

The BIBLE STORY

Eli and Boy Samuel

1 Samuel 1–3

In a hilly country called Ephraim (EE fra ihm), a man named Elkanah (el KAY nuh) lived with his wife, Hannah. Hannah was very sad because she did not have any children. Hannah really wanted to have a family.

Every year, Elkanah went to the tabernacle to worship God. Hannah went with Elkanah. She cried and would not eat. Elkanah saw that Hannah was upset. “What’s wrong, Hannah?” he asked. “Don’t I make you happy?” But Hannah was not happy. She wanted a baby.

Hannah prayed to God and cried some more. Hannah prayed, “Lord, if You give me a son, I will give 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. He couldn’t hear her, but he saw her lips moving. Eli thought there was something wrong with Hannah.

“I am very sad,” Hannah told Eli. “I’ve been telling God how I feel.”

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

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

When Samuel was old enough, Hannah took him to Eli at the tabernacle. “God has answered my prayers!” Hannah said. Hannah worshiped God. Then she left Samuel with Eli to serve God, and she went home. Every year, Hannah visited Samuel and brought him a new robe. God gave Hannah many more children.

Eli was getting old. His sons were priests in the tabernacle. Eli heard that his sons were not obeying God. Eli asked his sons, “Why are you doing bad things?” But they did not listen to him.

Samuel grew older and obeyed God. 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 Him faithfully.

One night, Eli went to bed. Samuel was lying in the tabernacle when he heard someone's voice.

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

God called Samuel three times. Each time, Samuel ran to Eli. "Here I am," he said. But Eli did not call Samuel. Who was calling Samuel? Eli knew it must be God. Eli told Samuel what to say.

Samuel went back to his place. God called, "Samuel, Samuel!"

"Speak, for Your servant is listening," Samuel said. God talked to Samuel. God told him that He was going to punish Eli's family for disobeying Him.

The next day, Samuel was afraid to tell Eli what God had said. It was bad news for Eli. Eli asked Samuel to tell him what God had said, so Samuel did.

As Samuel grew, God did everything He said He was going to do. God was with Samuel, and everyone in Israel knew that Samuel was God's messenger.

Christ Connection: Samuel told people what God is like. Jesus came to earth as a human. His life showed the world what God is like.

* Use only the words in bold to review the Bible story or tell it to younger preschoolers.

Small Group OPENING

Session Title: Eli and Boy Samuel

Bible Passage: 1 Samuel 1–3

Big Picture Question: Who spoke to Samuel? God spoke to Samuel, and Samuel listened.

Key Passage: 1 Samuel 2:35

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

- Prepare: Play “Center of It” in the background.
- Post an allergy alert, if necessary. (enhanced CD)



- “Circle Items You Can Hear” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or crayons
- blindfold (optional)

Welcome and Session Starter (15–20 minutes)

Set an offering basket near the door. Set out a few favorite toys such as puzzles and blocks for kids to do after completing the activity page.

Activity Page: Circle Items You Can Hear

Help kids identify the pictures on the page. Instruct them to circle the ones that show things you can hear.

Say • Samuel listened and heard the voice of God.

Listen and guess who

Blindfold one kid or ask her to cover her eyes with her hand. The others can rearrange themselves around the blindfolded child. Say, “Who spoke to Samuel?” Point to a kid who will respond, “God spoke to Samuel.” The blindfolded child will try to guess who answered the question. Remove the blindfold for her to check.

Say • *Who spoke to Samuel? God spoke to Samuel, and Samuel listened!*

Copy what you hear

Invite kids to copy a rhythm as you clap, stomp, slap thighs, or swish palms together back and forth. Keep the rhythm patterns short and simple at first. You may want to begin with the rhythm of the first words of a familiar song, or you might clap the syllables of kids' names. For example, swish your palms together back and forth to the words "Yes, Jesus loves me," or alternate slapping thighs to the name "Addison." Clap louder, softer, faster, or slower depending on how the word or phrase sounds: AD - di - son.

