

Samuel: Listening to God!

Some lessons include the story of Hannah too!

Overview of the Workshops:

- [Bible Skills & Games](#): Children will play several listening games.
Focus: Learning to listen to God.
- [Cooking](#): Children will create Samuel's bed snacks.
Focus: Remembering the story, hearing God's voice.
- [Video](#): Children will view the Nest Video "Samuel."
Focus: Overview of the story.
- [Samuel: Listening to God Music/Movement Workshop](#): Blacklight Theater

Scripture References:

I Samuel 1-3

Memory Verse:

"Speak Lord, I'm listening." I Samuel 3:9

Theme:

God spoke to the people in the Bible. God still speaks to us today through the Bible, through those who love us, through preachers and teachers, through Christian friends, through worship and prayer and experiences.

Background Information:

The books of I and II Samuel explore the history of Israel from the 12th Century to 10th Century B.C. These books describe Israel's transition from a loosely organized Tribal Confederacy governed by judges to a unified monarchy. Samuel was Israel's last and greatest judge.

After the death of Moses and the Israelites' entry into the Promised Land, Israel was governed by judges. Judges were people with great moral character and believed to have a close connection to God. They made God's will known to the people. Eli was a priest and judge in the town of Shiloh. The Tabernacle had become a more permanent structure, sometimes called a shrine, and was located at Shiloh. Eli served as the priest and cared for the tabernacle. Each year, the Israelites made three required pilgrimages to worship and offer sacrifices at Shiloh.

Hannah and Elkanah

Elkanah (El-KAY-nuh) was from the tribe of Levi. He had two wives – Hannah and Peninnah (Puh – NIN –uh). He greatly loved Hannah, but she was unable to have children. His second wife, Peninnah, had several children. Polygamy in these times was not considered morally wrong, however it was economically unfeasible for many. If a first wife was barren, it was common for men to take additional wives. This seems to have been the case in Elkanah's situation. Rural families also tended to have more wives to ensure enough children were born to work the fields and because infant and childhood mortality was so high. Children in Bible times were considered to be special blessings from God (still are!). Children were a symbol of fulfillment. In contrast, childlessness in Bible times was considered a great curse and punishment from God. Hannah's barrenness was a bitter disappointment for her. Peninnah did not help matters by constantly teasing her about her childlessness.

Each year, Elkanah's family made the pilgrimage from their home in Ramah to Shiloh to worship and offer sacrifices for the forgiveness of their sins at the tabernacle. (The tabernacle by this time was housed at Shiloh and may have been a more permanent building than the portable building used in the wilderness.) Each year, as family members gathered, Hannah was reminded of her childless state. Her bitterness and despair over her childlessness dominated her entire life. Because of her depression, she was unable to see the blessings God had given her, such as a loving husband.

During one of these annual pilgrimages, Hannah fervently prayed for God to give her a child. In return she promised that she would give him to the Lord as a Nazirite. (A Nazirite was one who was under a special vow of separation to the Lord. Nazirites could not cut their hair, touch a dead body or drink any fermented

drinks. Samson was probably the most well-known Nazirite. Samuel and John the Baptist were also dedicated similarly.) The dedication of the firstborn son was a common practice for families. However, most families "redeemed" their firstborn by bringing a special sacrifice to the tabernacle or temple. God answered Hannah's prayer, she became pregnant and baby Samuel was born. The name Samuel means "name of God" or "asked of God."

The dedication of Samuel

Hannah remembered her promise to God. After he was weaned (probably at about age 3-4), she took him to Eli, the priest at Shiloh, and left him in his care. Hannah's prayer of joy and praise at Samuel's dedication is an amazing declaration of faith and understanding of God. In this prayer, Hannah declares God to be holy, the one who sees and judges all human affairs, the one who satisfies our needs and the Master of all that happens to us. Mary's Magnificat (in Luke 2) is modeled after Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving in I Samuel 2.

