had told us. We fell to our knees and worshiped that baby—right there in the stable.

And then we ran out and started shouting the news to everyone we met. "We saw angels! We saw the baby! And this world will never be the same again!"

Will you join us? Tell everyone you meet today about the miracle in Bethlehem!

Christmas Taboo Cards

<p>Manger</p> <p>Baby Animals Jesus Mary</p>	<p>Angels</p> <p>Shepherds Night Host Singing</p>	<p>Jesus</p> <p>Savior God Baby Joseph</p>
<p>Mary</p> <p>Joseph Jesus Mother Baby</p>	<p>Shepherds</p> <p>Sheep Watch Night Fields</p>	<p>Messiah</p> <p>Savior King Lord World</p>
<p>King</p> <p>Messiah Savior Lord Jesus</p>	<p>Light</p> <p>Angels Stars Glory Shine</p>	<p>Christmas</p> <p>Holiday Season Winter Jesus</p>
<p>Christmas Tree</p> <p>Lights Star Presents Green</p>	<p>Candy Cane</p> <p>Sweet Red White Sugar</p>	<p>Star</p> <p>Bright Light Sky Night</p>
<p>Christmas Lights</p> <p>Bright Shine Houses Christmas tree</p>	<p>Presents</p> <p>Christmas tree Toys Gifts Bows</p>	<p>Christmas Cookies</p> <p>Dough Frosting Sprinkles Gingerbread</p>
<p>Christmas Carols</p> <p>Songs Music Tunes Instruments</p>	<p>Church</p> <p>Christmas programs Singing Candles People</p>	<p>Joseph</p> <p>Engaged Inn Man Angel</p>

The Stolen Vineyard

SCENE 1

Narrator: In the city of Jezreel lived a man named Naboth. Naboth owned a beautiful vineyard, not too far from King Ahab's palace. King Ahab saw the lush, green land and wanted it for himself. So Ahab said to Naboth . . .

Ahab: That's a nice vineyard you have, Naboth. Since it's so close to my palace, I would like to use it for a vegetable garden. Don't worry, I'll give you another vineyard in its place—an even better one—or I'll pay you whatever the land is worth. Is it a deal?

Naboth: I'm sorry, O king, but I cannot disobey God's commands and sell you my vineyard. This land has belonged to my family for many years. God's law says I can't give it away—that I need to pass it down to others in my family.

Ahab: But . . . you can't refuse me! I'm the king! I'm prepared to pay you whatever you want—name your price!

Naboth: I won't give up the land—not for any amount of money. It's my family's. And it was given to us by God. This, O king, is my final answer.

(Ahab walks away angry.)

SCENE 2

Narrator: King Ahab went home to his palace, sullen and angry because Naboth would not sell him the vineyard. He was so upset that he lay on his bed and refused to eat. His wife, Jezebel, came into his room to see what was bothering him.

Jezebel: Why are you so sullen and angry? Why won't you eat anything?

Ahab: It's because of that selfish, hard-headed Jezreelite named Naboth! I offered to buy his vineyard from him, or to exchange the one he has for another vineyard, but he refused me—me, the king.

Jezebel: Is this how you act as king of Israel? You're the king—you can do whatever you want. Cheer up! Eat something! I'll get you Naboth's vineyard.

Narrator: So Jezebel got right to work. She wrote letters in Ahab's name to the elders and nobles who lived in Naboth's city. She signed the letters with Ahab's name:

Jezebel: *(pretending to write a letter)* Dear elders and nobles, this is what I want you to do: Declare a day of fasting and seat Naboth in an important place among the people in the city. Then seat two false witnesses across from him and tell them to spread lies about Naboth, saying that he has cursed God and the king. These are the orders of Ahab, king of Israel.

(Jezebel seals the letter, laughing to herself.)

Naboth will be sorry he ever refused my husband!

