Session One

Trust

Trust is an essential value. Children need to know they can depend on adults to care for them and supply their basic needs. Trust is fundamental to their development into healthy human beings. When children can trust others, they develop a positive attitude toward life and have less need to be in control to make things turn out right.

From the biblical story of Elijah, children learn that God is trustworthy. God is in control, and they can let go of their fears and worries. Children can trust in a loving, compassionate God, and also learn to trust in themselves and each other.

BIBLE TEXT
1 Kings 19:1-15

FAITH CHALLENGE
God invites us to a personal relationship based on trust.

ADVANCE PREPARATION
• Read through the entire session, and decide what you will do.
• Set up the room/space for the various activities.
• Gather supplies for the Kids Cluster activity: bean bags, pail or bowl.
• Find volunteers and gather props to present the Bible story, “Where Are You, God?” (p. 30): Elijah, Angel, Queen (offstage), Voice of God (offstage), tattered clothing, large boots, wings, backpack with bread and bottled water. Practice the skit ahead of time.
• Prepare materials for Sophie’s Web activity (p. 26).
• Gather supplies for the activities you choose to do.
• Prepare a snack (p. 13).

Kids Cluster

1. **Plan an activity for the early arrivals.** Check page 6 for ideas.
2. **Play “People I Can Depend On” bean bag toss.** Children take turns tossing bean bags into a pail or bowl (make it easy). For each successful toss, they complete the sentence: “I can trust a person who . . .” If there is time, repeat the activity, this time completing the sentence: “People can trust me because . . .” Ask children to name people in their lives who are trustworthy.
3. **Gather for a time of singing** (p. 8). Be sure to include familiar songs, new songs, and action songs for all the ages.
**Kids Explore Values**

1. **Begin with the theme song,** “Song of Hope” (p. 8). Pray a simple prayer.
2. **Introduce the theme of trust:** God invites us to a personal relationship based on trust.
   - Ask the children to respond aloud or silently: If you were given a very important message and could only tell one person, who would that person be?
   - Why do you think you would trust that person?
   - Would you trust yourself to get it right?
3. **Tell the Bible story.** Open the Bible to 1 Kings to show where today’s story is found. Present the skit, “Where are you, God?” (p. 30).
4. **Talk about values.** Children first learn trust from adults. If they have healthy, trusting relationships with adults they can see, they learn to trust in the One who cares deeply for them, whom they cannot see but whom they can know deeply.
   - What did you like about this story?
   - What surprised you?
   - Where did Elijah find God?
   - How did Elijah show trust in God?
   - How can this story help us to trust in God?
   - I wonder where or when you feel closest to God.
   - I wonder if you can trust in God like Elijah did. What do you trust God to do for you?
   - What do you trust a friend or adult to do for you?
   - What helps you trust that everything will turn out right?
   - How can you show that you are trustworthy?
   - How can you learn to trust someone who has not kept a promise?
5. **Sophie’s Web activity.** Tell the children that they will encounter situations that require their good problem-solving abilities. Create an environment where children can feel good about offering suggestions for problem-solving. If their suggestions are silly or inappropriate, remind them that they are capable of solving problems in a positive, realistic manner. Ask them to “put on the heart and mind of Christ” as they solve problems.

Children can trust God to help them make good decisions when they don’t know what to do. Work on one problem as a group to reinforce the process, or begin with Elijah’s story.

**Tip**

*Use these questions/ideas as conversation points during the craft time. It is not necessary to sit quietly and reflect on these points, but do include them during other activities.*

**Tip**

*See pages 16–17 for preparation and process for Sophie’s Web.*
Assign different problems to small groups, or have groups work on the same problem and note how many different solutions can be found. Affirm the children for finding wise solutions and for putting on the mind of Christ as they explored the value of trust.

- You and your friend Chris made arrangements to get together at your house on Saturday morning. You want to play your new computer game. On Saturday morning you wait for Chris to show up. Chris doesn’t call you or come to your house. You suspect Chris is with another friend.
- You promised to take cookies to school tomorrow. Dad agrees to stop at the grocery store to pick up the cookies on his way home from work. He comes home late without the cookies. He tells you he forgot them.
- Last month your friend Terry borrowed one of your favorite books to read. It was a gift from your grandmother. When you asked for it back, Terry said it was lost. You never got it back. Now Terry asks to borrow another book from you.
- You are on vacation at a place you’ve never visited before. You get separated from your parents and can’t find them in the crowd. You are worried and scared.

**Tip**
If there is time, tell personal stories of trust in God, self, and others, or read a story about trust.
Kids Create

**HERB GARDEN**
(INDIVIDUAL)
Plant a small herb garden to take home. Elijah looked for God in nature and found God in the silence of nature. Just as we trust that God cares for creation, we can trust God to care for us.

**Materials:** small pots or bottom sections of 2-liter plastic bottles, variety of herb seeds or small plants, potting soil, small stones, water, gardening tools
- Set out all the supplies.
- Place stones in the bottom of the pot. Add soil.
- Carefully place the herbs in the soil. Add more soil and water gently.
- Give instructions for care at home. Encourage children to thank God for being trustworthy as they care for the plants.

