
Leader BIBLE STUDY

Hannah—an ordinary Israelite during the time of the judges—wanted nothing more than to be a mother, but the Lord had closed her womb. (1 Samuel 1:5) Each year when her husband went to Shiloh to worship and to sacrifice to God, Hannah went up to the house of the Lord. One evening, Hannah returned to present herself to the Lord. She wept and prayed, asking God to give her a son and vowing to dedicate him to God. Hannah’s cries to the Lord were so fervent that Eli the priest rebuked her for being drunk.

“I haven’t had any wine or beer; I’ve been pouring out my heart before the Lord,” Hannah explained. Eli blessed Hannah and said, “May God answer your prayers.” God answered Hannah’s prayers. Hannah had a son. She named him Samuel, which means, “requested from God.”

When Samuel was old enough to be weaned, Hannah took him to Shiloh and presented him to Eli. First Samuel 2 records Hannah’s triumphant prayer. Hannah glorified God for His sovereignty, then she went home with her husband, leaving Samuel to serve God under the leadership of Eli the priest. Samuel faithfully served God. Hannah visited Samuel each year and brought him a robe.

Now Eli had two sons of his own who were also priests. Eli had trouble controlling his sons. They were wicked men with no regard for God. Eli rebuked his children, but they did not listen. So God rejected Eli’s family.

Review 1 Samuel 3. Note how Samuel responded to God’s call: “Speak, for Your servant is listening.” Samuel was the prophet Israel needed to give them God’s guidance. He became a prophet of God and was the last judge of Israel. Help kids identify Samuel’s role as God’s messenger. Help them connect Samuel to Jesus, who came to earth not only to tell what God is like, but to show what He is like.

Older Kids BIBLE STUDY OVERVIEW

Session Title: Eli and Boy Samuel

Bible Passage: 1 Samuel 1–3

Big Picture Question: How did God use Samuel? God used Samuel to share His plan with the nation of Israel.

Key Passage: 1 Samuel 2:35

Unit Christ Connection: God used people and visual elements in history to give us pictures of Christ.

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Small Group Leader

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The BIBLE STORY

Eli and Boy Samuel

1 Samuel 1–3

In a hilly country called Ephraim, a man named Elkanah lived with his two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. Hannah was very sad because she did not have any children. Peninnah had children. Peninnah was mean to Hannah and made Hannah feel bad that God had not given her any children. In those days, having children was very important. Hannah wanted to have a family.

Every year, Elkanah went to the tent of meeting in Shiloh to make sacrifices to God and to worship Him. Hannah went with her husband. She wept and would not eat. Elkanah saw that Hannah was upset. “What’s wrong, Hannah?” he asked. “Don’t I make you happy?”

Hannah prayed to God and wept. Hannah told God, “Lord, if You give me a son, I will dedicate him to You. He will serve You all of his life.” A priest named Eli was sitting near the doorpost of the tabernacle. Eli watched Hannah pray silently. He couldn’t hear her, but he saw her lips moving. Eli thought there was something wrong with Hannah.

“I am a woman with a broken heart,” Hannah explained. “I’ve been pouring out my heart before the Lord.”

Eli replied, “Go in peace. May God answer your prayers.”

Hannah and Elkanah returned home, and God did answer her prayers. After some time, Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel because, she said, “I asked the Lord for him.”

When Samuel was no longer a baby, Hannah took him to Eli at the tabernacle. She reminded Eli who she was and told him that God had answered her prayers. Hannah pledged Samuel to serve God and she worshiped God with a prayer.

“There is no one holy like the Lord. There is no one besides You! And there is no rock like our God,” Hannah prayed. She returned home and left Samuel with Eli to serve God. Every year, Hannah returned with a

new robe for Samuel, and God gave Hannah many more children.

Eli was getting old, and his sons served as priests in the tabernacle. Eli heard that his sons were sinning against God. Eli asked his sons why they were sinning, but they did not listen to him. Samuel, on the other hand, grew older and found favor with God and with men.

One day a man of God came to Eli and told him that God was not going to honor people who sinned against Him. God said He was going to choose a new priest who would serve God faithfully.

One night, Eli was lying in his bed and Samuel was lying in the tabernacle when Samuel heard someone speak to him.

“Here I am,” Samuel replied. He ran to Eli. “Here I am; you called me.”

God called Samuel three times, and each time Samuel ran to Eli. “Here I am,” he said. Eli finally understood that God was calling to Samuel. He told Samuel how to respond.

Samuel went back to his place, and God called, “Samuel, Samuel!”

“Speak, for Your servant is listening,” Samuel replied. God told Samuel that He was going to judge Eli’s family for their sin.

The next day, Samuel was afraid to tell Eli what God had said. Eli asked Samuel to tell him what God said. “He is the Lord. He will do what He thinks is good,” Eli assured Samuel.