Narrator: The elders and nobles of the city did as Jezebel had instructed, and Naboth was found guilty and stoned to death. When word reached Jezebel that Naboth was dead, she said to Ahab,

Jezebel: Go and take the land that Naboth refused to sell you. He's dead. There's no one left to say no to you.

(laughing to herself)

Ahab: Dear, you are a genius! What would I do without you? I can almost taste the vegetables from my garden already!

(Jezebel and Ahab exit.)

SCENE 3

Narrator: Ahab went to claim Naboth's vineyard for himself.

(Ahab enters and admires the vineyard, pretending to touch plants, chuckling to himself.)

Narrator: Ahab went to claim Naboth's vineyard for himself. While he was admiring the land, the prophet Elijah came to meet him.

(Elijah approaches Ahab in the vineyard.)

Ahab: *(startled to see Elijah)* So you have found me, my enemy! What do you want with me now?

Elijah: This is what the Lord says, Ahab. You murdered Naboth and stole his property. Because you have done this, I will destroy you! I will bring disaster on you and your family—even your wife Jezebel will be killed for the evil she has done!

Ahab *(tears his clothes and falls on his knees)*

Narrator: Ahab tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, a garment used for mourning, and did not eat any food. He was terribly sorry for the evil he and his wife had committed, and he went around humbly before the Lord. Because God saw how sorry Ahab was for his sin, he decided not to destroy Ahab's family while the king was still alive. God would wait until Ahab's son became king.

CHARACTERS

Narrator

Ahab

Jezebel

Elijah

Naboth

Challenge

Choose one of the following activities to respond to the story of Ahab and Naboth.

Confess It

Pretend you are Ahab. How do you feel about what you did? Write down your thoughts. (You may be asked to read them to the group.)

Picture It

Choose the scene in the story you think is most important. Draw a picture of it and prepare to tell the group about your drawing.

Report It

Pretend you are a news reporter interviewing some of Naboth's neighbors after Ahab has returned to claim the vineyard. Prepare to perform your interview for the group. What did the neighbors see? What do they think?

Imagine It

Imagine that Elijah is in your own city today. What message would he bring about injustice in your city, state/province, or nation?

Story Cards

Scene 1



Ahab: Sell me your vineyard for a price.

Naboth: I'm sorry, I cannot disobey the Lord.

Scene 2



Jezebel: What's bothering you? Why won't you eat?

Scene 3



Jezebel: This ought to take care of Naboth!

Scene 4



Naboth: No, please—you are mistaken! No!

Story Cards

Scene 5



Jezebel: Go and get your vineyard—Naboth is dead!

Scene 6



Elijah: Because you have destroyed the life of Naboth, the Lord will destroy your life!

Scene 7



Scene 8



Because Ahab felt sorry for his sins, God did not bring disaster on his family during his lifetime.

That's Not Right!

Melodrama Scenarios

Scenario

A kid steals candy bars from a grocery store.

Scenario

Kids in school laugh and make fun of a new student who drops his books in the hallway.

Scenario

Someone beats up another person in the street.

Scenario

Someone cheats on a test.

Scenario

A group of people walk out of a restaurant without paying for their meal.

Scenario

Some kids on a basketball team pick a fight with the members on the opposing team.

Micaiah Tells the Truth: A Readers' Theater

Reader 1: The people of Israel enjoyed a time of peace with no war or fighting for three years. But then King Ahab remembered that Israel had lost some land to the nation of Aram. He called a meeting of his officials.

King Ahab: Why haven't we done anything to recapture Ramoth Gilead from the king of Aram? It's our land, and we should fight to get it back.

Reader 2: A short time later, Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, came to visit King Ahab.

King Ahab: I'm going to fight the king of Aram to get my land back. Will you go with me? Your people are just like my people, and anything I have is yours as well. You know that I would help if you needed *me*. What do you say?

King Jehoshaphat: Of course I'll go with you. My horses and soldiers are ready to join in the fight. But don't you think you should ask the Lord's advice first?

