



Elisha Helps a Family

(based on 2 Kings 4:1-7)

Elisha (ee-LIE-shuh) was a prophet of God. God would give him messages to tell the people, and Elisha would pass on the messages to them.

One day, a woman with two sons stopped Elisha on the street. She was in trouble and needed God's help.

"Please, sir," the woman cried, "I am a widow. My husband followed in God's ways, but sadly he died. When he was alive, he owed a man some money, and now that man is coming to take my two sons as payment. Please help me."

Elisha wanted to help the woman. "I think God can help," he replied. "What do you have in your house that we can use?"

The woman thought. She was very poor, so all she had to give Elisha was a small jar of olive oil.

Elisha told the woman and her sons to go out and find as many empty jars as they could. They should borrow from their neighbors and friends.

The boys went out and did just as Elisha said. They went from house to house and gathered up all the old empty jars they could find. They carried them all home to their mother.

Elisha told the woman and her sons to go inside the house and shut the door. "Pour the oil into all the empty jars," he instructed. "Keep filling up the jars."

The woman did not know how this could happen because she only had one small jar of oil. How could it fill all those empty jars? Still, she did as Elisha said. The boys carried the jars to the table, and the woman filled them with oil from her small jar. Then they brought more jars and filled those too. Somehow the oil kept coming. Soon there were loads of jars all filled with oil.

When they had finished filling all the jars, the woman rushed outside to tell Elisha. He told her to go and sell the oil. "You'll earn lots of money," Elisha said. "Then you can pay your bills, and you'll have money for what you need."

The woman sold the oil, and there was enough to pay off all the money that she owed. She hugged her two boys and went home. Now her sons would not be taken away from her! The woman and her two sons said thank you to God for the gift of the oil.



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Olives grow, among other places, in Israel and Palestine. Having olive oil would be a necessity; it was also a form of currency and having a lot was a luxury. Do an internet search for pictures and stories of the cultivation and harvest of olives, and especially pressing the olives to make oil.
- At the grocery store, look at the many different containers of olive oil on the shelves. Wonder why some small bottles may cost as much as a large container. At home, if you have olive oil, smell and taste the olive oil. Put a dab of it on the back of your hand and experience how it feels to rub it into your hand.



Responding to God's Grace

- Wonder together how your family gets money to live. Talk about all the contributions each family member makes to the family besides money.
- Talk together about a time when your family had a tough time and how each of you experienced God during that time. Give thanks to God for God's presence in many ways.
- The woman in today's story asked Elisha for help, and he helped her family in an unexpected way. Elisha's help made it possible for the family to help themselves. Talk with your children about what you might do when someone asks your family for help.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Let your children dice vegetables and sauté or roast them in olive oil. Enjoy the vibrant colors and crunchy textures. Or make an olive oil cake using a recipe from bit.ly/RecipeOliveOilCake. Enjoy the many uses of olive oil. Give thanks to God for providing beautiful food for us.
- Talk with your children about how expenses in your household are like the jars waiting to be filled. Wonder together what different jars need to be filled in your home, such as rent/mortgage, electricity, water, food, and so forth. Consider what might be in a jar for family fun/entertainment. Find a jar and decorate it. Encourage everyone to put coins or bills in the jar when they have some extra. See what you can do for some family fun with the money provided in the jar.
- Pray:
Thank you, God, for providing our family ways to have what we need. Amen.