

SAMUEL WAS BORN AND CALLED

1 Samuel 1-3



During the time of the judges, there was a woman named Hannah who desperately wanted a son. Every year, she would go with her husband to worship and sacrifice to the Lord at a place called Shiloh. Priests named Hophni and Phineas, and their father Eli, would lead the people in worship at Shiloh.

During one of her visits, Hannah went into the Lord's house, crying and praying to God: "Lord, please give me a son, and I will give him back to you."

Eli was also in the Lord's house at the same time. When he heard what she was asking the Lord for, he said, "Go in peace, and may God grant your request and give you a son."

God answered Hannah's prayer, and she gave birth to a boy, and she named him Samuel. When the boy was a few years old, Hannah returned to Shiloh and gave Samuel to Eli to worship and serve the Lord there. Then Hannah prayed and said, "My heart rejoices in the Lord. There is no one holy like our God!"

Now, Eli's sons were wicked leaders of the people. They did evil by using their power as priests to take what they wanted from the people. They did not obey God's laws for making sacrifices. God sent a man to Eli to give him a message from the Lord. He said, "I am going to cut off your family from leading

my people, and I will raise up a faithful priest for myself."

Sometime later, Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the Lord by the ark of God. The Lord called Samuel, and Samuel answered, "Here I am."

Samuel ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

"I didn't call," Eli replied. "Go back and lie down."

A second time, the Lord called, "Samuel!" Samuel got up, went to Eli, and said, "Here I am; you called me." Eli sent Samuel back to bed again.

A third time, the Lord called Samuel. This time, when Samuel went to Eli, Eli understood that the Lord was calling Samuel. He said to Samuel, "If he calls you again, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'"

When the Lord called Samuel a fourth time, Samuel replied, "Speak, for your servant is listening." From that day on, God spoke to Samuel, and all Israel knew that Samuel was a prophet of the Lord.

Christ Connection: God called to Samuel, and Samuel responded. God calls people to turn from sin and follow Jesus. Everyone who responds by trusting in Jesus is saved from sin.



1 WELCOME TIME

Greet each preteen as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

- **Have you ever been called to an important task? Maybe you were called to be the class line leader or maybe you were called to help a friend with her homework.**
- **Tell me about it.**

2 SESSION STARTER

OPTION 1: GUESS WHO



Lead kids to sit in a circle. Invite kids to say their name aloud, being sure to introduce anyone new. Allow kids to repeat each others' names. Then tell kids to close their eyes.

Explain that when you tap a kid on the shoulder, he or she must say something aloud such as "I like to ride my bike" while everyone's eyes remained closed. Then tell kids to open their eyes and invite kids to raise their hands to guess who spoke. Call on kids until the correct kid is named. Repeat again as time allows.

SAY “ If we’re familiar with a voice, it’s easier to know who spoke. Today, we’ll see how God called Samuel, but at first, Samuel didn’t know who was calling him. We’ll learn that eventually **SAMUEL RESPONDED TO GOD’S CALL.** ”

OPTION 2: SPREAD THE WORD

Before the session, cut 5–10 slips of paper and write a silly news headline on each one. Some examples include: *Today’s Weather Calls for Raining Pancakes*, *Kid Eats 100 Slices of Pizza*, *Man Walks Pet Elephant in the Park*, *Woman Sets Hiccup World Record*. Call for volunteers to read the headline to the group and elaborate on the news story. Invite kids to pretend to be a news anchor, a podcaster, or a radio DJ.

SAY “ Some people, like news anchors or radio DJs, have opportunities to share stories about what is happening in the world. In the Bible, God called prophets to share His words. God would speak to the prophets, and they would tell the people His message. God’s words are always true, and His words lead us to life. Today, we’ll see how God called a boy named Samuel to be His prophet to Israel. ”



1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Today, we are going to hear about how Samuel was born and called. Through our Bible story we will learn that **SAMUEL RESPONDED TO GOD'S CALL**. Whether this is your first time or your tenth time hearing this story, there is always something new to learn in God's Word.

Read from 1 Samuel 1-3.

•What does this story teach us about God?

God always knows what is best, and in His perfect timing and knowledge, He will answer our prayers for our good. This may mean that, like Hannah, we receive what we want. Other times, it may mean we have to wait longer or trust that even if we don't get what we want, God always does what is right. When God answered Hannah's prayers, she responded in worship. The Bible says that God is like a rock because He can always be trusted, and in His holiness, He always does what is good.

•Samuel did not know God's voice. How can we learn God's voice?

Just as Samuel had to learn God's voice, **we can learn God's voice through the Bible.** When we read our Bibles, we learn how God loves us and wants to save us from our sin. We learn how He calls us to live and the commands He desires us to follow. We learn what He says is true so we can turn away from the lies of the world. The Bible tells us that God has spoken to us through His Son, Jesus (Hebrews 1:1-2). Anyone who trusts in Jesus is forgiven of sin and given eternal life.

Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

2 MISSIONS MOMENT

Remind kids that Doug and Evelyn Knapp were missionaries in Tanzania, Africa. Tell kids that it wasn't always easy for Doug and Evelyn to tell people about Jesus in Tanzania. But as the Knapps formed relationships with the people through teaching the people better ways to farm, they had more opportunities to tell people about Jesus.

Tell kids that one time, a group of bees swarmed around some children. As the local Christians knelt to pray, an unusual gust of wind came and scattered the bees. When the bees were gone, the believers gathered in the church to praise God for hearing their prayers and removing the bees. Even though some people questioned what the Knapps were telling them about Jesus, God's mighty power to answer prayer led many of the people to trust in Jesus.

Remind kids that God heard the prayers of the Christians in Tanzania just as He heard the prayer of Hannah from our story. Close in prayer, thanking God for how He sees and hears His children.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

The Bible tells us that God calls all people to repent (Acts 17:30-31). We can respond to God’s call by turning from our sin and turning to Jesus. When we respond to God’s call, God is faithful to save us from our sins. Have you responded to God’s call of repentance?






4 PRAY

Dear God, help us listen for Your call on our lives. Thank You for Your grace as You call us to repent of our sin. Help us continue to turn away from our sin and turn to Jesus. Amen.

THE GOSPEL

GOD’S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.

				
GOD RULES	WE SINNED	GOD PROVIDED	JESUS GIVES	WE RESPOND
Ask: “Who is in charge at home?” Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.	Ask: “Have you ever done something wrong?” Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.	Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.	Ask: “What is the best gift you’ve ever received?” Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.	Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: “Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus.” Read Romans 10:9-10.



THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

1 THINK ABOUT THE STORY

- **What makes a “prophet” a prophet? Do we have prophets today?**
- **How is Jesus the perfect Prophet?**

2 GROUP DISCUSSION

Distribute Bibles. Guide preteens to open their Bibles to 1 Samuel 3. Choose a volunteer to read aloud 1 Samuel 3:21. Remind preteens that the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel through His words. The Bible is God’s Word to us, and it is how we come to know God and His Son, Jesus. In fact, the Bible tells us that Jesus is the Word made flesh (John 1:14). Tell kids that when we trust in Jesus, not only do we come to know God, but we also are saved from our sin so we can live with God forever.

Choose another volunteer to read aloud 1 Samuel 3:21 again. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. **When has God answered your prayer? How did He answer you?**

Answers will vary. Remind kids that God always answers our prayers, but sometimes His answer may be a “yes” or a “no.” Discuss how we can trust God, like Hannah did, and come to Him with our frustrations, challenges, heartbreaks, desires, praises, and needs. Encourage kids to make prayer a daily habit, knowing God sees and hears them. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 John 5:14.)

2. **How can we respond to God’s call to obey Him?**

Remind kids that God calls all people to repent of their sin and trust in Jesus. Tell kids that God also calls us to respond in obedience to His commands. Explain that we discover God’s will for our lives by reading the Bible. We can then use that knowledge to act in obedience through faith. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Sam. 15:22.)

3. **How can we respond to God answering our prayers for His glory?**

Tell kids that Hannah gave Samuel back to the Lord to serve Him, and she praised Him for His grace. Discuss how we can worship God and praise Him when He answers our prayers. Tell kids that we can use the gifts He gives us to serve Him and point others to Him. Share how God receives the glory when we acknowledge He alone is worthy of our praise. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 11:36.)

BIG PICTURE QUESTION

How does God care for His creation?
God loves and rules over His creation according to
His perfect plan.



THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

1 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Before the session, write the key passage on two different colors of paper or small pieces of paper, including only one or two words per paper. Hide the papers throughout the room. Instruct kids to open their Bibles to Philippians 4:19. Lead them in reading the key passage aloud together.

Form kids into two teams. Assign a color to each team and challenge the kids to find all of the pieces of paper hidden around the room. Once they've gathered all the papers, set a timer for two minutes. Lead kids to put the key passage in the correct order in two minutes. The team to put it in order first is the winner.

2 PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, praising God for calling people to Himself through faith in Jesus.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

WHAT'S THE RESPONSE?

Form kids into five groups. Provide each group with a Bible, paper, and pens. Assign each group with one of the following Bible references: Genesis 6:14,22; Genesis 12:1,4; Exodus 4:19-20; Matthew 4:18-20; Mark 2:13-14.

Direct groups to read their Bible verse and answer the following questions:
1) Who called someone? 2) What did He call the person or people to do? 3) How did the person or people respond? Then review their answers.

Tell kids that in the Old Testament, God spoke directly to people. He called Noah to build the ark, Abraham to go to a new land, and Moses to rescue the Israelites in Egypt. These people responded by faith and obeyed God. Share that in the New Testament, Jesus called people to follow Him. The Bible tells us that God has spoken to us through Jesus (Heb. 1:2). Just as Samuel responded to God's call, we can respond to God's call through faith in Jesus.