As Samuel grew, God was with him. Everyone in Israel knew that Samuel was God’s messenger. God used Samuel to share His plan with the nation of Israel.

Christ Connection: Samuel used God’s words to tell the people what God is like. John 1:1 says that Jesus is the Word. Jesus showed the world what God is like, and He told people to turn away from their sin. Jesus ultimately freed people from the power of sin by dying on the cross and rising again.

Small Group OPENING

Session Title: Eli and Boy Samuel

Bible Passage: 1 Samuel 1–3

Big Picture Question: How did God use Samuel? God used Samuel to share His plan with the nation of Israel.

Key Passage: 1 Samuel 2:35

Unit Christ Connection: God used people and visual elements in history to give us pictures of Christ.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Ask kids to share a time that they really, really wanted something. What did they want, and why did they want it?

Activity page (5 minutes)

Say • In today’s Bible story, someone desperately wanted something. We’ll hear more about that later. Our activity page today reveals a special message from today’s Bible story.

Help kids decipher the combinations to reveal the messages.

Session starter (10 minutes)

Option 1: It wasn’t me game

Lead kids to form a circle or a line. Select one kid to be *It*. He will stand with his eyes closed. One of the other kids should move a little to a new stance or slightly to the side. *It* will open his eyes and try to guess who moved. If he guesses wrong, the kid should say “It’s not me!” Allow *It* to continue guessing until he names the correct

- “Word Wheels” activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils



person. When *It* guesses correctly, select a new kid to be *It*. Continue until several or all of the kids have had a turn being *It*.

Say • In today's Bible story, a young boy thought a certain adult was speaking but the adult kept saying, "It's not me." Listen closely to discover who was really speaking.

Option 2: Life goals

Form groups of 4 or 5 kids and indicate which set of signs each group can write on. Explain that you will give a start command. Kids must move to one of the signs and write as many goals as they can think of for that category. After 30–45 seconds, you will give the command to move to another sign. Continue until kids have recorded goals on all four signs.

Briefly review the goals the kids have on each sign.

Say • In today's Bible story, a woman didn't have goals about school. She didn't have goals about having fun. She didn't have any goals about a job. She only had one desire. She wanted to have children. She wanted to have a family of her own. Listen closely to discover what happened to this woman and her desire for children.

Transition to large group

- chart paper
- markers
- tape
- Print a set of signs saying *family, fun, job, school*. Create a set of signs for each group of kids. Tape each set of signs on different walls in your room.

Large Group LEADER

Session Title: Eli and Boy Samuel

Bible Passage: 1 Samuel 1–3

Big Picture Question: How did God use Samuel? God used Samuel to share His plan with the nation of Israel.

Key Passage: 1 Samuel 2:35

Unit Christ Connection: God used people and visual elements in history to give us pictures of Christ.

Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins.

• Add notes to the case file board that say *Samuel, Eli, hints of Christ in 1 Samuel, How did God use Samuel?*

Introduce the session (1 minute)

[Large Group Leader enters and walks to the case file board. Study it intently for a few seconds before turning to the kids.]

Leader • Oh, hello! I see you are back to help Mr. Homes solve another case. You were great detectives last week. Mr. Homes was very impressed that we were able to solve the case so quickly. He was so impressed that he asked that we help with another case. You can see the case here on our case file board.

Big picture question (1 minute)

Leader • This one is very interesting. It appears our case is about a young man named Samuel. I wonder what hint of Christ is found in Samuel's story.

According to the board our mystery big picture question is, *How did God use Samuel?* This is very interesting, indeed! Have you heard of anyone named Samuel before?

Samuel is in the Bible you say? OK, I think we need to consult our timeline map to find more clues about this Samuel person.

Timeline map (2 minutes)

Leader • I see on our timeline that Samuel is after the judges and Ruth. Samuel's story is in the Book of 1 Samuel. Very interesting clues! Let's look at the picture on our timeline map and see if it gives us any more clues. Trace the chronology and mention some of the Bible stories as you follow the path to reach Samuel's picture.

Leader • Here we are! Samuel appears to be sitting up in bed. Hmm ... interesting. He also looks young, like someone your age maybe, give or take a few years. What do you say we find Samuel's story in our Bibles and try to solve this mystery? Yes! Let's get to work! We have a hint of Christ to uncover! Remember our mystery big picture question is, *How did God use Samuel?*

Lead boys and girls to find 1 Samuel 1 in the Bible.

Tell the Bible story (9 minutes)

Open your Bible to 1 Samuel 1 and tell the Bible story in your own words, or show the Bible story video "Eli and Boy Samuel."

