



WEEK 2

HYBRID TEACHING GUIDE



THE BIG IDEA

Because of who God is, we can do difficult things.

THE BIBLE

I Kings 18:18-39, 19:2-12;
Psalm 23

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

QUESTION | Toy Story Synopsis

- Welcome back to *True Story*, where we're exploring some true stories from Scripture (and some not-so-true stories from our favorite movies) and what they can teach us about who we are and who God is.
- Last week we kicked things off by watching a clip from *Toy Story*. Does anyone think they know *Toy Story* really well?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask one student to summarize the entire movie in 30 seconds. Put a timer on the screen or hold up a stopwatch while they summarize.

ACTIVITY | Toy Story Trivia

- That was pretty good, but let's try something a little more difficult. We're going to play a quick trivia game to see who knows the most about our plastic friends. Fair warning — it's going to be hard.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play a quick game of trivia using the seven question images and seven answer images provided in your Week 2 folder. Here are three ways to play . . .
 - Play with **your entire group** by having students shout their answers when each question is displayed onscreen. Give everyone candy as a prize.
 - Play **in small groups** by having each group write down their answers. Give the winning group a prize.
 - Play **with 2-4 contestants** by bringing students to the front of the room and racing to be the first to raise their hand and answer each question correctly.

ACTIVITY | Creatio Ex Marshmallow

- That challenge was hard, but I want to try something even more difficult. This isn't a trivia challenge. It's a building challenge.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need [index cards](#), uncooked spaghetti noodles, and [mini marshmallows](#), but how much you need will depend on how many students you'd like to participate. Give each student or group of students playing a box of noodles and a bag of marshmallows, and let them know they'll need to construct whatever you tell them to build. When they're done, the rest of the students will have to guess what their object is. Before your program, write a variety of objects on index cards (skyscraper, castle, limousine, giraffe, UFO) and instruct your contestants to build whatever is listed on the card you give them. Play with your entire group by having three students building three different structures while the rest of the students try to guess what they're building or play in small groups by having each group build a different structure.*
- Considering you had to build something from next to nothing, that's pretty impressive.
 - I wouldn't blame you if you felt some frustration during your building project. It would have been much easier if you had more time, better supplies, or the chance to plan and prepare.
 - But at the same time, some of you loved this challenge. To you, it was fun and energizing.
- To put things in perspective, building a giraffe out of spaghetti isn't really *that* difficult. You and I will face much harder challenges in our lives and, when we do, it's not always easy to predict how we'll react.
 - Sometimes we'll be excited by the challenge before us.
 - Sometimes we'll feel defeated by it.
- But there are some truths we can always hang onto, no matter how difficult things get. Like we did last week, today we're going to look at another true story from Scripture to discover what those truths might be.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
- **What's one fun or exciting challenge you've faced recently?**
- **What's one difficult challenge you've faced recently?**
- ☆ **When you face a difficult challenge, how do you usually react? Do you feel excited, scared, defeated?**

SO WHAT? *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

VIDEO | "Jack Jack vs. Syndrome," from *The Incredibles*

- But before we get to that *true* story, let's take a look at a not-so-true story. Have you seen *The Incredibles*? It's a story about a family of superheroes with their own unique superpowers.
 - Dad has superhuman strength.
 - Mom can turn her whole body into super-stretchy elastic.

- Their daughter Violet can become invisible and create force fields.
- Their son Dash has the power of superhuman speed.
- And their baby Jack Jack . . . well, he doesn't have any powers. Not that they know of.
- By the end of the first movie, the family has already completed impossible task after impossible task, but there is one more challenge they must face when Jack Jack is kidnapped by the villain Syndrome.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show a portion of [this scene](#) from *The Incredibles*. (Disney+ timestamp: 1:43:22–1:45:35.)
- The Incredibles were faced with a seemingly impossible challenge. They were quick to act, but there was more at work than their own abilities or quick-thinking. For the first time, Jack Jack discovered his super powers. Something miraculous happened!

SCRIPTURE | I Kings 18:18-39

- There may not be any superheroes in the Bible, but much of it is "supernatural." Scripture is filled with accounts of God showing up and saving the day in powerful, miraculous ways.
- Elijah was a man who was well-acquainted with God's ability to work miracles. Here's what you need to know about him . . .
 - Elijah lived in the 9th century BC. That's a long time ago.
 - You can read about him in the books of I & II Kings, in the Old Testament of the Bible.
 - Elijah was a prophet, which means he was sent by God to deliver messages to Israel, God's chosen people.
- At the time Elijah was prophesying, King Ahab was the king of Israel, and he was not a great guy. He committed atrocities, murdered people unjustly, disobeyed God, and led the nation in worshiping the false god Baal. So God sent Elijah to do something really difficult — boldly oppose King Ahab and call Israel back to God.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read or summarize I Kings 18:18-39.
- This is a pretty amazing story, right? It reveals that God . . .
 - Hears our prayers (v. 37).
 - Can be trusted (v. 37).
 - Is powerful (v. 38).
 - Is the only God (v. 39).
- If you know you serve a God like that, it makes sense that you'd be ready and willing to take on big challenges, right? God called Elijah to do something difficult, but he embraced the challenge boldly! At least . . . he did at first.

