

YEAR C | QUARTER 4

5

Running With God

Grace in Action
God helps us understand grace.

POWER TEXT

"The Lord makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand" (Psalm 37:23, 24).

KEY REFERENCES

- 1 Kings 19:15-18
- 2 Kings 2:1, 11
- Matthew 17:1-5
- *Prophets and Kings,* chap. 17, pp. 217-228
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 5, pp. 55-60
- student story on page 62 of this guide.

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 11, Growing in Christ
- No. 17, Spiritual Gifts and Ministries
- No. 9, The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that even when they feel they've failed God, He is there to help.
- **Feel** assured by His grace and ready to go forward in their relationship with God.
- **Respond** by praising and serving God.

POWERPOINT

God forgives our failures and helps us join Him in His work.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Elijah is amazed and awed when God speaks to him. He returns to Israel and preaches and teaches, working for the Lord and training Elisha to follow him when he's gone. One day God takes Elijah to heaven. When Jesus is on this earth, Elijah and Moses come to comfort Him and remind Him of all the people He is going to be dying for.

This is a lesson about grace.

Even when we take our eyes off God, He doesn't take His eyes off us. He forgives our failures and picks us up and helps us join Him in His work again.

Teacher Enrichment

"Christ will never abandon those for whom He has died. We may leave Him and be overwhelmed with temptation, but Christ can never turn from one for whom He has paid the ransom of His own life. Could our spiritual vision be quickened, we should see souls bowed under oppression and burdened with grief, pressed as a cart beneath sheaves, and ready to die in discouragement. We should see angels flying quickly to the aid of these tempted ones, forcing back the hosts of evil that encompass them, and placing their feet on the sure foundation. The battles waging between the two armies are as real as those fought by the armies of this world, and on the issue of the spiritual conflict eternal destinies depend" (*Prophets and Kings,* p. 176).

How do I feel knowing that angels are waiting to fly to my aid? What does it mean to me that Christ will never abandon me?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the readiness activity of your choice. »

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. The Wall*	Bibles
		B. Broken Connection	Bibles, telephone/cell phone
* Prayer and Praise	15-20	See page 57. Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, rainbow box, world map, pushpins
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story	
		Experiencing the Story	Bibles, art supplies, Bible-time map, paper, pencils
		Exploring the Bible	Bibles, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Scenarios*	
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Let's Get Together*	handout (p. 157), pens
* Closing		A. Prayer and Closing Comments B. Reminder to Parents C. Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:
- □ Bibles

The Wall

Ask a volunteer to leave the classroom and to wait outside for a few moments, until called to return. Close the door behind him/her. Ask another volunteer to go to the wall that is next to the door and try to communicate with the student that is outside, on the other side of the wall, without yelling or using too loud a voice.

Debriefing

Then ask: **How is making a wall similar to your relationship with God sometimes?** (Let students explore different possibilities. Sometimes we make a wall and hide from God. Sometimes it feels as if there is a wall between us and Him. I don't understand how to have a relationship with God, etc.) **How was trying to break through the wall similar to your relationship with God sometimes?** (Again, encourage students to explore possible applications. God is always trying to break through to us. We can choose to seek the Lord with all our hearts and break through whatever is keeping us from Him. I don't want anything between me and God.)

Say: **We build different kinds of walls in our lives. Sometimes we build walls between us and God, perhaps because we have tried to run from God and hide. Or we feel as if we have failed Him somehow. Let's find and read our power text, Psalm 37:23, 24.** (Allow time for students to find and read the text with you.)

"The Lord makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; through he may stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand" (Psalm 37:23, 24).

Say: **Today we want to focus on how to get past that "walled off" place in our relationship with God. We will study about what happened to Elijah after he had run away from God. We want to focus on the fact that**

God forgives our failures and helps us join Him in His work.

B

YOU NEED:
- □ Bibles
- □ telephone/cell phone

Broken Connection

Say: **Excuse me, I have to make a quick phone call.** Use a phone or pull out your cell phone and thumb through it, evidently searching for a phone number. Say: **It's ringing.**

Say into the phone: **Hello, Lisa? Oh, this is her sister? Well, this is** [your name] **from** [your church] **calling. I wanted to talk with her.** Pause. **I see. She's attending a missionaries' retreat, you say? Well, could I leave a message? Hello? Helloooo?**

To the group, say: **I was disconnected!**

Hang up the phone. Ask: **How did watching my phone call make you feel? How is that like or unlike your relationship with God? Explain.**

Say: **God is always near us, but sometimes our relationship with Him can seem like a "bad connection."** At this point, ask the students to form a circle so that each person's right shoulder is toward the center. Stand in the center of the circle, and instruct students to move in as close as possible.

