Sunday School from Home

August 30, 2020

This week our story of the prophet Elijah continues in 1 Kings 18:20-39. After three years of drought, God sends Elijah back to King Ahab to pray for rain, and to demonstrate that Baal is a false God.

* Read the Bible passage from your Bible or online. Older kids and adults, read all of chapter 18 for greater context. For younger kids, focus on the “competition” between Baal and God.
* An essential part of this story is the altar. Make sure children understand what an altar is and what its purpose is in a worship space. Where can you find an altar in our church?
* Use whatever materials you have around the house to help children build an altar: consider couch cushions, pillows, blocks, or go outdoors and use rocks or bricks. If you have enough, use paper grocery bags to make pretend stones: stuff with crumpled newspaper, plastic bags, or other materials, then fold down the tops and secure with tape. Challenge your kids to build different designs – who can build the tallest altar, the strongest altar, etc.
* Another important element of the story is fire. Consider the importance of fire in Elijah’s time – what was it used for? What purpose did it serve in religious rituals? Big kids and adults – do a little research on the significance of fire in Biblical times or in other world religions. Why do you think fire is so universally important?
* Use crepe paper streamers or strips of colored paper to make fire streamers – twist together red, yellow, and orange streamers and secure them with a piece of string or tape. Read the Bible passage again and ask children to wave their streamers every time they hear the word “fire.”
* This is the perfect time of year to have an outdoor fire (safely of course!). If you have an outdoor fireplace or fire pit or grill, consider lighting it while you talk about the events in the story for this week. You can even make it extra fun with a camping theme – roast hot dogs over the fire for dinner, and don’t forget the s’mores for dessert!
* Last week we considered the importance of rain and water. If you did not already, talk to kids about why water is so important for life on earth, and why a drought was especially worrying during Biblical times. If you did not make time for water play with a baby pool or tub of water outside, do it now! If the kids aren’t impressed with your selection of cups and spoons for playing in the water, challenge them to find some other safe objects around the house to play with in the water.
* Try playing a simple relay game with water. Put equal amounts of water in to two different tubs or bowls, and put empty bowls across the yard from these. Give each child or each team an identical cup. At your signal have them take one cupful at a time from the full bowl to the empty one. The team that gets the most water in the bowl in a set amount of time is the winner. Kids might especially enjoy competing against their parents with this game. ☺
* If it has been a while since you played with sidewalk chalk, ask your kids to draw a picture of the fire with chalk. For extra fun, use the garden hose to “put out” the fire. Talk about how this is usually the way of things: we use water to put out a fire. But in the story, God’s fire is more powerful than water!