Reader 1: So King Ahab called together about four hundred of his own prophets who always told him what he wanted to hear.

King Ahab: Is it a good idea for me to go to war against the king of Aram?

False Prophets: Yes, go to war! The Lord will help you win!"

Reader 1: King Jehoshaphat felt a little uneasy.

King Jehoshaphat: Isn't there a *real* prophet of the Lord here that we could ask?"

King Ahab: Well, there is one more prophet I know of, but I hate him very much. He never has anything good to say about me. His name is Micaiah.

King Jehoshaphat: Well, it doesn't hurt to ask him.

Reader 2: So King Ahab sent messengers to bring Micaiah to them. While they waited, King Ahab and King Jehoshaphat sat on their thrones near the city gate with Ahab's prophets. The prophets continued to tell Ahab what he wanted to hear.

False Prophets: Attack Ramoth Gilead, and you will be victorious!

Reader 1: One of the prophets named Zedekiah made large iron horns and showed them to the kings.

Zedekiah: You will use these horns to fight and defeat the Arameans—you will win!

Reader 2: Meanwhile, Ahab's messenger found Micaiah.

Messenger: King Ahab wants to know what you think about going to war against the king of Aram. All the other prophets have been saying that the Lord will help Ahab win the war. You should agree with the other prophets and say the same thing.

Micaiah: I can only tell the king what the Lord wants me to say.

Reader 1: Micaiah arrived at the place where the two kings were waiting and stood before them.

King Ahab: Tell us what you think, Micaiah. Should we go to war against the Arameans?"

Micaiah: (*smirking*) Attack, and you'll win a great victory.

Reader 2: But Ahab could tell that Micaiah was mocking the other prophets.

King Ahab: Tell me the truth, Micaiah. What does the Lord *really* say?

Reader 1: Micaiah took a deep breath.

Micaiah: The truth is, if you go to war, you will be killed and your soldiers will be left without a leader.

Reader 2: Ahab turned angrily to Jehoshaphat.

King Ahab: See what I mean? This prophet always gives me bad news!

Micaiah: King Ahab, all of your other prophets are lying to you. The Lord has made them lie so that you will not believe the truth. But the truth is, O king, that you will *not* defeat the Arameans!

Reader 1: Once the people heard this, Zedekiah went up to Micaiah and slapped him on the face.

Zedekiah: How dare you claim that the Lord has spoken to you and not to me!

Reader 2: King Ahab waved his hands in disgust at Micaiah.

King Ahab: Take this imposter to prison and give him nothing but bread and water until I return safely!

Reader 1: Ahab's men grabbed Micaiah to take him away.

Micaiah: If you return safely, then the Lord has not spoken through me . . . but mark my words, everyone!

Reader 2: So King Ahab and King Jehoshaphat ignored Micaiah's warning and went out to Ramoth Gilead. But Ahab was still worried about the words of Micaiah. And he was worried about the soldiers of Aram who would be trying to kill him—the *king*! He told Jehoshaphat his cowardly plan.

King Ahab: I'll go to battle in disguise, and you wear your royal robes. That way, no one will know where I am in the battle, and I will be safe.

Reader 1: So Ahab disguised himself as a common soldier and went into battle.

Reader 2: Meanwhile, the king of Aram gave the order to his soldiers not to fight anyone except the king of Israel. When the soldiers saw Jehoshaphat in his royal robes, they thought he was Ahab, and they went after him to kill him.

Reader 1: But Jehoshaphat cried out until the Aramean soldiers saw that he wasn't Ahab.

King Jehoshaphat: I'm Jehoshaphat, not Ahab!

Reader 2: Even though no one noticed Ahab in his disguise, a stray arrow hit him between the chinks or cracks of his armor during the battle. He cried out to his chariot driver.

King Ahab: Stop! Get me out of the fighting—I've been hit!

