

JANUARY DEVOTIONAL IDEAS FOR SENIOR ADULTS

“Elijah, God’s Servant”

Materials: A leader-created happy atmosphere. A front table with an attractive centerpiece of flowers and a large open Bible with a large, colorful ribbon bookmark, marking 1 Kings 16. An added focal point on the table could be a small standing poster with the name “ELIJAH” printed in large letters. Also, enlist an accompanist and provide song books or song sheets with the words of the songs selected for this devotional time.

Ahead of time: Start the devotional-year with the extra effort of arriving early, arranging the room and the focal table. Make the room look like someone cared about “us” and got the room ready. Give each person a “Happy New Year” greeting.

Devotional Time

- Begin with telling the group that, since today’s devotional is about a man who loved and trusted God, let’s sing the song, “ ‘Tis So Sweet To Trust In Jesus”. Then lead the group in the song, “O How I Love Jesus” .
- Open your Bible to 1 Kings 16 and begin, “Here in 1 Kings is a sad, but then a wonderful, story of an ordinary man who did extraordinary work for God.” The story begins with:

Ahab, the wicked king of Israel

Ahab, the King of Israel, married the evil Jezebel and together they worshiped the false God, Baal. The scripture says (verse 33b) “Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the Kings of Israel that were before him.”

Elijah, FAITHFUL messenger for God

God gave Elijah a message to take to the wicked King, Ahab. Elijah knew the King would not like God’s message. He realized that, in taking God’s message to the King, he, Elijah, would be in danger. But, Elijah trusted God and was faithful. He took God’s message to the King. Because God’s message made the ungodly King very angry, God’s messenger, Elijah, was in grave danger of being killed.

Elijah, FEARFUL but trusting servant of God

Elijah was afraid, but he trusted in God’s protection. In the 17th chapter of 1 Kings, God told Elijah, “Depart from here and turn eastward and hide yourself by the brook Cherith.” So, Elijah “turned eastward” and went to the brook, trusting God for his safety from the murderous intentions of the wicked king Ahab.

Elijah, FOLLOWER of God’s instructions

Elijah did exactly as God instructed. He went to the brook to be safe from the angry King Ahab. Verse 5 of 1 Kings: “So he (Elijah) did according to the word of the Lord; he went and dwelt by the brook.” Elijah did not question or second-guess God’s instruction, he just followed God’s instructions.

Elijah, FAVORED servant of God

Elijah’s obedience and love for God gave him favor with God. God showed his love, appreciation, and favor by protecting Elijah. God not only protected God from wicked King Ahab, God fed Elijah while he lived in safety by the brook. God provided a miracle for

sustenance for Elijah. 1 Kings 17, verse 6, "the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening," and Elijah drank from the clear water of the brook.

Elijah, FERVENT defender of God's power

Later, Elijah again encountered King Ahab who called Elijah a trouble-maker for telling about the real, true God. Elijah said to the king, 1 Kings 18:19: "Gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel." He told the King to also bring the 400 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah who eat at table of the wicked queen, Jezebel.

On the mountain, Elijah said to the people, 1 Kings 18:21, "If The Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him." Then Elijah said to the people, "I am the only prophet of God on this mountain, but there are 450 prophets of Baal here."

Elijah instructed the people to build an altar and give Baal's prophets a bull to cut up and put on the wood altar; then give Elijah a bull to cut up and put on the altar. Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Call on the name of your God and, in turn, I will call on the name of the Lord. The Lord who answers by fire, HE IS GOD!"

Early in the day, the prophets of Baal began to pray to Baal. They screamed and shouted and danced around the altar and cut themselves until blood, "gushed upon them." Noontime came and there was no fire. Evening came and they screamed and danced, but there was no voice from Baal, no answer, no fire.

Then, Elijah repaired the altar. He made a trench around the altar. He cut the bull in pieces for a burnt offering and put it on the wood. He asked that four jars of water be poured over the burnt-offering meat and the wood. He requested that four jars of water be poured a second time, a third time. The water filled the trench around the altar.

Now it was time. Elijah stood before the people and prayed.

- Read aloud Elijah's prayer (1 Kings 18, verses 36b and 37).

Then, THE FIRE OF THE LORD FELL! and consumed the burnt offering, the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench around the altar! AND THE PEOPLE SAID, "THE LORD HE IS GOD! THE LORD HE IS GOD!"

Elijah, FORESIGHTED prophet of God

Elijah kept on teaching and preaching about God. He realized that more teachers and preachers were needed. He was foresighted enough to know that preachers and teachers would be needed when he was no longer living on the earth.

1 Kings 19:27 begins the story of Elijah's finding and training the young man, Elisha, to succeed him in the work of The Lord. Elijah gave Elisha his "mantle," his cloak, which was considered to be a sign of God-given authority and responsibility. Elisha and Elijah then worked together to train other young men to preach and teach about God.

Elijah, FINISHER of the work God gave him to do

When God honored Elijah by taking him to heaven in a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:11b), Elijah had finished the work that God gave him to do. But, Elisha, and the young men he and Elijah had trained, continued to teach and preach and train others as they had watched and learned from God's prophet, Elijah.

CONCLUSION

- Elijah, an ordinary man, did extraordinary things for God. Each of us has a responsibility to live and witness for God wherever we are and whatever our circumstances. We, each one of us, can be God's messengers of love and joy.
- Pray, thanking God for His Word and for men and women who are willing to serve God wherever they are.

A CRAFT IDEA: A "MANTLE," a sign of Elijah's God-given authority and responsibility

Materials needed: posterboard (or thin cardboard), fabric scraps with colorful designs (remember, scraps and designs for men also), scissors, glue sticks and hand wipes, pieces of fabric trim or shiny flat "jewels" or other items with which to decorate the "mantles," patterns for use in cutting out the posterboard mantles, the head shapes, and the fabric "mantles," pencils or markers and yarn for making facial features and hair on the head

- Out of the posterboard, cut three pieces for each crafter. One, cut a 3-inch by 6-inch rectangle for the mantle (coat). Two, cut an inch & ½ half circle (for the head). Three, cut a small strip ½ inch by 2 ½ inches (for gluing the back of the head on the "mantle.")
- Use the rectangle - "mantle" - as is, or some may choose to round the shoulders and cut a waist in the rectangle. Choose the fabric for the "mantle," cut out the rectangle - "mantle" - fabric shape and glue it on the cardboard rectangle. Draw the head-features on the circle and draw or glue yarn-hair on the circle. Glue the small strip of cardboard to the back of the head and the back neck of "mantle."
- As the seniors work on the "mantle," talk about what it represented and converse about Elijah's courage and strength and willingness to do what God wanted him to do. Ask, what would you have done in Elijah's place?