

WIDOW'S OIL

2 Kings 4:1-7

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Widow and Elisha

Key-location: Widow's home in Israel

Key-repetitions:

- Debt/creditor: creditor was coming to take sons (2 Kin 4:1); Elisha told widow to pay her debts (2 Kin 4:7).
- Jars/containers: little jar of oil (2 Kin 4:2); Elisha told widow to ask neighbors for empty containers (2 Kin 4:3); Elisha told widow to pour oil into containers (2 Kin 4:4); sons brought containers (2 Kin 4:5); all containers were full (2 Kin 4:6); she asked for another container (2 Kin 4:6); son said no container was left (2 Kin 4:6).
- Oil: she only had one jar of oil (2 Kin 4:2); Elisha told her to pour oil into containers (2 Kin 4:4); she poured oil (2 Kin 4:5); oil stopped flowing (2 Kin 4:6); Elisha said to sell oil (2 Kin 4:7).
- Shut the door: Elisha said to shut the door (2 Kin 4:3); she shut the door (2 Kin 4:5).
- Sons: two sons (2 Kin 4:1); Elisha said to close the door behind her and her sons (2 Kin 4:4); she and her sons were in the house (2 Kin 4:5); sons brought containers (2 Kin 4:5); she spoke to her son (2 Kin 4:6); her son replied (2 Kin 4:6); Elisha told widow for her and her sons to live on what was left (2 Kin 4:7).

Key-attitudes:

- Widow's fear.
- Widow's trust in the prophet.
- Positive attitude toward Elisha.

Initial-situation:

Prophet Elijah was taken to heaven and Elisha became his successor and began his prophetic ministry. There was war in the land.

Initial-problem:

Elisha, the young prophet, was beginning his ministry when a widow brought her problem to him.

Final-situation:

Elisha told her to sell the oil, pay her debt and live on the rest.

BIBLE STORY

The wife of a man from the brotherhood of prophets called out to Elisha, "Your servant, my husband, is dead. You know that he was devoted to the Lord. But now his creditor is coming to take my two sons as his slaves."

Elisha replied to her, "How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?"

The widow answered, "Nothing at all, except a little jar of oil."

Prophet Elisha said, "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty containers. Don't ask for just a few. Then go inside and close the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the containers. When each is filled, set it aside."

The widow did what Prophet Elisha said. She shut the door. Only she and her sons were in the house. As her sons brought the containers to her, she poured the oil. When all the containers were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another container."

Her son replied, "There's not a container left." Then the oil stopped flowing.

The widow returned to Elisha and told him what happened. Elisha said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left" (2 Kin 4:1-7).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story? | 5. How did the characters face their problems? |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems? |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story? | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face? | 8. What does the story tell about God? |

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What problems did the widow face?
2. How did Elisha help the widow?
3. What kind of problems do some families face during a time of war?
4. How can we help people start with what they have to solve difficult problems?
5. When we face problems, to whom do we seek out for help?
6. How can we be available to help people who are facing crisis?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **God's people will also face crisis.** The nation Israel was at war. The young prophet was a godly man who died and left a wife, two young sons and a debt his widow couldn't pay.
2. **God's people should take their problems to the Lord.** The widow took her problems to the Lord's prophet.

3. **The head of the household should not create debts that bring hardships to his family.** The prophet created a debt that put his wife and children in dire need when he died.
4. **Solutions to a problem begin with what a person has.** The widow only had a little oil in her home. God took the little oil and multiplied it.
5. **The spiritual leader should be sensitive to the needs of those in need.** The widow took her needs to the Prophet Elisha and he helped her.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Role-playing Drama:

Pick volunteers to tell the story from the viewpoint of participants in the story:

- The debt collector.
- A neighbor who loaned pots and pans to the widow.
- One of the sons, who is now a grown man, giving his testimony of what happened after his father died