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## 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.

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# Younger 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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# 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**

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**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

**Arriving Activity:** Happy things

Share something that makes you happy. It can be a special place you go, a family member or friend you spend time with, or anything else that makes you happy. Invite the kids to share something that makes them happy, too.

**Say** • Many things make us happy, but many things also make us sad. Today, we will find out what made a woman named Hannah happy and what made her sad.

## Activity page (5 minutes)

- “Talk to Me” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils

Guide boys and girls to complete the activity page.

**Say** • In today’s Bible story, God communicated or talked to a young boy, and God didn’t need any of the things you circled in this picture.

## Session starter (10 minutes)

**Option 1:** Message please

Group the kids into two or more teams. Encourage the kids to huddle together in a circle with their group. Explain that you have a special message for the teams. When you



- paper
- marker

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give the signal to go, only one member of each team may run up and read the message. Each team must choose a messenger. Be prepared to whisper the message to any kid who struggles to read it. When the messenger returns with the message, the team must follow the instructions of the message. The first team to do so wins. If the messenger forgets the message, he may come back and read or hear it again. Play again with a different messenger. Here are some ideas for possible messages. Write each message on a separate sheet of paper.

- Sit down.
- Pat your head with your hand.
- Run and touch a wall.
- Make a circle and hold hands.
- Give a thumbs up.

**Say** • What would you do if God had a message for you? Would you obey? We will find out if a boy named Samuel obeyed a message God gave him.

### **Option 2:** Spoon puppet

Provide a wooden spoon for each child. Explain that the kids will make a happy face on one side and a sad face on the other. Invite kids to make the faces using markers. Provide yarn in a variety of lengths from 1 to 4 inches. Allow the kids to glue on the yarn pieces as hair.

**Say** • There are some happy times and sad times in today's Bible story. Listen to see if you can find both.

### **Transition to large group**

- wooden spoons,  
1 per kid
- markers
- yarn pieces
- glue

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# 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.

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## Countdown

• countdown video

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

## Introduce the session (1 minute)

*[Large Group Leader enters the room with a sad expression.]*

**Leader** • Oh, hello there. I'm really sad today because I just can't figure out this case I've been working on. I've been investigating this story in the Bible, and I just can't find the hints of Christ. I know it has something to do with Jesus, but I just can't seem to find out what. Hey, I just thought of something. Maybe you can help. You have already had one training class, and two heads are supposed to be better than one. Do you think you're ready to help find some clues? Great, let's get started!

## Timeline map (1 minute)

• Timeline Map

**Leader** • Let's first review what we learned last week. We saw how Boaz redeemed Ruth and Naomi. Their story was a hint about another redeemer. Does anyone remember who that is? That's right. It's Jesus. **Who is**

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*our redeemer? Jesus is our Redeemer who gives us salvation.* Jesus paid for our sin and rescued us from the punishment we deserve. Our Bible story for today is called “Eli and Boy Samuel.”

### **Big picture question (1 minute)**

**Leader** • Now, where do you think we should start looking for clues? I know! What about our Bibles? After all, that’s where we can find the story of Eli and young Samuel. Do you have your Bible today? Great!

Let’s see our big picture question and what clues it holds. *How did God use Samuel?*

### **Sing (5 minutes)**

- “Center of It” song

**Leader** • I bet if we can find the answer to our big picture question, we can find out more about Jesus. I could sure use some music. It always helps me to think. I really liked that song from last week. Let’s see if we can sing along this time.

Sing together “Center of It.”

### **Key passage (4 minutes)**

- Key Passage Slide or Poster (enhanced CD)
- “Raise Up” song

**Leader** • We discovered a hint of Jesus in our key passage last week. Maybe taking another look at it before our Bible story will help us focus. Plus, we can see how much of it you remember.

Show the slide or poster of the unit’s key passage, 1 Samuel 2:35. Lead the boys and girls to read the verse together. Sing together “Raise Up.”

