

Send North America: Seattle

Kids Learning to live life on mission in North America

Lesson Title: Things unseen

Items needed:

- Empty jar with lid
- White paper
- White crayon or piece of wax
- Watercolor paint
- 1-inch wide paintbrush*
- U.S. map
- Bible

**Note: A wide brush works better for this purpose than the smaller brush that typically comes in a watercolor paint set.*

Lesson summary

Through the story from 2 Kings 6:8-23 about Elisha and the invisible army, and the illustration of an invisible message and an empty jar, children will learn about walking by faith and not by sight.

Lesson objective

Some say “seeing is believing” but many times what we think or see to be true may not be true at all. In these days of depending on science and the human intellect to figure out truth, matters of faith are typically discounted because they perhaps cannot be scientifically proven. Through this lesson, children will learn that the human mind cannot fully understand God’s way of relating to His creation. God’s ways are higher than our ways; therefore, we walk by faith, not by sight.

Bible verse: “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7).

Prepare

1. Write a secret message or the Bible verse above on the white paper using the white crayon or a white candle—something waxy so that the children cannot see the message. The message will be visible when you paint the paper with the watercolor paint as the wax repels the paint. Have the watercolor paint ready. (Practice this ahead of time to ensure success.)
2. Have the empty jar nearby with lid attached.

Lesson

Tell the children that many times in our lives we see things that are not always what we think they are. Just because we believe something does not necessarily mean it is true, and, conversely, just because we do not believe something doesn’t mean it is not true.

For instance, this is a blank piece of paper, right? *Hold up the paper. They will probably all agree that the page is blank. If not, go with it and ask the dissenters why they don’t think the page is blank.*

We don’t see anything on it, do we? Well, let’s see if this piece of paper is indeed blank. *Paint the paper with the watercolor paint. The paint should bead up on the wax crayon, revealing your secret message.*

Well, it seems our eyes have deceived us. This page is not blank after all.

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What about this jar? Is it empty? Shake the jar. It looks and sounds empty, doesn't it? Remove the lid. Put the jar to your nose and mouth and breathe in.

Oh, it's not empty; it's full of air!

That reminds me of a story in the Old Testament of the Bible. This story is about a prophet named Elisha, to whom God had given extraordinary power, and an invisible army. *You may either read the story from 2 Kings 6:8-17 directly from the Bible or paraphrase it as follows.*

The king of Syria was at war with Israel. He talked with his officers and chose a place to set up his camp. But God had given Elisha the power to know the Syrian king's plans. He sent word to the king of Israel, warning him not to go near that place, because the Syrians were waiting in ambush there. So the king of Israel warned the people who lived in that place, and they were on guard. This happened wherever the Syrian king set up an ambush.

The Syrian king became greatly upset over this, thinking one of his officers must be a traitor giving away the locations of his planned ambushes. He called in his officers and asked them, "Which one of you is on the side of the king of Israel?"

One of them answered, "No one is, your majesty. The prophet Elisha tells the king of Israel what you say even in the privacy of your own room."

"Find out where he is," the king ordered, "and I will capture him."

When he was told that Elisha was in a place called Dothan, he sent a large force there with horses and chariots. They reached the town at night and surrounded it. Early the next morning Elisha's servant got up, went out of the house, and saw the Syrian troops with their horses and chariots surrounding the town. He went back to Elisha and exclaimed, "We are doomed, sir! What shall we do?"

"Don't be afraid," Elisha answered. "We have more on our side than they have on theirs." Then he prayed, "Oh Lord, open his eyes, and let him see!" The Lord answered his prayer, and Elisha's servant looked up and saw that the hillside was covered with horses and chariots of fire sent to guard the people of Israel.

Then Elisha asked God to make the Syrian army blind, and he led them from Dothan to Samaria, the capital of Israel, without a struggle. They became prisoners of the king of Israel. Rather than lock them up or kill them, Elisha convinced the king to feed the prisoners, to treat them well and to send them home to their king. Never again did they attack Israel.

Elisha's servant couldn't see God's vast army protecting the people of Israel, but the army was real. At first we couldn't see the message on the piece of paper, but it is real. We can't see the air in the jar, but it is real. We can't see God, but He is real.

Sometimes people who are very smart have a hard time believing that God is real because they can't see Him or prove that He exists. There is a city in the state of Washington that has lots of smart people living and working in it. Most of them depend on themselves, not God.

The city is Seattle. Seattle is quickly becoming one of the top growing cities in the U.S. mostly because of technology jobs. That means lots of smart people live there. Seattle is also known as one of the most literate cities in the United States and one of the least religious in the U.S.

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Hardly anyone in Seattle goes to church. If you had 10 friends in Seattle, only one of them might go to church. That means that most people living in Seattle don't have Jesus as a friend. This should make us sad because Jesus wants to be a friend to everyone.

God is so much more than our minds can even imagine. We can never fully understand Him with our human brains. When people don't have Jesus living in their hearts, they can't understand or accept Him. But when Jesus lives in our hearts, He helps us to love and trust God. He helps us to live by faith and not by sight.

Church planters and missions teams are going to Seattle talking to people and starting churches. They want everyone in Seattle to know that even though they can't see God, He is real. They want them to know that though it may seem that they are doing OK in life, they really aren't living the abundant life God wants for them. They need to know that without Jesus, they can't go to heaven.

At this point, you may extend the lesson by showing the featured video and doing the video recall activities.

Action

What actions can we take to love the people in Seattle and help them put their faith in Jesus, not themselves? (Let the children offer some suggestions.) Here are some more things we can do:

1. Pray that the people in Seattle will seek the truth about Jesus.
2. Pray that 200 families will leave home and move to join a church planting team in Seattle for five to 10 years.
3. Pray for the church planters and their families. (To learn the names of church planters in Seattle, go to namb.net/Seattle.)
4. Support ministry in Seattle through our generous offerings.
5. Prepare ourselves in case God wants us to one day serve Him in Seattle.

Close in prayer, inviting a child to pray for the items mentioned above.

For articles, video and more information on Send North America: Seattle, go to namb.net/Seattle.