Say: **Let's imagine that this circle you've formed represents your connection with God. You may have had a time in your life when you felt this close to Him (maybe you do now), as close as you can get. I am going to read some situations. Follow the instructions as they apply to you. Be honest.**

Read these instructions slowly:

1. If you argued with anyone this week, take a step away from the center.

2. If you seriously thought about cheating on a homework assignment or test this week, take a step away from the center.

3. If you read your Bible every day this week, take one step closer to the center.

4. If you talked about someone behind their back this week, take a step away from the center.

5. If you prayed at least three times this week, take a step closer to the center.

6. If you talked about your faith with a non-Christian friend this week, move one step closer to the center.

7. If you didn't, take a step away from the center.

Debriefing

Ask participants to notice how close or far from the center they ended up, then gather everyone again. Ask: **How did you feel when you had to admit you had done something that moved you away from God? How is this experience like your relationship with God in real life? What are other things that make you feel far from God?**

Say: **There are always things that seem to come between God and us. In our lessons this month we have learned that Elijah let discouragement and fear of an angry woman come between Him and God. Let's find and read our power text, Psalm 37:23, 24.** (Allow time for students to find and read the verse with you.)

"The Lord makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand" (Psalm 37:23, 24).

Say: **Today we will be discussing how God set Elijah back on the right track. We are learning that**

God forgives our failures and helps us join Him in His work.

(Adapted from *More Smart Choices for Preteen Kids* [Loveland, Colo.: Group Publishing, 1999], pp. 22, 23.)

Prayer and Praise

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"Got a Reason for Livin' Again" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 79)
"Thy Word" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 88)
"Cares Chorus" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 141)
"Think About His Love" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 40)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map, pushpins

Use Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. For the mission story, have a map of the world where the students can identify the location of the mission story and compare it to where they are. You could use pushpins to mark where the mission story takes place.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ rainbow box

Continue to use the rainbow offering box from four weeks ago. Take a different color and talk about what that color represents. You may want to sing "The Coloring Song" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 61). Ask: **How does this color reflect God's grace?**

Prayer

Say: **For the past four weeks we have been learning about God's grace. Let's take time to praise Him for His grace. Just say one word that means something to you and expresses some aspect of God's grace that you want to praise God for. You may speak more than once.**

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

2

BIBLE LESSON

Introducing the Bible Story

Ask: **Can you remember as a child falling over and feeling like all the breath had been knocked out of your body? You couldn't speak or do anything. All you could do was lie there. How did you feel when your mom or teacher or friend picked you up? Today we'll learn that Elijah felt as though he just couldn't go on, then God came and picked him up. Elijah responded by joining God in His work and teaching others to praise God for His goodness and grace.**

God forgives our failures and helps us join Him in His work.

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils
- ☐ Bible-time map
- ☐ art supplies

Experiencing the Story

Read 1 Kings 19:15-18; 2 Kings 2:1, 11; and Matthew 17:1-5 together. Ask: **How do you think Elijah felt when he tried to run away and even die, but God kept taking care of him and talking to him? How do you think he felt when God asked him to go back the way he had come? What happened when he joined God in His work again?**

Let the students divide into groups and choose from the following activities.

1. Profile—Create a profile of Elijah, listing his achievements, what characteristics he had (i.e., good spokesperson, leader, etc.).
2. Compose—Write a song or verse to teach to the rest of the group.
3. Create—Draw or make a chariot of fire like the one you imagine Elijah rode in.
4. Advertise—Make an advertisement for a film of Elijah's life.
5. Dramatize—Act out Elijah's life after God talked to him in the cave.
6. Map—On a map, mark the key places and events in Elijah's life.

Allow time for groups to share their work.

Accommodations for students with special needs:
Allow students with special needs who are experiencing difficulty with these activities to work with a partner who could assist them.

3

APPLYING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ marker/chalk

Exploring the Bible

Say: **Elijah is not the only person in the Bible who tried to run away from God. Let's look at some others.** Have students find the following texts and answer the questions. List the questions and the Bible references on the board.