SCRIPTURE | I Kings 19:2-12

- You might think, after a miracle like that, that Elijah would be filled with confidence, courage, and faith. Instead, Elijah was exhausted and afraid.
 - King Ahab's wife Jezebel was so angry about what happened with the prophets of Baal that she threatened Elijah's life and sent men to kill him.
 - Terrified (and apparently forgetting everything God had just done), Elijah ran.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read or summarize I Kings 19:2-12.*
- Elijah has two important encounters with God here.
 - The first one takes place under a small tree, where Elijah has collapsed. He's exhausted, terrified, and wants to die — but God doesn't let him. Instead, God lets Elijah rest, reminds him to eat and drink, and makes sure he arrives safely at his next destination.
 - After a long journey, Elijah stops to rest again, this time in a cave, and God meets him there. But God doesn't appear in a huge display of fire and power, like Elijah saw once before. Instead, God speaks to Elijah in a quiet, gentle whisper.
- So what does this show us about who God is? The same powerful, strong, miracle-working God we saw on Mount Carmel . . .
 - Is gentle (v. 5).
 - Is understanding (v.5).
 - Gives us what we need (v. 6).
 - Protects us (v. 8).
 - Is with us (v. 9)
 - Speaks to us (v. 10-12).
- If I had to sum it up, I'd say exactly what I said last week. God is good.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
- ☆ **Have you ever faced a challenge that left you feeling overwhelmed, exhausted, or afraid? Tell us about it.**
- ☆ **Why do you think Elijah faced one challenge with confidence but another challenge with fear? Can you relate?**
- **What are some of the ways God interacts with us when we face difficult things? Do you have any examples from your own life?**
- **Do you usually imagine God as mostly powerful or mostly gentle? Why is it important that God is both?**

STORY | Talk about a difficult challenge God helped you face.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a personal story (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about a time when God helped you face a difficult time or tackle a big challenge. Share what you discovered about who God is, and how that knowledge helped you through.*
- Scripture never tells us that our lives will be easy, but it does tell us God will always be with us. We're all going to face seemingly impossible tasks, but (like Elijah) we'll never have to face them alone.
 - When you face your next difficult moment, you might respond with boldness and determination, like Elijah did on Mount Carmel, because you know your God is powerful, strong, and trustworthy.

- But you're only human. You get tired and scared sometimes, and God knows that. So maybe you'll face your next challenge like Elijah did in Horeb — with fear and exhaustion. If you do, I hope you remember your God is gentle, kind, and never leaves you.
- When difficulty comes, you and I often react in unpredictable ways, but we can trust that God never changes (even when we do).
- So what does the story of Elijah reveal about who God is? And what does it say about who we are?
 - You were created by a God who is good (powerful, strong, trustworthy, gentle, protective, and present).
 - You are seen and understood by your Creator, who is always with you. No matter what difficulties or challenges you face, you are never alone or without help.
- If you've ever backed away from a difficult challenge because you were afraid, tired, or overwhelmed, remember this: we can be strong because of who our Creator is. **Because of who God is, we can do difficult things.**

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

OBJECT LESSON | Talk Positive

- So what kinds of difficult things might you need to face? You'll need to face some everyday difficult things, like . . .
 - Disciplining yourself to spend regular time with God.
 - Making wise choices.
 - Loving others like God loves them.
 - Doing what's right.
 - Taking care of your body and mind.
- You may also have to face a few bigger challenges, like . . .
 - Losing someone you love.
 - Experiencing a big life-change.
 - Taking a risk you know God has called you to take.
- When you face difficult things, what you believe matters. That's because our minds have a direct impact on our actions.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Ask a student or volunteer to join you at the front and stand with their arms out. First, ask them to repeat the phrase, "I am weak and useless." While they do, push their arms down to their sides — their arms should go down pretty easily. Next, have them repeat (or yell) the phrase, "I can do difficult things," and try to press their arms down again. This time, their arms should be much more difficult to move.*
- When we face challenges that seem too big for us, or leave us feeling tired or afraid, we must remind ourselves what is true about God and about ourselves:
 - God is good.
 - Because of who God is, we can do difficult things.

REFLECTION | Am I Overwhelmed?

- Even though Elijah saw God perform miracles and take care of him in extraordinary ways, that didn't stop him from sometimes feeling afraid, tired, and overwhelmed.
 - Feeling overwhelmed with the difficult things we're facing doesn't mean we're weak or don't have enough faith. We're only human — God understands that.
 - But while God understands that we get overwhelmed, we don't need to stay that way. Elijah needed rest, food, water, and a reminder that God was with him. So what do you need?
- If you feel overwhelmed with a difficult challenge right now, spend some time thinking about it. If you don't feel overwhelmed right now, that's great — instead, think about a time you did feel overwhelmed, afraid, or exhausted.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your program, print and cut the handouts provided in your Week 2 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen. Play an on-theme worship song (like "God I Look to You," by Bethel Music) and ask students to write a few notes. You may want to place prompts on your screen, like . . .*
 - **What challenge is overwhelming you?**
 - **How is this difficult challenge making you feel?**
 - **What do you need to remember about who God is?**
 - **Because of who God is, how can you respond?**
- Whatever difficult challenge you're currently facing, I want to challenge you to remember what's true about God, and what's true about you. Like Elijah, God can help you face seemingly-impossible tasks with hope and confidence. Remember . . .
 - God is strong and powerful, as well as gentle and protective.
 - God is with you, no matter what.
 - Because God is good, you can face any challenge with courage and strength.
 - **Because of who God is, you can do difficult things.**

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Break for discussion. If you have more than ten students, split into groups so everyone can share. The starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them if you're working only with middle schoolers.*
- **Read Psalm 23. In this passage, which words or images stand out to you, and why?**
- ☆ **What's one new or interesting thing you noticed about God today? If that's true about God, what's true about you?**
- **Are you facing any difficult or overwhelming challenges right now? What do you need from God or from us in order to face it?**