For very young children, begin with very short patterns: pat-clap-clap or swish-swish-stomp.

Say • Samuel listened to God and told people what he heard.

Transition to Bible Study

Sing the verse to "Jesus Loves Me," keeping time as you walk, stepping **LOUDLY** and softly:

JE - sus **LOVES** me

THIS I KNOW,

FOR the **BI** - ble

TELLS me **SO.**

LIT - tle **ONES** to

HIM be - **LONG;**

THEY are **WEAK** but

HE is **STRONG.**

Transition cue: Ring the bell, show the countdown video, flip the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for children to copy to gain attention.

Large Group BIBLE STUDY

Session Title: Eli and Boy Samuel

Bible Passage: 1 Samuel 1–3

Big Picture Question: Who spoke to Samuel? God spoke to Samuel, and Samuel listened.

Key Passage: 1 Samuel 2:35

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

Large Group Bible Study (10–15 minutes)

Introduce the Bible Story

Show the key passage poster. Sing “A Faithful Priest.”

- Bible
- “A Faithful Priest” song
- Key Passage Poster (enhanced CD)
- Timeline Map

Say • The song we sang as we walked together, “Jesus Loves Me,” says that “little ones” belong to Jesus. Who are the little ones? (*children*) Today we will hear about a little boy who listened to God. He grew up to be a man who did what God told him.

Look at the “Judges” section of the timeline. Recall the names of the judges in the Bible story pictures. (*Ehud, Deborah and Barak, Gideon, Samson*) Look at the “Saul and David” section of the timeline. Find two people wearing crowns. Identify King Saul and King David as the two people wearing crowns.

Watch or tell the Bible story

- “Eli and Boy Samuel” video

Say • Samuel led God’s people at the end of the time of the judges. Samuel anointed the first kings of Israel. Watch (or listen to) the Bible story about Samuel when he was a little boy.

Talk about the Bible story

Ask questions about the Bible story. If kids think they know the answer, they can jump up and all answer together when you give a signal.

- Why was Hannah sad? (*She wanted children.*)
- What did Hannah name her son? (*Samuel*) She said she named him Samuel because she asked God for him.
- Whom did Samuel help in the temple? (*Eli the priest*)
- One night Samuel heard a voice call him. It wasn't Eli who was calling. ***Who spoke to Samuel? God spoke to Samuel, and Samuel listened.***

Say • Everyone in Israel knew that Samuel was God's messenger. Samuel told people what God is like. Jesus came to earth as a baby and grew up. His life showed the whole world what God is like.

Transition to Small Groups

Describe the small group activities that you have set up.

Explain how you will proceed to do them:

- as a group, all at the same time;
- in small groups that rotate through each activity;
- set up as centers, allowing kids to browse and choose among them.

Small Group ACTIVITIES

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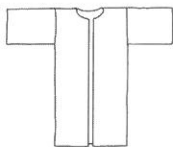
Small Group Activities (20–25 minutes)



- strips of red fabric or construction paper, cut as described, 6
- scissors

Sort Samuel's robes

Before class, cut six long strips of red fabric (or red construction paper) to match the red robe in the Bible story picture. These will represent robes Hannah made for Samuel each year. You may want to cut them out in the shape of long T-shirts. Keep the first strip (or T-shirt) its original length. Cut off one inch from the second strip or T-shirt, two inches from the third, three inches from the fourth, four inches from the fifth, and five inches from the sixth strip.



Scatter the strips on the floor and invite kids to arrange them from shortest to tallest (for Samuel from youngest age to oldest).

