TRACK THREE

THE DROUGHT · COMPANION GUIDE

YOUTH MINISTRY

A 60-75 minute youth night for middle and high school students: a hook, a talk, discussion, breakouts, and a challenge for the week.

THE BIG IDEA

When the brook dries up, God isn't finished. His word is true: He provides in unlikely ways, He hears honest prayer in grief, and He alone gives life, as He did for the widow's son.

NIGHT PLAN

	60 MIN	75 MIN
Arrival and hook	8	11
Watch the film	11	11
Leader talk	15	17
Large-group discussion	8	10
Small-group breakouts	12	16
Reflection	4	6
Challenge and prayer	2	4

THE HOOK: RUNNING ON EMPTY

Ask: *What's something that ran out on you at the worst possible time?* A phone battery before a ride home, gas, time on a test, your voice at a game. No phones needed, and no one has to answer. Take a few answers, then ask: *What do you do when something you depend on runs out?* Bridge: *Tonight we meet a prophet who obeyed God and still watched his brook dry up, and a widow down to her last meal.*

Low-prep option: *What Do People Trust?* Students rank, on paper or out loud, what people their age rely on most to feel secure: money, grades, friends, family, looks, being liked, God. Ask why.

LEADER TALK

1 **A WORD AGAINST THE STORM GOD.** King Ahab "did more yet to provoke Yahweh, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him." (16:33) He built a temple for Baal, worshiped in that region as the god of storms and rain *(historical background from outside the Bible)*. Elijah's first words go straight at that claim: "As Yahweh, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." (17:1) The living God, not Baal, holds the rain.

2 **HIDDEN AND FED.** God sent Elijah to hide by a brook: "I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." (17:4) Obedience took Elijah out of the spotlight and into a place where he depended on God every morning and every evening.

3 **WHEN THE BROOK DRIES UP.** "After a while, the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land." (17:7) The text gives no hint that Elijah had done wrong; the drought he announced reached his own cup. Following God doesn't exempt us from dry seasons, but God had a next step ready when the old supply stopped.

4 **THE LAST HANDFUL.** God sent Elijah to a widow in Sidon, Jezebel's home region (16:31; 17:9). She had “only a handful of meal in a jar and a little oil in a jar” (17:12). Elijah said, “Don’t be afraid.” (17:13) She trusted God's word enough to give first, and “The jar of meal didn’t run out and the jar of oil didn’t fail…” (17:16) Jesus later pointed to her as a sign of God's grace reaching beyond Israel (Luke 4:25-26).

5 **THE HARDEST LOSS.** Then her son became sick until “there was no breath left in him” (17:17). Elijah took the boy upstairs and brought the hardest question straight to God: “Yahweh my God, have you also brought evil on the widow with whom I am staying, by killing her son?” (17:20) Honest prayer is not a lack of faith. “Yahweh listened to the voice of Elijah…” (17:22), and the boy lived. The widow said, “Now I know that you are a man of God, and that Yahweh’s word in your mouth is truth.” (17:24)

6 **JESUS.** *(A gospel parallel; Luke 7 doesn't cite 1 Kings 17, though its wording echoes it.)* At the gate of a town called Nain, Jesus met a widow carrying out her only son. He said, “Young man, I tell you, arise!” (Luke 7:14) Elijah prayed and waited; Jesus spoke, and death obeyed. He is “the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25), and for everyone who trusts Him, death is not the end.

DISCUSSION

MIDDLE SCHOOL

1. Why would a drought be a direct challenge to people who believed Baal sent the rain?
2. Elijah obeyed God, and his brook still dried up. Have you ever done the right thing and still had it get hard?
3. The widow gave first from the little she had. What makes sharing hard?
4. Elijah told God exactly how he felt (17:20). What keeps us from being honest with God?

HIGH SCHOOL

1. Read Deuteronomy 11:16-17. How does Elijah's drought fit what God had warned?
2. God provided through ravens and a foreign widow, sources no one would have expected. How might God provide through unexpected people today?
3. Read Luke 4:25-29. Why did Jesus' mention of this widow make his hometown so angry?
4. After her son was restored, the widow said, “Now I know…” (17:24). How do hard seasons shape faith?

BREAKOUT GROUPS

1. Where has a "brook" run dry for you, something you relied on that stopped? Keep it private or pass if you'd rather.
2. Who has God used to help you when you didn't expect it?
3. What would it look like to pray as honestly as Elijah did this week?
4. Who could you help or share with this week? Time and kindness count too.

REFLECTION: TWO OPTIONS

Phones down. Hand each student an index card titled *My Brook*. They write one thing they rely on that could run dry, and one way God has provided for them before. Have them keep the card.

Phones out (no social media). Students privately set a morning reminder labeled *New every morning* for each day this week. No one shows a screen or says what they wrote.

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

NEW EVERY MORNING.

Each morning this week, before you check your phone, read Lamentations 3:22-23 and name one way God provided for you yesterday. Next time your small group meets, share how it went, if you want to. Anyone may pass.

LEADER NOTES ON HARD QUESTIONS

"WHY DID GOD LET THE BOY DIE?" The text doesn't say. The widow's words suggest she feared her sin had been brought to memory (17:18), but the narrator never says her sin caused his death, and Jesus warned against assuming that suffering is punishment for someone's sin (John 9:2-3). What the text shows is that God heard Elijah's honest prayer, gave the boy his life back, and the widow came to know that His word is true (17:24). Be gentle: some students have lost people who were not brought back. God's final answer to death is Jesus (John 11:25-26).

"IS IT OKAY TO BE UPSET WITH GOD?" Elijah's prayer in 17:20 is a raw question, and Scripture is full of prayers like it (Psalm 13:1-2). Bringing grief and questions to God is an act of faith. Elijah prayed to God, not away from Him.

"WHY DOESN'T GOD FEED EVERYONE WHO'S HUNGRY?" Jesus said there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's day (Luke 4:25), and the famine was real (1 Kings 18:2). Scripture doesn't explain every case, but it calls God's people to share (James 2:15-16). If a student's family is struggling, connect them quietly with your church's care team; never single anyone out.

"DID THIS REALLY HAPPEN?" 1 Kings presents it as history. An Assyrian inscription names King Ahab, and Josephus reports a drought in Phoenicia in the reign of Jezebel's father; see the Deep Dive track. Archaeology can't test the miracles themselves, and its silence doesn't settle the question. This guide, with many evangelical scholars, reads 1 Kings 17 as the account of real events it presents itself to be.

CARE LINE. The widow expected to "die" (17:12), and her son died. Grief, hunger at home, or hopelessness may come up. If a student says they want to hurt themselves or don't want to live, stay with them and get help now: follow the safeguarding steps below, and in the US they can call or text 988, the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

SAFEGUARDING. If a child or teen tells you about abuse, neglect, self-harm, harmful drinking or drug use at home, or anything else that makes you worried for their safety: stay calm, listen, and thank them for telling you. Don't promise to keep it secret, don't question them for details or investigate, and don't confront anyone involved. Write down what they said as soon as you can, and report it the same day to your church's designated safeguarding lead, following your church's safeguarding policy and any mandatory-reporting law that applies to you. If anyone is in immediate danger, stay with them and call emergency services. Telling a church safeguarding lead does not replace any report the law requires you to make directly to child-protection authorities or police.

PRAYER

Give students a moment of silence to pray Lamentations 3:23: "They are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness." Then close: *Faithful God, You hold the rain and You give life. When our brooks run dry, help us trust Your word. Teach us to pray honestly, give generously, and look to Jesus, the resurrection and the life. Amen.*