*Group option:* If space permits, plant an indoor or outdoor garden to observe during the series.

**TIP**
Use this as a service project; make pots to give away.

**CREATIVE ART**
(INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP)
Be creative in expressing trust in God.

**Materials:** variety of art materials such as paper, finger paints, string or yarn, glue, scissors, magazines, pastels, play dough
- Draw a picture or create an art piece that reflects the value of trust.
- A small group could illustrate the Bible story on mural paper for the bulletin board.
- Invite children to tell about their creations.

**TIP**
Use this art activity as an option during other sessions.

**STAR MOBILE**
(INDIVIDUAL)
Just as the points of a star go in several directions, we can find God in many different ways and places. The ribbons remind us of God’s gentle presence.

**Materials:** star templates (p. 32); cardstock; squares of felt or heavy fabric; embroidery thread or yarn; craft glue; glitter, gold sequins, or stars; cotton batting/stuffing or cotton balls; narrow ribbon in various colors; fabric scissors; sewing needles; fine-tip markers
- Ahead of time, cut one star template out of cardstock for each child.
- Children place the star template on the felt and carefully trace around the outside using a marker. Each child will need two stars. *Option:* To save time, or for younger children, cut out the stars ahead of time.
- Place the two stars together and carefully stitch around the edges, leaving one point of the star open for the cotton stuffing.
- Insert a small amount of cotton batting into the opening and finish stitching.
- Decorate the star with glitter, stars, or sequins.
- Use needle and thread to make a loop for the top of the mobile by stitching through the top star tip. This loop can be 8–12 in. / 20–30 cm in length.
- Thread two or three lengths of ribbon through a needle and sew them through another point of the star. Repeat with the other three points.

**TIP**
This mobile can be made with poster board or paper, with stars glued rather than sewn. Taking the time to sew it, however, is a great reminder that developing trust takes time.
ELIJAH AND JEZEBEL TAG
(GROUP)
- Divide into two teams: Elijah and Jezebel. Review the story, reminding the children that Jezebel was the queen.
- Elijah’s team gets a head start to get away from Jezebel’s team. On “Go,” Jezebel’s team tries to tag and capture Elijah’s team. When all are caught, reverse roles.
- After the game, talk about how the children felt when they were the chasers and the chased. Did their feelings change?
- Play the game again, but this time provide a safe place to run to, such as an adult leader who remains in one spot.
- Connect with feelings again: How did it feel to know that you could find safety? What does this game teach us about trust?

YURT CIRCLE
(TRUST EXERCISE—GROUP)
- Form a circle, holding hands. Number off by twos. On a signal, all Ones lean slowly forward while Twos slowly lean backwards. Hold this position for a few seconds. Relax. Reverse roles and try again.
- Talk about how important it is to be able to trust and depend on others.

TIP
Younger children might enjoy a simple trust walk with one child directing a blindfolded partner through an obstacle course or around the play area. Reverse roles and play again.

BALANCING ACTS
(TRUST EXERCISES—PARTNERS)
- **Palm Lean:** Partners lean toward each other, hands together to keep from falling. Push into a standing position without moving the feet. If this is fairly easy, repeat the activity with each partner taking small steps backwards until both are leaning forward to hold the other up. Let go of one hand at a time.
- **Back to Back:** Partners sit on the floor back to back. They attempt to push each other up to a standing position.
- **Toe Lean:** Partners stand facing each other, toes together and holding hands. Both lean back until their arms are straight out, then rock gently back and forth.

SUN TAG
(GROUP)
- Ask for two volunteers to be Sun and Winter.
- Everyone starts out “frozen” except Sun and Winter. The object of the game is for Sun to thaw out the players and Winter to refreeze them.
- On “Go,” Sun runs to thaw players by tagging them. When they are free, the players run around to avoid Winter. If Winter tags them, they become frozen again.
- To catch Sun’s attention, frozen players can yell, “Water!”
- The game ends when all players are either frozen or free.
- Discuss how trust is like the Sun—it’s dependable and helps us grow.

Variation: Add more Suns and Winters to the game.

Closing
For closing ideas, see page 7.
BIBLE STORY SKIT
WHERE ARE YOU, GOD? by Allan Rudy-Froese

Characters
Elijah—barefoot, wearing tattered clothing
Queen—voice offstage
Angel—female with big boots and small wings; wears a backpack containing bread and bottled water
God—voice offstage

Scene 1: The Desert
Elijah: (Leans against a tree, nervous, and exhausted. He speaks to God, counting on his fingers.) Now, let’s see. What more could be wrong? It’s hot during the day, cold at night. I’ve been running for days from the wicked queen and her little army. I’m afraid, tired, lonely, and hungry. And as if that’s not bad enough, I can’t seem to find God. It’s as though God has forgotten me. I don’t hear the word of God. All I hear is the queen’s last words to me . . .

Queen: (Offstage) I’m going to get you . . . if not today, then tomorrow!

