

Look Closer: Elijah's Three Sources of Food

I Kings 18:1-2,18-46: Fire from Heaven

This activity examines three times when Elijah received food from a miraculous source.

Supplies Needed for Each Student

- copy of the blank chart (see attached sheet; there is also an answer page for the teacher)
- pens or pencils
- copy of the Word or Bible

Optional

Bring food samples to show and share with the students, e.g. a small piece of uncooked meat and torn bread representing what the ravens brought to Elijah, dry crackers representing the widow's food, a sweet roll representing the cake the angel brought. Bring enough crackers, rolls, and water to share.



Activity

1. Remind students that most of the story of Elijah takes place during a famine—a shortage of food and water due to a drought. These are like times when we are in negative states, when we don't seem to have what we need spiritually. Let's look at the three times we are told about Elijah being fed and see what meaning these might have in our lives.
2. Working alone or in pairs, have students fill out the chart at the top of their pages, using the Biblical references as needed. Give the students 10-15 minutes to work on this. Those who finish early can start thinking about the questions at the bottom of the page for discussion later.
3. Bring the class back together for a discussion. Begin by asking for volunteers to read the columns in the chart so you can make sure you are all on the "same page".
4. What was miraculous about each of these feedings? (The source the food came from : ravens wouldn't normally feed someone; the oil and the flour did not run out as they normally would have; an angel brought physical food.)

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5. What do you think the food the ravens brought would have been like? *Hint:* Where might it have come from? (raw meat from carrion; stolen pieces of bread) If you brought meat and bread, show them to the students. Point out that these would keep you alive if necessary, but wouldn't be pleasant to eat.
6. What would the cake the widow baked have been like? (made with oil and flour, very plain) If you brought dry crackers and water, distribute to the students. This food would have been clean and wholesome.
7. What do you think the food from the angel would have been like? (warm from coals? a little sweet? very nourishing, and delicious) *Optional:* Share rolls. The food that the Lord miraculously provided for Elijah got better and better over time, as it came from better and better sources.
8. What are the common elements in the food? (some kind of bread; water) We all know that water is essential to life. For centuries, bread was the main staple of most people's diet. For that reason, it was sometimes called the Staff of Life. But the food was of different kinds.
9. The New Church teaches that all the stories in the Word have an inner, hidden meaning for our lives. The key to understanding that inner meaning is something called correspondences. Something natural corresponds to something spiritual. For example, we are told that water corresponds to truth. Both are essential to our lives—one to our physical life and the other to our spiritual life.
10. By knowing what the different sources of Elijah's food represent we can see some of the story's meaning in our lives. Bread represents or corresponds to good. The increasingly good sources of the food represents increasing good and truth in our lives. As we seek to follow the Lord the good and truth we receive becomes increasingly better. This is because we grow in our capacity to receive higher truths.

Elijah's Three Sources of Food in Times of Famine

	WHO fed Elijah?	WHAT was he fed?	WHEN was he fed?
I Kings 17:3-7 At the Brook Cherith			
I Kings 17:8-16 In the town of Zarephath			
I Kings 19:3-8 Wilderness near Beersheba			

Discussion Questions

1. What was miraculous about each of these situations?
2. What do you think each kind of food might have been like?
3. What two kinds of food were consistent in each situation?
4. What do these two elements mean in our lives?

Elijah's Three Sources of Food in Times of Famine

	WHO fed Elijah?	WHAT was he fed?	WHEN was he fed?
I Kings 17:3-7 At the Brook Cherith	Ravens	Bread and Meat	Morning and Evening
I Kings 17:8-16 In the town of Zarephath	A Widow	Small cake made of oil and flour	Everyday for many days
I Kings 19:3-8 Wilderness near Beersheba	An Angel	A cake baked on coals	Twice a day for 40 days and 40 nights

Discussion Questions

1. What was miraculous about each of these situations?
The source of the food in each case. Ravens wouldn't normally bring food to people. The widow's oil and flour would have run out under normal circumstances. An angel appearing and giving someone physical food is a miracle.
2. What do you think each kind of food might have been like?
Ravens: raw meat from carrion, perhaps, bread stolen from people, just enough to live on
Widow: cake made from just oil and flour, clean and nourishing
Angel: delicious, very nourishing—enough to journey on
3. What two kinds of food were consistent in each situation?
In each case there was water to drink and some kind of bread to eat.
4. What do these two elements mean in our lives?
Water corresponds to truth. Bread corresponds to good. These are the two essentials in our spiritual lives. As we work on following the Lord, we prepare ourselves to receive higher truth and good from Him into our lives.