1. Why did Jonah try to run away from God? Jonah 1:1-3.
2. What was the end result when Jonah listened to God? Jonah 2.
3. Why did Jacob try to run away from his family and God? Genesis 27:41-44.
4. How did God talk to Jacob? Genesis 28:10-22.
5. Why did Moses run away? Exodus 2:11-15.
6. How did Moses react when God talked to him? Exodus 3:1-6.
7. At what critical point did Jesus' best friends run away? Matthew 26:47-56.
8. What did the disciples do after they had seen Jesus again? Luke 24:53.

Ask: **Who was successful in running away from God? In each of these cases, what great things did God have in store for the people when they rejoined Him in His work?**

God forgives our failures and helps us join Him in His work.

Accommodations for students with special needs: Students with impaired vision or with learning disabilities will benefit from having the list of questions and texts in front of them. Allow these students to sit near the board or prepare for them in advance handouts with the above list of questions and texts.

Scenarios

Say: **Let's discuss some of the choices we have to run away from God or to run with God.**

1. You are at a friend's house and they suggest you check out the contents of their parents' alcohol cabinet. You know that your body is the temple of God. If you were to run away from God, what would you do? (try the alcohol) **If you were to go with God, what would you do?** (say no and leave)

2. Your friends start making nasty comments about and to someone in school. You know that the comments are unjustified as well as unkind. But if you stand up for the person, you will get the same treatment. If you were to run away from God, what would you do? (stay quiet) **If you were to run with God, what would you do?** (defend and befriend the person)

3. There has been trouble in school with gangs. You see one gang beating up a student. Afterward the teacher asks if anyone saw anything. You are afraid of being picked on by this group also. If you were to run away from God, what would you do? (keep quiet) **If you were to run with God, what would you do?** (tell the teacher what you saw)

4. You are in a store and the cashier gives you change of $20 instead of $10. You are short of cash, and this could be considered one of life's little bonuses! Into your head pops *You shall not steal.* If you were to run away from God, what would you do? (keep the money) **If you were to run with God, what would you do?** (show the cashier their mistake)

Debriefing

Say: **Elijah ran from God. We have plenty of opportunities in our lives to make choices to run from God too. But God never forsakes us, and He helps us have an even stronger relationship with Him afterward, just as Elijah had, when we accept His help and grace.**

God forgives our failures and helps us join Him in His work.

4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ handout (p. 157)
- ☐ pens

Let's Get Together

Make enough handouts for each student to have two.

Say: **Spending time with God each day really helps us run with God instead of away from Him. Let's see how we might do that.**

Distribute a photocopy of the "Let's Get Together" handout (p. 157) and a pen to each student. Instruct students to complete the handouts on their own. When students have finished, have a few volunteers tell what they wrote.

Say: **Take your commitment letters home with you, and use them as a guide when you have your next get-together with God.** Give each student a blank handout. **And during the week, think of at least one person to share with who may like to make a commitment letter of their own.**

(Adapted from *More Smart Choices for Preteen Kids* [Loveland, Colo.: Group Publishing, 1999], p. 24.)

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Have a short time of silent prayer so students can ask forgiveness for sins that keep them from God. Say: **Since God forgives us, let's forgive each other too.** Close with praise to God for His forgiving and restoring grace.

Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **Nehemiah prays. We reveal God's love when we serve others.**

Notes

Student lesson

Running With God

Have you ever felt that you had messed up so badly that things would never be the same again? Did you wonder if there was any hope for the future? Elijah ran from God, asked to die, but ended up going to heaven in special transportation sent just for him.

Picture Elijah at the mouth of the cave, pondering in amazement how God had spoken directly to him.

He understood that running away from Jezebel was not part of God's plan. God had wanted him to stay and break the power of the worshippers of Baal. Running away hadn't been the smartest thing he'd ever done. No doubt he felt a little ashamed of his actions.

But Elijah didn't sit thinking about himself for too long. He had work to do. God had said, "Go back the way you came." He still had work for Elijah to do. Now Elijah would be running with God instead of away from Him.

Elijah drew his cloak around him. Maybe he smiled to himself. He could almost feel the joy of the Lord giving him strength. He stood up and headed back the way he had come—back toward Israel and Jezebel.