Reader 1: For the rest of the day Ahab sat propped up in his chariot and painfully watched the battle. Later that night he died, just as the Lord had said he would.

Reader 2: Once word spread that the king was dead, all the soldiers returned to their homes.

Reader 1: The battle was lost, just as Micaiah had prophesied.

Dare to Share

Scenario 1:

You and everyone else at your table group sees Makayla take a five-dollar bill from the teacher's desk. Makayla is your friend, and you don't want her to get mad at you for telling the teacher. When the teacher asks everyone at your table who took the money, everyone lies and says they don't know.

What will you say? What might happen if you tell the truth?

Scenario 2:

Kids make fun of a new student in school because he is from another country and speaks with an accent. Everyone laughs at him behind his back—including your friends.

What will you say? What might happen if you tell the truth and defend the new student?

Scenario 3:

You have a good friend who's been really nice and helpful to you. But she has started spreading rumors and gossiping about others in your class. She wonders why people are always mad at her and don't want to be her friends. You know she will get upset with you if you tell her the truth.

What will you say? What might happen if you tell the truth?

Scenario 4:

In the cafeteria at school, Tom knocks over Mary's tray of food on purpose. A teacher comes by and accuses Mary of not being careful. Tom smirks and walks away. After school you ask Tom why he had to be so mean to Mary at lunch, and Tom threatens to knock over your lunch next time if you tell a teacher.

What will you say? What might happen if you tell the truth?

Scenario 5:

You are in a video game store at the mall with your friends. You see one of your buddies sneak a video game and hide it under his coat.

What will you say? What might happen if you tell the truth?

Scenario 6:

As you walk to school you see your neighbor Nick skipping school with some of his friends. When school is over, Nick's mom asks if you have seen him lately.

What will you say? What might happen if you tell the truth?

Elijah Travels to Heaven

Greetings! My name is Elisha, and I'm a prophet.

Don't confuse me with Elijah. Our names are a lot alike, but he was my master. I learned so much from him. I think he'll always be remembered in Israel as one of the greatest prophets ever. Were any of you there when he did some of his miracles—or did you hear about them?

Invite the group to respond. If they seem unsure, prompt them with a question like, “Did you hear about the great show on Mt. Carmel?”

When Elijah told me and the other prophets that he was going to leave us soon, I couldn't believe it. How would we ever know what to do without him? He told us it was time for him to be with God.

When the day came, he tried to say goodbye to me, but I didn't want to leave him—not for a minute. If he was really going to go with God, I wanted to see it happen and be with him until the last second.

So I was still with him when we reached the Jordan River. The other prophets were nearby too, but they were following us at a distance.

As we traveled to the Jordan River, something amazing happened. Elijah took off his cloak, rolled it up, and hit the water with it—and can you guess what happened?

Give the group a chance to make suggestions.

The water parted. That's right—it rolled up into two walls, leaving a dry path across the river. I was amazed! I knew at that moment—more than ever before—that Elijah was a great man of God. I knew the story about another great leader whom God used to part the waters, of course. Do you remember his name?

Give the group time to mention Moses. If none of them knows that story, tell them that this would be a great story for them to hear another day!

As we were crossing between those walls of water, I was wondering to myself, “Will I ever be as great a prophet as this man?” And then Elijah spoke. He asked, “What would you like me to do for you before I am taken from you?” This was my chance. And I knew at that moment what I wanted more than anything else.

Invite the group to guess what that might have been.

I wanted Elijah's spirit to be with me, so that when I took his place as prophet God would give me power to help others as Elijah had done. But I didn't want just a small portion of his spirit—I wanted a double portion! So that's what I asked for.

Elijah seemed surprised by my boldness. “You have asked for a difficult thing,” he responded, stroking his beard as though in deep thought. And then he said something really strange and frightening: “If you see me when the Lord takes me to heaven, your request will be granted. Otherwise, it will not.”

What did he mean by that? Was God going to come here? To us?

