

# Elisha Helps a Poor Widow

Elisha Helps a Poor Widow .....	1
Scene Summary .....	1
Scripture .....	1
Players .....	1
Special Props .....	2
Script – Elisha Helps a Poor Widow .....	3
Supplemental Information .....	5
Extra time .....	5
Jars and pots .....	6

## Scene Summary

“Elisha Helps a Poor Widow” presents the miraculous story of a prophet’s aid to a desperate woman. Scenes include: the creditor’s threat to sell the widow’s sons into slavery...the widow’s appeal to Elisha...his plan...borrowing pots from neighbors...the miracle of the oil that does not fail...the full pots of oil...sale of the oil...paying off the debt.

## Scripture

(2 Ki 4:1-7 NIV) The wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the LORD. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves." {2} Elisha replied to her, "How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?" "Your servant has nothing there at all," she said, "except a little oil." {3} Elisha said, "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few. {4} Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side." {5} She left him and afterward shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring. {6} When all the jars were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another one." But he replied, "There is not a jar left." Then the oil stopped flowing. {7} She went and told the man of God, and he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left."

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. NIV®. Copyright©1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

## Players

- **Narrator** – The play’s “catechist” or teacher, should be a good reader with a clear voice.
- **Banker** – Played as a gruff and arrogant person.
- **Widow** – A person that is very sad, grief ridden, poor and under great stress.
- **Elisha** – A character with authority, an older person.
- **Son 1, 2** – The widow’s children, always willing to help.

- **Neighbor 1, 2, 3** – Having many neighbors would illustrate their search.

***Special Props***

- Normal items from the prop box such as cloaks, veils, robes and headdresses.
- Many pots, bowls or cups.
- Coins

### ***Script – Elisha Helps a Poor Widow***

**Banker:** [gruffly] Pay me what you owe me!

**Widow:** [begging] Please give me time to get the money.

**Banker:** [angry] I will come again, but if you do not have the money, I will sell your sons as slaves.

**Narrator:** The woman hurried to Elisha, the man of God.

**Widow:** [distressed] What shall I do? You know that my husband has just died.

**Elisha:** [comforting] Your husband was a good man. He studied hard in my school for prophets. [pause, thinking] Do you have anything to sell?

**Widow:** Nothing. The only thing that I have is a little oil.

**Elisha:** Go and borrow empty jars and pots. Be sure to borrow as many as you can, not just a few. With you and your sons inside the house, shut the door behind you, and pour the oil into the jars.

**Narrator:** The poor widow hurried away.

**Widow:** [to herself] I wonder why Elisha told me to do this? I don't have enough oil to even fill one jar.

**Widow:** [to her neighbor] Do you have any empty jars or pots that I can borrow?

**Neighbor 1:** Yes, just a moment. [going to get them] Here are two that you may borrow. [handing the jars to the widow]

**Narrator:** The widows two sons borrowed jars and pitchers too. Each one went to a different house. It was fun to collect the jars, pitchers and bowls. The boys laughed as they carried them home. [pause] Soon the little house was filled with jars, bottles, pitchers, bowls and pots.

**Son 1:** What will we do with so many empty pitchers?

**Widow:** You will see. [pause] Now please close the door.

**Narrator:** Then the widow picked up her jar of oil and began to pour oil into one of the empty jars. When it was full, she set it aside.

**Widow:** [looking into her pitcher, excited] There is still oil in my pitcher!

**Narrator:** So, she began to pour oil into another jar. [pause] The widow poured and poured. Each time she filled a jar she looked into the pitcher. Always, there was more oil left. The widow was so excited that she could hardly pour without spilling the precious oil.