It may be difficult for our children to understand how Hannah could "give away" her son. This did not mean that Hannah stopped loving her son; indeed, we read that each year Hannah and Elkanah journeyed to Shiloh to visit Samuel and bring him a new coat. Young children were often apprenticed to learn various careers. Samuel was groomed to replace Eli since Eli's own sons were spoiled, unruly young men. It would have been a great honor for a young boy to serve in the tabernacle with the priest. And we also read that God blessed Hannah and Elkanah with three more sons and two daughters. God is able to answer our prayers in greater ways than we can imagine!

Relation to baptism

There are similarities between the practice of infant baptism and Samuel's dedication to the Lord. In both instances, the parents promise to bring their children up to know and love the Lord. In our Baptismal Covenant, parents promise to nurture their children "in Christ's holy church, that by (their) teaching and example they may be guided to accept God's grace for themselves, to profess their faith openly, and to lead a Christian life." The congregation also promises to "do all in your power to increase their faith, confirm their hope and perfect them in love." Samuel's upbringing with Eli would have surrounded him in the ways of God and groomed him for God's service.

God calls Samuel

One night Samuel heard a voice calling out to him. Thinking it was Eli, he went and woke the old priest. After the third time, Eli finally realized that Samuel was hearing the voice of God and instructed him to say, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening." Samuel obeyed and God relayed his message. God told Samuel that Eli's sons would not inherit the priesthood because of their evil ways. They regularly violated the regulations of the Law regarding the sacrifices. They were violent, dishonest and adulterous. While Eli rebuked his sons, he was unwilling to take the discipline further and continued to allow them to serve as priests. Because of this Eli's sons would lose their positions. Instead, God called Samuel to serve him in a mighty way as a prophet and leader of Israel. Samuel would be the one who would take over after Eli's death. God continued to lead the Israelites through Samuel for many years.

God calls us

Too often, adults brush children aside. Children are not expected to fully participate in worship or to understand matters of faith. This story makes clear that God speaks to willing hearts – young or old. Children as well as adults are called by God to serve. What are ways our children can listen to and serve God?

How do we hear God's voice today? Sometimes God still speaks in an audible voice. But we also hear God's voice through prayer, by listening or reading the Bible, through worship, by listening to sermons or Sunday school teachers, through Christian friends and parents, and through the feelings and experiences God presents us with. Children need to know that God speaks to us very clearly through His Word, the Bible. How do we show God that we are listening to him? By taking time to be still and seeking God's voice, by talking to God and by doing what God says to do. As we grow in faith, God's voice becomes more clear in our lives.

Cooking Workshop Lesson Sketch: "Wake-up Samuel!" Foods

Summary of Activities:

Students will enjoy several healthy breakfast foods that are healthy metaphors for waking up to God's call and starting our day off right.

In this "wake up to serve the Lord" meal-making exercise, allow students to choose what they prefer and try new tastes as a 'memory hook' for your content and focal point for asking questions.

 *See the Bible Background for scripture passages and additional information.*

 *Consider using a Bible storybook with illustrations, or a short video of the story to help tell it.*

 *Use the food activity to reinforce and ask key questions.*

Supplies List:

- Cold pitcher of water and cups for students
- Instant Oatmeal packets, one per student
- Bowls and spoons
- Hot water to mix in oatmeal
- Brown sugar and a variety of cut fruits to mix into oatmeal
- Granola mix with chopped/smashed M&M candies
- Peanut butter to mix into the granola to make the "manna" snack
- Bananas as an alternative or addition to the peanut butter (form granola with mashed banana)
- Plastic wrap to package the granola as a take-home "Wake up" snack
- Beanbag or small pillow for closing game
- Small doll or figurine in a "bed" (box) to represent Samuel in the closing game

Lesson Sketch

Opening:

Welcome the children and introduce yourself. Explain what they will be doing during the workshop and what you hope they will learn.

Prayer: Please begin your class with prayer each week. Pray your own or use the prayer printed below.