Ask the group if they can guess what Elijah was talking about.

All I could do was remain hopeful that God would allow me to see my master taken from this earth. I was excited about becoming the next prophet to speak the words of God to the people of Israel, but I was also really sad that Elijah was leaving me behind.

As we continued to walk along, something amazing and terrifying and totally awesome happened. A chariot and horses of blazing fire suddenly appeared in front of us, and in a whirlwind Elijah was gone! Just like that! One minute Elijah was with me and the next he was taken up into heaven. Everything happened so quickly that I barely had time to think. I was stunned and amazed! I shouted “My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!”

When I stopped gazing up to where he had disappeared, I noticed Elijah's cloak on the ground before me—the same one he had used to part the Jordan River. I knew my master was gone forever. Now I wondered if what he had promised would come true.

Ask the group whether they remember what Elijah had promised.

So I picked up the cloak, went back to the bank of the Jordan, and struck the river as Elijah had done. And the river parted—just as it had for him! At that moment I knew my request had been granted. I was now the prophet of Israel. And God's power would be with me—just as it had been with my master Elijah.

The other prophets saw me from a distance and came running. I told them what had happened, and they begged me to send out a search party to look for Elijah. But I told them no—because I knew where Elijah was. Do you?

Give group members an opportunity to respond.

You're right, Elijah was *nowhere on earth*—he was in heaven. And I am on a mission to continue the work of my master Elijah, the prophet of God.

Story Scenes

Scene 1: Elijah and Elisha walk together.

Scene 2: Elijah parts the Jordan with his cloak.

Scene 3: Elisha and Elijah walk through the dry riverbed.

Scene 4: A fiery chariot with horses swoops down and picks up Elijah.

Scene 5: Elisha picks up Elijah's cloak.

Scene 6: Elisha parts the Jordan and walks through it without getting wet.

Scene 7: Elisha meets with the other prophets.

A Family in Trouble

2 Kings 4:1-7 (based on *The Message*)

When you see a  talk about the question with your group. When you see a  write down your thoughts.

One day the wife of a man from the guild of the prophets called out to Elisha, “Your servant my husband is dead. You well know what a good man he was, devoted to God. And now the man to whom he was in debt is on his way to collect by taking my two children as slaves.”

 : **How do you suppose the woman was feeling as she approached Elisha?**

 : **Think of a time when you felt scared or desperate. What did you do?**

Elisha said, “I wonder how I can be of help. Tell me, what do you have in your house?”

“Nothing,” she replied. Then she added, “Well, I do have a little oil.” “Here’s what you do,” said Elisha. “Go up and down the street and borrow jugs and bowls from all your neighbors. And not just a few—all you can get. Then come home and lock the door behind yourself and your sons. Pour oil into each container; when each is full, set it aside.”

 : **How do you suppose Elisha’s request sounded to the widow? Why?**

 : **Think of a time when you or someone you know were asked to do something that felt strange or impossible. What happened?**

The widow did what Elisha told her. She locked the door behind herself and her sons; as they brought the containers they had gathered to her, she filled them. When all the jugs and bowls were full, she said to one of her sons, “Another jug, please.” He replied, “That’s it. There are no more jugs.” Just like that, the supply of oil stopped.

 : **I wonder what the widow and her sons were saying to each other while this was going on.**

 : **I wonder if God has ever answered one of your prayers or one of your family members’ prayers in an amazing way.**

She went and told the story to the man of God. He said, “Go, sell the oil and make good on your debts. Live, both you and your sons, on what’s left.”

 : **How do you suppose the neighbors and the people to whom she owed money reacted when they found out that the widow had so much oil to sell? What might they have said to each other?**

 : **Why do you think Elisha wanted this miracle to be done in secret?**

You Are There

Scene 1: You overhear your mother talking to someone about the money she owes.

Tell us a little about what life is like for you and your mother and brother. Do you have enough to eat?