- “Eli and boy Samuel” video
- Bibles
- Bible Story Picture Slide or Poster (enhanced CD)

### **Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)**

**Leader** • Let’s open our Bibles to 1 Samuel 1 and check out our Bible story, “Eli and Boy Samuel.” Remember to



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keep looking for the hints of Jesus and the answer to our big picture question. *How did God use Samuel?*

Show the “Eli and Boy Samuel” video, or choose to tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided. For a shorter version of the story, read only the bolded text.

**Leader** • Hannah was a very sad lady. Have you ever been sad before? Hannah wanted a child but couldn’t have one.

She prayed to God, telling Him she would even give the child back to God if He would bless her with one. You know what? God did, and she had a little boy named Samuel. Hannah was so happy she started praising God. She also kept her promise. When Samuel was a little boy, she gave him to the priest, Eli, so he could serve God at the tabernacle. She still loved him and visited him every year. Meanwhile, God gave her several other children.

Eli became like a father to Samuel. Meanwhile, Eli’s sons, who were also priests, were not obeying God. A man of God told Eli that God was not pleased with his sons, and a new priest was going to be chosen.

Samuel was about to go to sleep one night in the tabernacle when he heard a voice. He thought it was Eli, but Eli said it wasn’t him. Three times Samuel heard the voice, and three times Eli said it wasn’t him. Eli realized it must have been God, so he told Samuel to go back to his bed and answer God. Samuel did, and God told Samuel that He was going to judge Eli’s family for his sons’ sins.

The next day when Eli asked Samuel what God said, at first Samuel didn’t want to tell Eli the bad news. Finally, Samuel told him. Samuel grew and God was with him. God continued to talk with Samuel. He used Samuel to share His plan with the nation of Israel. *How did God use Samuel? God used Samuel to share His plan with the nation of Israel.*

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Ask the following review questions:

1. What did Hannah promise if God gave her a son?  
(*to dedicate him to God, 1 Samuel 1:11*)
2. How did Hannah keep her promise? (*She left Samuel at the tabernacle, 1 Samuel 1:24-28*)
3. Who was speaking to Samuel during the night?  
(*God, 1 Samuel 3:8*)
4. What did God tell Samuel? (*He was going to judge Eli's family, 1 Samuel 3:11-13*)
5. **How did God use Samuel? God used Samuel to share His plan with the nation of Israel.**

### **Discussion starter video (3 minutes)**

**Leader** • How many of you would like God to talk to you?

Watch this video.

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

**Leader** • God doesn't usually talk to us like this. Is there another way God talks to all of us? That's right. The Bible is God's Word. God talks to us every time we read our Bible.

Wait a minute. John 1:1 says that Jesus *is* the Word. There's our hint of Jesus. Israel was able to understand God through the words spoken to Samuel. Every time we read about Jesus, we also learn more about who God is. Jesus shows us what God is like.

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

Use Scripture and the guide provided with this session to explain to boys and girls how to become a Christian. Assign individuals to meet with kids who have more questions. If this is not possible, encourage boys and girls to ask their parents, small group leaders, or other Christian adults any questions they may have about becoming a Christian.

• Big Picture Question  
Slide or Poster  
(enhanced CD)

## Prayer (5 minutes)

Show the big picture question slide or poster.

**Leader** • Thanks for helping me find the hint that leads to Jesus. By the way, does anyone remember the big picture question and answer? *How did God use Samuel? God used Samuel to share His plan with the nation of Israel.*

Share the big picture question with the kids, and tell them to get up and find a friend to share the answer with. Repeat three times, the same number of times God spoke to Samuel before he knew it was God.

Before transitioning to small group, make any necessary announcements. Lead the kids in prayer. Pray that God will show the kids that He still speaks to kids through His Word.

## Dismiss to small groups

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## 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.

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## Small Group LEADER

**Session Title:** Eli and Boy Samuel

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**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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### Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Slide or Poster (enhanced CD)
- dry erase board and markers (optional)
- sheets of paper, 2
- scissors
- markers
- tape
- Bibles, 2

Make sure the key passage, 1 Samuel 2:35, is visible for each child, either as the printed poster or written on a dry erase board. Read the verse together.