Elijah: (To self) I’m in the middle of the desert now. Surely the wicked queen won’t find me here. (Looks around, just to make sure.) Well, in fact, there’s nothing here. Nothing except me and a lot of sand, and a tree. God seems to be absent too . . . (Speaks to God.) It’s enough; take my life. God, take me from this place. I’m tired. I’m lonely. I need something to eat . . . (Drifts off to sleep.)

Angel: (Offstage) Elijah!

Elijah: (Startled) Oh, no! The wicked queen . . . she’s found me!

Angel: (Enters nonchalantly.) Wicked queen? Do I look like a wicked queen?

Elijah: Well, the wings would suggest something else. But, you could be the wicked queen in disguise.

Angel: Yeah, right. As if the wicked queen would ever be caught in boots like these!

Elijah: You have a point there. What can I do for you?

Angel: Nothing. I’m here to do something for you. Of all the places I could go today, God sends me here. (She looks around, somewhat disappointed.) Nice place, but it could use a lake or something.

Elijah: It’s hot during the day and cold at night. I’ve been running . . .

Angel: (Mimicking) . . . for days from the wicked queen and her army. I’m frightened. Yes, we’re aware of your predicament. We’ve heard your prayer many times. All I was supposed to say was . . . (tries to remember) Oh, yeah. Eat! Get up and eat, Elijah!

Elijah: (Stands up and looks around.) Eat what?

Angel: Hmm . . . good question. Oh, yeah. (Takes off backpack and opens it, giving Elijah bread and a bottle of water.) Eat this. Drink this.

Elijah: Yes—bread! Water! (pause) It is spring water, without impurities?

Angel: Yes, it’s spring water with no impurities.

Elijah: All right. (He starts to eat and drink.)

Angel: Where are you going, Elijah?

Elijah: I’m going to the mountain of God, Mt. Horeb. It’s forty days and nights from here. God will meet me there and take my fear away, just as God has taken my hunger away now, through you.
Angel: Ah, well, forty days. You better have the whole thing. *(Hands him the backpack.*) You’ll need this food for the journey. I have to go now. I have other things to do.

Elijah: Well, I have things to do, too. I have to go to the mountain of God. The queen can’t get me there. Thanks for the food and the conversation.

Angel: The pleasure is mine. *(They shake hands.*) Oh, need these boots?

Elijah: With this food and pure water, I feel like a new man. And besides, I’ve walked for seventy years without shoes, so why start now? *(They shake hands and exit, each a different way.)*

Scene 2: Mt. Horeb

Elijah: *(Sits against a rock, exhausted, nervous, and rubbing sore feet.)* I should have taken the boots. Boy, are my feet sore! I think I’m safe here. This is Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. But where is God? I’m still tired and frightened, and the food is gone.

God: *(Offstage)* What are you doing here, Elijah?

Elijah: *(Jumps in surprise.)* Is that you, God? I’m here because this is a safe place. I’ve done all you asked me to do as your prophet. But it was a bad deal! See, some of the things you told me to do made other people, like the queen, quite miffed. Now she’s out to get me. I’m all alone. And besides, I’m tired and frightened.

God: *(Offstage)* Go out and stand near the edge of the cliff. I will pass by.

Elijah: *(Gets up and goes near edge of cliff.)* But what should I look for? What do you look like, God? *(Waits expectantly, then suddenly appears to protect himself from a rainstorm, while attempting to see God. If possible, use sound effects.)* Wow, this is quite a storm! But I don’t see God here.

*(Waits dejectedly, then begins to shake as if in an earthquake.)* Help, I’m shaking to death here! *(Continues to search for God.)* I guess God wasn’t in the earthquake. *(Becomes glum again as he waits.)*

*(Next comes fire. Elijah shields himself from heat.)* Oh-h, look at that awesome fireball. That must be hot! *(Looks around and then shouts.)* WHERE ARE YOU, GOD?

*(There is silence. Elijah sits and listens. The more he listens, the more he starts to smile and feel good.)* Ah! There you are, God! You’re in the silence. I feel you, and I find you in the silence. My fear is gone. Ha! *(Jumps up and starts to do a little jig.)*

God: *(Offstage)* Elijah, what are you doing here?

Elijah: Actually, I was just about to leave. I’m your prophet. That’s what I do. Sometimes listening to you is no picnic. Take the queen, for instance. She’s probably still miffed. But I have to do what I have to do. And you’re so much more powerful than all my fears. You’re certainly more powerful than the queen and her little army. Do you have something for me to do? The desert and this mountain are nice, but for some reason, I feel like a new challenge would be great.

God: *(Offstage)* Go back through the desert the way you came. I have some work for you to do in Damascus. I need you to help King Hazael. And after that I have all kinds of other work for you.

Elijah: Okay. Back across the desert. Hmm. I’ll need some more bread and bottled water. And I could use some boots.

Angel: *(Entering)* I thought you didn’t want the boots.

Elijah: I’ll take them now . . . if you don’t mind.

Angel: Hey, have some more bread and your favorite kind of water. There’s a lot where this comes from. *(Gives him her boots and backpack. They walk off together, arms around each other.)*

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