You hear your mom talking to a neighbor about the debts she can't pay and what might happen. What does she say?

Scene 2: Your mother talks to Elisha.

What does he look like?

What does she say to him?

How do you feel when you hear her mention the word "slaves"? What do you say to your brother?

Scene 3: You and your family do what Elisha tells you to do.

What did Elisha command you, your brother, and your mom to do?

How do you feel going to the neighbors' houses and asking for jars?

When you get back home and your mom locks the door, what do you expect is going to happen?

Scene 4: Your mom begins pouring oil, and you watch the results.

Tell us what the scene in your kitchen looked like. How many containers did you have?

When your mom started pouring, what did you think?

When the jars started filling up, what did you think?

What did the room smell like?

What did the expressions on your mom's and brother's faces look like?

Scene 5: Your family talks to Elisha.

What does your mom's voice sound like as she tells Elisha what has happened?

What does he tell her to do?

How do you think this will change your life?

I Wonder Cards

I wonder what the widow's husband did to owe so much money to the debt collector.

I wonder how the widow's boys felt knowing that they were probably going to be sold into slavery.

I wonder how Elisha felt when the widow shared her situation with him.

I wonder how old the widow's boys were.

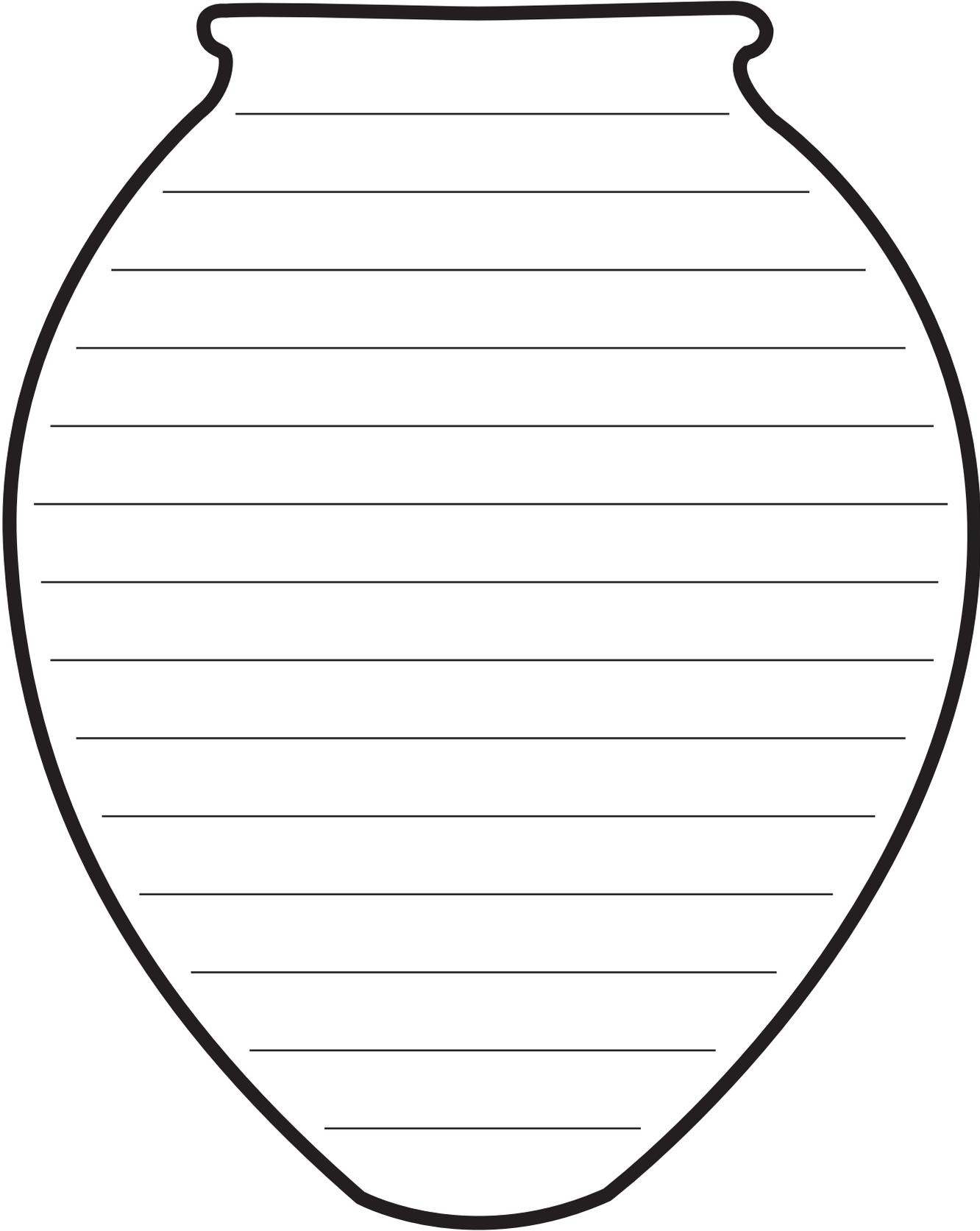
I wonder what the widow's neighbors thought when she and her boys asked to borrow their jars.