**Widow:** [to her sons] Bring me another jar.

**Son 2:** They are all full of oil. [staring at all of the pots and jars of oil]

**Son 1:** Where did all of this oil come from?

**Widow:** God has provided the oil.

[scene change, going back to Elisha]

**Widow:** Sir, I have borrowed many empty pitchers and they are all filled with oil.

**Elisha:** [smiling] Sell your oil and pay your debts.

**Narrator:** The widow hurried home. Her sons helped her carry the pitchers and jars to the marketplace.

**Widow:** [calling out] I have good cooking oil.

**Narrator:** Women hurried to her with their empty pitchers to buy the oil. [pause] When all of the oil was sold, the widow and her sons counted the money. They were so excited; they had never seen so much money. The widow put the right amount of money into bags, to pay each person she owed. She then took one of the bags of money to the banker who had told her that he would sell her sons.

[Scene change to the banker]

**Widow:** Here is the money that I owe you. [Handing him the bag]

**Narrator:** The banker was so surprised, he didn't even say "thank you."

**Narrator:** When the widow had paid all of her debts, she hurried home to her sons. How happy she was that they would not be sold, and there was money left over to buy food and clothes for a long time. [pause, widow and sons kneeling in prayer] Together, the widow and her sons thanked God.

The End

## ***Supplemental Information***

Elisha's name means "God is Salvation." He lived more than 800-years before Christ. His home was in the Jordan valley, about halfway between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. There is not much known about his family, but there is evidence that they were wealthy.

God chose Elisha to take Elijah's place as a prophet. Elijah trained Elisha and, when God took Elijah to heaven, his mantle or cloak fell on Elisha as an indication that he had been chosen by God. The common people as well as the kings and other important leaders respected Elisha. He gave advice and help to all who came seeking him. Through God's power, he performed many miracles. Elisha also headed schools for training prophets.

When one of the poor student prophets died, his widow came to Elisha for help. Her husband had owed money and the creditor now demanded payment immediately. Since the woman had no money, the creditor threatened to sell her two sons into slavery. Elisha performed a miracle to help her. Her meager bit of oil was multiplied until she had many vessels of valuable oil. She took the oil to the open market and sold it. When she counted the money, she realized she not only had enough to pay the debt, but had money left over to provide for the family needs.

Since silver was a common metal in Palestine, it was used most frequently for money. Gold was also used, but since it was scarce, it was more valuable. Lumps of silver of varying sizes were used as money. To determine the value, the silver was weighed. A buyer purchased goods by paying the correct weight of silver pieces. Sometimes, the silver was hammered into rings and strung a cord to make it easier to carry. Usually money was carried in small leather bags. It was not until several hundred years after Elisha's day that coins were minted and became in common use.

Clay pots were used to store food and oil in Bible homes. They were also used as cooking pots. Even the small household ovens for baking bread were made of clay. Often, the man and his sons made the clay jars and pots used by the family. Sometimes, they would make extra and sell them to caravans traveling to distant cities.

The poor widow probably had few pots, because she would not need very many. At Elisha's request, she borrowed extra jars and pots from her neighbors. These were probably made of reddish clay and decorated with designs in black. Some may have been covered with blue glaze.

## ***Extra time***

Your class will enjoy making clay pots, similar to those used by the poor widow. A simple recipe for clay is provided, or you can inexpensively purchase modeling clay.

You may want to let your students draw a picture illustrating some aspect or theme of the Bible story.

### ***Jars and pots***

The jars and pots borrowed by the poor widow from her neighbors were handmade of clay. Boys and girls will enjoy making a Bible time pot or jar.

To make your own “clay,” mix together equal parts of salt and flour, and then add just enough water to form very thick dough. A heaping one-fourth cup each of salt and flour will make two small jars 1-1/2 inches in diameter and 2-1/2 inches high. Pinch off a small piece of dough, roll it by hand on wax paper on the tabletop until you have a rope a little thinner than a pencil. Wind spiral fashion to form the bottom of a jar. Or, flatten a small piece of clay with your hand to form a jar bottom.

Form the outside wall of your jar with clay ropes to the desired height. Press the clay ropes lightly against the previous row as you go along. Let the jar dry several days, then paint it red and decorate with black lines. Or paint it blue. Tempera will work fine. Young children may find it difficult to form the jars. They may cover glass or plastic bottles with the clay, let it dry, and then paint it. Make clay a creamy consistency by adding a little more water. Turn jar upside down to dry.