

Elijah Heard God's Silent Speech

LESSON:

Today is the Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Last week's readings talked about God taking care of us. He heard about following Jesus' example of putting others' needs before our own. Today we need to believe that God will take care of us. It is one thing to say that God will take care of our needs. It is a whole other idea to actually believe that it will happen.

Today's first reading is from the first book of Kings in the Old Testament (1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a). Today we heard about the prophet Elijah. Elijah was a good man who tried hard to listen to God and do what God told him to do. This is a story about a time when Elijah was living in a cave. God told him to go outside because he was going to pass that way. Elijah wondered what he would see or hear when God passed by.

Ask: Would you recognize God if he passed by your house? What do you think you would see or hear? (let the children respond) Let's listen to Elijah's story and see what he discovered.

Read the first reading: A reading from the first Book of Kings

At the mountain of God, Horeb, Elijah came to a cave where he took shelter. Then the LORD said to him, "Go outside and stand on the mountain before the LORD; the LORD will be passing by." A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the LORD— but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake— but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake there was fire— but the LORD was not in the fire. After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound. When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went and stood at the entrance of the cave.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Ask: How did he recognize God? Was God in the mighty wind? (no) Was God in the earthquake? (no) Where was God when Elijah recognized him? (in the stillness) Do you think, if Elijah wasn't sure that God was coming, that he would have recognized the moment of God's arrival?

Reinforcement at home: Elijah heard God's silent speech. Or, put another way, from out of that silence God spoke to Elijah. More to the point: the silence was God speaking to Elijah. Silence is indeed a sort of language all its own. The readings today remind us that we need to pay attention to recognize God in our lives. Elijah expected God to appear in the great wind and then looked for him in the mighty earthquake – yet God used the quiet stillness to come forward. Elijah needed to believe strongly that God was coming and that he needed to pay attention to recognize God.

Activity: Make a game! Practice listening with your child for God in your life. Discuss with each other each time this week that you experience God. Some examples would be when you know in your heart the right thing to do, when you see the smile of a child, or when a song on the radio hits you and gives you a message you need to hear.