I wonder how the widow felt when she kept pouring the oil into jars and it didn't run out.

I wonder how many jars the widow filled with oil.

I wonder what the debt collector thought when the widow brought all the money to pay her husband's debt.

Thank You Jar



The Amazing Healing of Naaman

The King of Aram

I'm the king of Aram—so you can call me “Your Majesty.” Maybe you've never heard of Aram, but I want you to know that we are a big and powerful country. We win almost every battle we take part in. I'd like to take all the credit for that, but, to be honest, my army commander, Naaman, has a lot to do with those wins.

And that's where my big problem comes in. You see, Naaman is sick—and it isn't something simple like a cold or the flu. Naaman is *very* sick with a disease called leprosy. It's a horrible disease. Already Naaman has sores and patches of white on his skin. Soon he'll lose feeling in his toes and fingers. Even worse, all the soldiers think leprosy is very contagious, so they don't want to get anywhere near Naaman anymore.

So I'm worried. What if some other nation attacks Aram? I won't have my army commander to lead us in the battle. And we might lose . . . I'd give anything to find someone who could make Naaman well again.

The Israelite Girl

My name is Sara, and I'm a slave. That's right, *a slave!* The soldiers from Aram captured me from my home in Israel—stole me away from my family—and took me to Aram to work for Naaman and his wife.

As you can imagine, I was pretty scared and sad for a long time, but Naaman and his wife have been good to me. They treat me almost like a member of their family. So I feel really bad about what's happened to them. Maybe you haven't heard, but Naaman has leprosy. And no one—none of his friends or family members or soldiers—wants to be around him anymore. Leprosy is really scary because it kills people.

I was thinking of that scary disease last night when I remembered something. In Israel there is a holy man—a man my parents and others believe is very close to God. His name is Elisha—and he may be just what my master, Naaman, needs.

No one is going close to Naaman right now, as I told you, but I think I'll tell my mistress about Elisha. Maybe Naaman will go to Samaria to visit him. And maybe Elisha will do another miracle so that people—even the people of Aram—will know that the God of Israel is the one true God.

King of Israel

I am the king of Israel—that's right, another “Your Majesty.” Today I have a problem. I got a really strange message from the king of Aram. He wants *me* to cure the commander of his army, Naaman, from leprosy. And Naaman is waiting right now in the palace courtyard. Who does he think I am, anyway? I'm a king, not a miracle worker!

I've been sitting here all day wondering what to do. If I do nothing, I'll probably have a war on my hands! And that's the last thing I need.

Just an hour ago, though, something wonderful happened! A messenger from Elisha showed up. I haven't always appreciated Elisha because sometimes he says things I don't agree with, but this time I was very glad to see him. Elisha has solved my problem! He says if I send Naaman to him, God will heal him.