As he looked around he could see God's love and grace in everything. When he had been running away, everything was still dry and brown and dead from the long drought. Now water was plentiful. The land was green again. He was not afraid anymore. He was going to be doing God's work again.

Elijah went back to work for God. He traveled around Israel teaching those he met about the true God. He shared his story of meeting God in the cave on Mount Horeb. He told about God's forgiveness, and patience, and grace. He told about how God had given Him a second chance.

One of Elijah's special jobs was to reestablish three schools. They were called the schools of the prophets. Long before, the prophet Samuel had set them up to train people to understand and teach about God.

God also told Elijah to train Elisha to be a prophet after him. Together the two men continued to work for God, sharing His goodness with everyone they met.

Then God told Elijah that his work on earth was just about over and that He would be sending a chariot for him. Elijah, who had once run from God and the work God had given him, would travel with Him right up into heaven—to live with Him forever. One day while Elijah and Elisha were walking together, the chariot of fire came and took Elijah to heaven.

But that was not the last we hear about Elijah and his work for God. Elijah went to heaven to be a representative of all the people who will be living on the earth when Jesus returns. Just like Elijah, those people—maybe you and me—will be changed and taken up to heaven without having to die. As the representative of those people Elijah returned to earth once.

When Jesus was here on earth, and thinking about the great sacrifice He was making for us, Elijah came back down from heaven with Moses to encourage Jesus. Elijah was there to remind Jesus of all the people who would one day be able to go to heaven without dying. Moses was there to remind Jesus of all the other people who would die, but who would be resurrected and go to heaven when Jesus returned.

Elijah not only encouraged Jesus—he also encouraged the three disciples who were there with Jesus. These were the ones who would lead the new Christian church when Jesus was gone.

So from a tired, depressed, and discouraged person who wanted to die, Elijah became one of the most important prophets of God. What an amazing God! He picks us up when we fall and finds us when we run away. He sets us back on the right path and helps us go on to be all that He intends for us to be.

This is our God! We have all the reasons to worship, praise, and glorify Him all the days of our lives.

KEY REFERENCES

- 1 Kings 19:15-18
- 2 Kings 2:1, 11
- Matthew 17:1-5
- *Prophets and Kings*, chap 17, pp. 217-228
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 5, pp. 55-60
- Our Beliefs, nos. 11, 17, 9

POWER TEXT

"The Lord makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand" (Psalm 37:23, 24).

POWER POINT

God forgives our failures and helps us join Him in His work.







Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 46.

Sunday

READ Read Psalm 37:23, 24 and this week's story, "Running With God."

MAKE Draw a pair of running shoes and write on them your power text, Psalm 37:23, 24.

LEARN Begin to learn the power text.

PRAY Pray that you will run with God, not away from Him.

Monday

READ Read 1 Kings 19:15–18.

THINK Elijah felt alone, but God had 7,000 faithful followers in Israel.

CONTACT Contact someone else you know who is a faithful follower of God. Try to find a way to encourage them in their walk with God.

PRAY Pray that God will be with you and with all your friends who are trying to trust and serve God.

Tuesday

READ Read 2 Kings 2:1, 11.

DISCOVER What do we know about how we will go to heaven when Jesus comes again? Find out in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18.

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write what you think are the similarities and the differences between your upcoming trip to heaven and Elijah's.

PRAY Ask God to prepare you to be among those who will be taken up into heaven without seeing death.

Wednesday

READ Read Matthew 17:1–5.

THINK What would you have asked Elijah if you were Peter, or James, or John?

SHARE Tell someone about the good news that this story reveals—there will be people who, like Elijah, will not die, but will be alive at Jesus' second coming.

PRAY Thank God for Elijah's example of faithfulness.

Thursday

READ Read Jonah 1 and 2.

THINK In what ways is Jonah's story similar and different from Elijah's?

WRITE In your Bible study journal, divide a page into two columns. In one column, write the similarities between the two stories, and in the other the differences.

PRAY Thank God for His forgiveness and His grace.

Friday

READ Read Matthew 26:55, 56 with your family.

THINK How did the disciples act toward Jesus? How did they act similarly to the way Elijah and Jonah acted? How do people today run away from God?

ASK Ask an adult if they know a story of someone who ran from God, but later turned and ran with Him. Ask them to tell you the story.

SAY Repeat the power text by memory.

PRAY Praise God for helping those who stumble to find their way back to Him.