Leader • Wow! Hannah was really sad. She didn't have any children and she wanted a family desperately! Can you imagine wanting something that much? Hannah was greatly distressed when she prayed to the Lord. And God granted her request. Hannah had a son, and she brought him to the tabernacle to serve the Lord with the priest, Eli. Hannah was faithful to God's plan, not her own.

When we pray, are we focused on God and His plan? Or do we focus on what we want? We're not always

• Timeline Map

- "Eli and Boy Samuel" video
- Bibles
- Bible Story Picture Slide or Poster (enhanced CD)
- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster (enhanced CD)
- For a shorter version of the Bible story, read only the bolded text of the Bible story script..

focused on God when we pray. We try to ask God for stuff we want because we want it. It's something to help us. We usually aren't willing to give back something we've prayed for.

But Hannah was. Hannah wanted to honor God more than she wanted to keep Samuel at home. She committed Samuel to God and knew that Samuel was meant to serve the Lord. Hannah kept her promise and Samuel lived with Eli at the tabernacle. Samuel grew, and he followed God.

Eli's sons were also priests, but they were not following God's commands. They were the opposite of Samuel. They constantly chose to sin, and Eli could not stop them. God sent a man with a message for Eli: God would choose a new priest to lead the people to worship God. One day Eli's family would die and a new family would become the priests for Israel.

Our big picture question was, *How did God use Samuel?* Did you discover the answer in the Bible story? Right! *God used Samuel to share His plan with the nation of Israel.* First, God gave Samuel a message for Eli. As Samuel grew, God continued to give him messages for the people of Israel. Samuel became a prophet for the Israelites. Who remembers what a prophet is? A prophet is someone who spoke God's words to the people. Samuel helped the Israelites understand what God was like. Samuel was a hint of Jesus Christ!

• Bible

Tip: Anytime you share how to become a Christian in a large group environment, try to have counselors available to meet one-on-one with kids. Make sure kids know who they can talk to and when they can talk.

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me (optional)

Leader • Jesus came to earth to show us what God was like. He freed people from the power of sin. Jesus showed people that God loved them and that He was gracious. God wanted His people to know and love Him.

Using Scripture and the guide provided, explain to the kids how to become a Christian. Encourage boys and girls to

ask their parents, small group leaders, or other adults any questions they may have about becoming a Christian.

Sing (5 minutes)

• “Center of It” song

Leader • God is always with us. God was with Hannah when she didn’t have any children. God was with Samuel even when he didn’t recognize that God was calling him. God was with Samuel as he spoke for God and helped the Israelites understand God’s plans for them. God is always there, always in the center of anything we face or endure. Lead boys and girls to sing “Center of It.”

Key passage (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Slide or Poster (enhanced CD)

• “Raise Up” song

Leader • Our key passage was part of what the man of God came to tell Eli. Eli’s sons did not follow God. God would not allow Eli’s family to continue to serve Him as priests. The priests were supposed to lead God’s people to worship and honor God, but Eli’s sons were sinning against God. God would not allow them to continue to sin against Him. Eli’s family would die and God would raise up a new priest who would follow Him. The promise of the new priest is our key passage. Read the key passage with me.

Lead boys and girls to sing “Raise Up.”

Discussion starter video (5 minutes)

• “Unit 10 Session 2” discussion starter video

Leader • How does God speak to us? What do you think? Call on several kids to answer.

Leader • Thank you for sharing your thoughts. Let’s watch this video and see what someone else thinks about how God speaks.

Watch the “Unit 10 Session 2” discussion starter video.

Leader • How many of you have wondered about how to

hear God speak? Will God speak to me in a loud booming voice? Is that how I'll know God is speaking to me? God speaks to us in a lot of different ways. In the Bible we see that God spoke to people out loud. He spoke to people by giving someone else a message to give them. He spoke to people by giving them instructions to follow. God spoke to people through prayer. God spoke to people through Scripture. God spoke to people through Jesus. He spoke through the Holy Spirit.

God doesn't just speak in one way. That is why it is important for us to spend time reading our Bible, praying, and learning from other Christians. As we learn more about God and who He is, we can understand when He speaks to us.

Prayer (2 minutes)

Leader • *How did God use Samuel? God used Samuel to share His plan with the nation of Israel.* We found a very interesting hint of Christ in the story of Samuel. Samuel helped the people understand what God is like. Jesus came to earth to show people what God is like.

Mr. Homes will be very excited that we've solved another one of his cases. I can't wait for you to come back next week so we can look at another case file. I wonder what mystery we will uncover next. Hmm ...

After I pray, watch your small group leader for the signal to go to your small group. Continue investigating the story of Samuel in your small group!

Close in prayer. Ask God to help boys and girls know Him and learn to understand when He is speaking to them.

Dismiss to small groups

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus.

Small Group LEADER

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Big Picture Question: How did God use Samuel? God used Samuel to share His plan with the nation of Israel.