I gave the news to Naaman, and now he's on his way. What a relief! He's away from my palace. Now I just hope that God will really heal Naaman, just as Elisha has said he would. If that doesn't happen, I'm afraid there will be war!

Naaman

Greetings. I am Naaman. You may have heard of me—the guy with leprosy. Before I got the disease everything was going great for me. Every time I'd lead our army into battle we'd win. The king heaped honors on me. I was rich. And then—*leprosy*.

Can you imagine how awful it is to have this disease? No one wants to be around me—not even my children or my wife. And every week I find new sores on my body.

But my wife had some good news for me a few days ago. She said that our slave girl, Sara, told her there's a prophet in Israel who can heal me. Call me crazy, but at this point I'll try anything.

When I got to the palace of the king of Israel, I didn't know what to expect. And no one there really seemed to know what to do with me. But then they gave me directions to Elisha's house. As I rode in my chariot through the streets of Samaria, I started to feel hopeful for the first time in years. Maybe I can be healed!

When I got to the prophet's house, though, fully expecting to talk face to face with Elisha, I got a big surprise—and not a pleasant one. He sent his servant out to talk to me—to *me*, one of the most important people in Aram. And the servant's message was even more surprising. He told me that if I wanted to be healed, I had to wash myself seven times in the muddy old Jordan River.

I must admit that, at first, I was furious. I came all this way to have a man I've never even met tell me to wash seven times in that dirty river? There are rivers much cleaner where I live—why should I listen to *this* man? I was expecting Elisha to come out and greet me, wave his hands around a few times, and presto! I'd be healed. I was so angry I wished I had never even bothered to come!

But my servants urged me to do what he said. So I did. I dipped into the cold, muddy waters of the Jordan River not once, not twice, but *seven* times. After the seventh time my sores were gone! I was healed! Now I know that the God of Israel is the one true God!

Gehazi (*head bowed in shame*)

I am—or was—a servant of the prophet Elisha. I have learned a very hard lesson through the healing of Naaman. Let me tell you how my own selfishness and greed got me into a lot of trouble. God healed Naaman, just as Elisha had said he would. Naaman was so overjoyed he came back to repay Elisha for his miraculous healing. But Elisha refused all the gifts Naaman offered. Why? Because Elisha wanted Naaman to know that the *Lord* had healed Naaman and that God's healing couldn't be bought with gold and fine clothing.

Somehow, though, as Naaman rode off in his chariot, I couldn't get all those wonderful gifts out of my mind. I convinced myself that Elisha was wrong. After all, Naaman wasn't an Isrealite—he was an Aramean, and in the past the Arameans have fought wars against us! So it seemed only right to me that Naaman should pay at least something for our God's services.

I devised a plan. When Elisha went back into the house, I ran after Naaman and caught up with him. I lied and told Naaman that two young prophets had just come to visit and that they needed some money and clothes. I took the things Naaman gave me and hid them in my master's house. I didn't think anyone would ever find out what I did—but I was dead wrong.

Elisha (*shaking his head*)

I was really sad to discover what my servant Gehazi had done. How did he think that I would not discover his deceitfulness? Doesn't he know that God reveals many things to me—that God would show me what Gehazi was doing, even as he ran to catch up with Naaman?

When I confronted Gehazi about his trip to follow Naaman, he lied to me and told me he hadn't gone anywhere. And that really made me angry. Didn't he realize I had refused these gifts so that the people in Aram and other nations around us would see the power of the one true God?

God was disappointed in Gehazi too. And as Gehazi left my house, something terrible happened. The disease of Naaman covered his body! That's right—those same awful sores and patches of whiteness appeared on the skin of the liar Gehazi.

Our God is powerful. He can heal the most terrible diseases. But he is also righteous—and he will punish those who disobey him. Gehazi learned that lesson the hard way.



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