**Say** • God was angry at Eli’s sons because of their sin. He promised new priests would come. They would be faithful and follow God’s heart. This line of priests led the Israelites during the reign of King David, but this is also a hint of the Priest who would truly live forever: Jesus.

Write the verse on two pieces of paper. Cut the pieces of paper to form two puzzles. Hide one set of puzzle pieces inside one Bible and the other puzzle pieces in the other Bible. Form two groups and ask the kids in each group to line up single file. Tape a start line and place one of the Bibles in front of each group several feet from the line.

When you give the signal to go, encourage the first kid in line to run to the Bible and find one puzzle piece. She must bring the piece back to the group, and the next kid in line does the same. The goal is to get all the pieces and put the puzzle back together quickly.

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Small Group Visual Pack
- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster (enhanced CD)

## Bible story review (10 minutes)

Encourage the kids to find 1 Samuel 1 in their Bibles. Help them as needed.

**Say** • Is 1 Samuel in the Old or New Testament? (*Old Testament*) First Samuel is in the division of books in the Bible we call History. First Samuel tells about the nation of Israel as the Israelites went from being led by judges to being led by kings.

Use the small group visual pack to show kids where today's Bible story is on the timeline. Review the Bible story provided using the bolded text, or summarize the story in your own words. Read the statements below, and ask the kids to make a happy face if it is a happy statement or a sad face if it is a sad statement.

- Hannah could not have a baby. (*sad*)
- God gave Hannah a baby boy. (*happy*)
- Hannah left Samuel at the tabernacle. (*sad and happy*)
- God spoke to Samuel. (*happy*)
- God asked Samuel to tell Eli bad news. (*sad*)
- God shared His plans for Israel with Samuel. (*happy*)
- God speaks to us through His Word. (*happy*)

Show the big picture question slide or poster.

**Say** • Let's look at our big picture question and answer one more time. ***How did God use Samuel? God used Samuel to share His plan with the nation of Israel.***

## Activity choice (10 minutes)

**Option 1:** Here I am!

Invite the kids to spread out in the room. Choose a volunteer to face away from the kids. Secretly choose another kid to say the volunteer's name without moving. The volunteer must turn around and guess who said it by running up to



a kid and saying, “Here I am.” If he guesses correctly, he chooses the next kid to take his place. If not, the kid who said his name becomes the next volunteer.

**Say** • It wasn’t easy to know who was talking to you. At first, Samuel didn’t know it was God speaking to him. As Samuel grew up, the people of Israel knew God was speaking to Samuel. God used Samuel to talk to His people, too. *How did God use Samuel? God used Samuel to share His plan with the nation of Israel.*

### **Option 2:** Prayer card

- construction paper
- scissors
- pencil or marker

Provide each kid with a piece of construction paper. Invite each kid to fold the paper in half lengthwise. Encourage the kids to place their non-writing hand in the middle of the folded piece of paper with the top of their middle finger on the fold. Demonstrate how the kids should close their fingers together with their thumb slightly out. This should look like they would hold both hands if they were praying. Invite them to trace the hand and then cut it out, leaving the middle finger attached at the fold.

When finished, you will have a praying card that opens at the top and even sits up on its own. Encourage the kids to write a prayer for someone inside the card, or use the card as a reminder to pray for someone.

**Say** • We talk to God when we pray and read the Bible. We can also share God’s plan with others. *How did God use Samuel? God used Samuel to share His plan with the nation of Israel.*

- journal
- Journal Page, 1 per kid (enhanced CD)
- markers or crayons
- Bible Story Coloring Page

### **Journal and prayer (5 minutes)**

Distribute each child’s journal and the journal page provided with this session. Instruct the kids to draw a

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picture of Samuel as a boy in the tabernacle. Writers can write the big picture question and answer.

**Say** •Let's say our big picture question and answer one last time. *How did God use Samuel? God used Samuel to share His plan with the nation of Israel.*

Make sure each kid puts this week's sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the coloring page provided with this session. Pray, thanking God that He wants to talk to us. Pray for each child by name, asking God to help the kids learn to spend time praying and reading God's Word.