Key Passage: 1 Samuel 2:35

Unit Christ Connection: God used people and visual elements in history to give us pictures of Christ.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster
(enhanced CD)

Form a circle with kids all facing outward, backs to the middle. Select one kid to start the key passage by saying the first word. Kids must take turns saying the next word of the passage without speaking at the same time as someone else.

If two kids speak at once, you may opt to guide the group to start again or allow the group to continue the passage. Kids should not look at anyone in the group as they play, and they cannot speak after the person next to them speaks. Allow kids to play for a few minutes.

Say •Eli’s family sinned and the consequences were very serious. God would choose a new priest to lead His people. The new priest would be faithful to God.

- One day God would send Jesus, the perfectly faithful Priest, to redeem people from sin.
- After Jesus’ sacrifice, people didn’t need a priest to help them seek God’s forgiveness.

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

• Bibles, 1 per kid
• Small Group Visual Pack
• chart paper
• markers

Guide kids to read 1 Samuel 2:26 and discuss the three areas in which Samuel grew: in stature (physical), with man (social), and with God (spiritual).

On a piece of chart paper, create three columns. Label a column *stature*, one *man*, and one *God*. Lead kids to list actions they can take to grow in each of the three areas. Sample actions: eat vegetables, exercise, be kind, love your neighbor, read the Bible, go to church, pray.

Ask kids to name actions that would not help them grow in each of the three areas.

Say • *How did God use Samuel? God used Samuel to share His plan with the nation of Israel.*

- How can God use us to share His plan with others?
- What did Jesus show the world? (*Jesus showed the world what God is like, and He told people to turn away from their sin.*)

Review the timeline in the small group visual pack. Allow each kid to name one of the previous Bible stories and one fact he remembers from that Bible story.

If you choose to review with boys and girls how to become a Christian, explain that kids are welcome to speak with you, another teacher, or a parent if they have questions.

- **God rules.** God created and is in charge of everything. (Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11; Col. 1:16-17)
- **We sinned.** Since Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Rom. 3:23; 6:23)
- **God provided.** God sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. (John 3:16; Eph. 2:8-9)
- **Jesus gives.** Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again so we can be welcomed into God's family. (Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 3:18)
- **We respond.** Believe that Jesus alone saves you. Repent. Tell God that your faith is in Jesus. (Rom. 10:9-10,13)



- blanket or sheet

Tip: If you don't have enough kids to form teams, allow kids to create different ways to move across the room and back. Or allow kids to play the normal game and time them. The kid with the best time after three tries wins.

Option: Instead of lying down, allow teams to kneel and wrap the blanket around their shoulders.

- pillowcases, 1 per kid
- fabric or permanent markers
- Bibles, 1 per kid
- heavyweight paper or cardboard

Activity choice (10 minutes)

Option 1: Get up relay

Form teams. The first person on each team should lie down and cover up with the blanket or sheet. When you give the command, the team member must quickly get up, walk toe-to-heel to the other side of the room, say “Here I am,” and return to tag the next player. When player one gets up and starts to cross the room, the next player on the team should lie down and cover up with the blanket.

After everyone on the team has completed the relay, the entire team must lie down (sit, if lacking space) and proclaim, “Speak, for Your servant is listening!”

Say • *How did God use Samuel? God used Samuel to share His plan with the nation of Israel.*

- When God calls us, we should always be ready and willing to respond with “Here I am” or “Speak, for Your servant is listening.”

Option 2: Speak! pillowcase

Provide heavyweight paper or cardboard for kids to slide inside the pillowcases while decorating. This will prevent bleeding through and will allow kids to decorate both sides of the pillowcases.

Allow each kid to decorate a pillowcase with part of Samuel's response to God (1 Samuel 3:10). Kids may also wish to print praises to God such as Hannah's praise in 1 Samuel 2:2.

Say • *How did God use Samuel? God used Samuel to share His plan with the nation of Israel.*

- What did Jesus show the world? (*Jesus showed the world what God is like, and He told people to turn away from their sin.*)
- Samuel told the Israelites what God is like. Jesus

showed the world what God is like. What can we share with people about God? How can they learn what God is like from us?

Affirm kids for their willingness to answer the questions.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Say • *How did God use Samuel? God used Samuel to share His plan with the nation of Israel.*

Invite kids to write a prayer asking God to use them in His plan.

Close in prayer by praying for each kid by name. Keep your prayer generic to keep kids from being embarrassed, but name each kid so the kids know you pray for them.

As time allows, lead kids to use the Bible to complete the activity page “Books of the Bible Clues.”

- pencils
- journals
- Bibles
- Journal Page, 1 per kid (enhanced CD)
- “Books of the Bible Clues” activity page, 1 per kid