Say • Why did Samuel's mother take him a new robe each year? (*He outgrew his old robe.*) The Bible says Samuel grew in stature (height) and in favor with the Lord and with men. God was with Samuel; Samuel was growing into the man God wanted him to be. In today's Bible story, someone called Samuel's name. ***Who spoke to Samuel? God spoke to Samuel, and Samuel listened.***

Pack for Samuel

- craft foam or construction paper
- stapler
- magazines, catalogs, and newspaper ads showing clothing
- child-size scissors
- glue

Prepare two identical suitcase shapes cut from craft foam or construction paper for each child. Staple them together along the sides and the bottom. Lay out magazines, clothing catalogs, and newspaper ads with children's clothing.

Allow kids to cut out or draw pictures showing the clothing Hannah might pack for Samuel today. Help very young children cut out pictures. Put the clothing inside the suitcase or glue it to the outside.

Alternate idea: Instead of a suitcase, cut out a "robe" (T-shirt shape) the size of a sheet of paper. Wrap the cutout clothing items in the robe like a bedroll and tie it with yarn.

Say • What would you pack in a suitcase? Hannah packed things Samuel would need because he was growing.

Explore sound

Try one or more of these ways to explore sound:

#1 • Wrap a rubber band around a ruler; place an unsharpened pencil between the rubber band and ruler.

The pencil will act like the bridge of a violin. Pluck the rubber band to make sound as it vibrates.

#2 • Wrap the middle of a long string around a metal spoon.

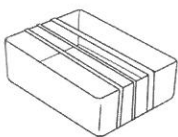
Twist the ends of the string around your fingers; place your fingers in your ears while a friend taps the metal spoon.

#3 • Wrap three or four large rubber bands of different widths around a plastic storage container. Pluck the rubber bands. Compare the sounds. Which makes a higher sound, wide or narrow rubber bands? Looser or tighter?

#4 • Place your fingers on your throat and hum or speak.

Feel the vocal chords vibrating to make sounds.

Say • *Who spoke to Samuel? God spoke to Samuel, and Samuel listened.*



- robes, 2

Note: Young kids may not be able to keep the whole series of instructions in mind. Station teachers at each end of the room to help them remember and to get the robe on and off.

Play a robe relay

Use two Bible costume robes, two men's shirts, or make "robes" by cutting openings for the head in the center of two towels. Form two lines at one end of the room. Place the robes at the opposite side of the room.

Each kid in turn will walk rapidly to the opposite side of the room, pull a robe over his head, clap three times, remove the robe, and replace it where he found it. Then he will walk quickly to tag the next person in line.

Say • Samuel's mother brought him a new robe each year because he outgrew his old robe. Samuel was growing into the man God wanted to lead His people from the time of the judges to the time of the first kings of Israel.

Try a reverse limbo

- broom or pole
- "Center of It" song

Play "Center of It" or some other background music you choose. Ask two kids to hold the ends of a pole a couple of feet from the ground. Invite other kids to take turns trying to bend backward and pass under the pole. Change pole holders and raise the pole several inches. After the line of kids tries to go under the pole again, talk about the result. Did anyone succeed at this height? Continue changing pole holders and taking turns trying again until everyone has managed to pass under the pole. Ask who could go under the pole when it was low (*a very small person; perhaps a crawling baby*). Talk about how the pole would have to be higher as people grow and get taller.

Say • Why did Samuel's mother take him a new coat every year? (*Samuel was growing taller.*) The Bible tells us that both Samuel and Jesus grew taller and that people thought highly of them. As Samuel grew, he listened to God; he told the people what God was like and what God said. Jesus showed what God is like by how He treated other people and by what He did and said.

Snack and Transition (20 minutes)

Play the countdown video while kids help straighten the room. Take a bathroom break and wash hands.

Serve a snack of cheese and bread such as Hannah might have brought when she visited Samuel.

Thank God for the snack food.

Transition

When a child finishes his snack and throws away his trash, he may select and examine a book or puzzle, draw on a journal page, color the Bible story coloring page, or work quietly at something of his own choosing. If he chooses to draw, suggest he draw a picture of a beautiful robe for Samuel.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert (enhanced CD)
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

- Journal Page (enhanced CD)
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- books and puzzles
- crayons