Play the "Telephone Game" with lines from today's story:

Gather the children in a circle and tell them that you are going to whisper in the ear of the child sitting next to you. That child will then whisper what they heard to the person next to them. This should continue around the circle. The last person in the circle should say aloud what they heard. 🗣️ Play music softly in the background to keep the children from overhearing someone other than the person whispering in their ear.

When you are sure everyone understands, whisper these lines from today's scripture:

1. *The boy Samuel served the Lord by helping Eli the priest.*
2. *One night Eli, heard someone calling, "Samuel!"*
3. *Samuel got up and went to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?"*
4. *End with: "**Samuel said, 'Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.'**"*

After the sentence has traveled around the circle and the last child has said aloud what they heard, tell them what you had whispered. Correct them (or have them try again).

When all four sentences have been used, S-L-O-W-L-Y repeat each line while the students say them along with you.

Ask:

1. What would be your FIRST reaction if you thought you heard God's voice waking you up in the middle of the night?
2. What do you think God would want to wake YOU up about? Praise? Change? Warning? Comfort? Help?

3. How would you know it was God's voice?

(This is a tough one, but if you had been studying God's message in the Bible, and been praying to God, you would probably know his voice. God would also likely give you a confirmation, assurance in your heart, that you had heard him.)

Tell the Story:

Introduce the story and begin sharing it using either an illustrated storybook or short video.

Introductions:

Our story today is about a boy named Samuel. Samuel lived many years before Jesus was born. Let's read/see his story! Samuel means "name of God" or "asked of God". Samuel's parents were Hannah and Elkanah. Hannah had been childless, and she had let it bother her so much that she was unable to see the blessings God had given her, such as her loving husband.

Every year Elkanah's family traveled to the Tabernacle at Shiloh, to worship and offer sacrifices to God for the forgiveness of their sins. During one of these trips, Hannah fervently prayed for God to give her a child. She promised that she would dedicate her child to God.

After the story is presented, discuss the following:

- Why was Hannah upset? (she did not have any children)
- Why did Hannah and Elkanah visit the Tabernacle each year? (required by law, to make a sacrifice so that they could be forgiven for their sins – contrast this with how we are forgiven through Jesus!)
- What happened when Hannah and Elkanah went to the Tabernacle? (she prayed to God to give her a son)
- How did Hannah feel after she prayed? (she felt a sense of peace, was no longer troubled)
- How was Hannah's prayer answered? (she had a son, Samuel)
- Does God always answer prayers? (Yes, just not always the way we want!)

Foods to Wake Up Samuel! (and energize God's servants for the day)

- Ask: What did God do to wake up Samuel and call him to become his prophet?
- Have you ever heard God's voice out loud? What do you think it would sound like?
- What do you think God said to Samuel? Called him to do? Become? And do you think God is calling YOU to do the same?

Things to share:

- Most people don't hear God's voice, they FEEL IT in their heart, or hear God's voice speaking through prayer, scripture, songs, and feelings. What do you think God's voice makes you FEEL like ? (accept any answers)
- Sometimes we say we "hear" God's voice when someone else is speaking. We say it is like God was "speaking to me through" that person or through that song. Has that ever happened to you? (accept any answers)
- Sometimes we say we "hear God speaking" when we experience something beautiful that feels like a message. For example, a beautiful sunset after a day of trouble. Or a feeling of comfort that comes over you after a walk in the woods or the appearance of a good friend when you were feeling sad. Has that ever happened to you? (accept any answers)

WATER!

Sometimes, God's voice feels like a cool glass of water when your heart is thirsty.

Raise your hand if you feel a bit brain groggy and foggy in the morning/
Did you know that plain old water first thing can help you wake up faster? It's estimated that a person loses about **half a quart** to full quart of water during an eight-hour night of sleep because at night you perspire and also because your body releases water into your bladder. That's almost a pound of water weight lost overnight leaving you mildly dehydrated. And when that happens, your body

doesn't have enough water to carry out normal functions, like energizing muscles and brain. So let's start off with some water. And by the way, if you find yourself nodding off at school mid-afternoon, or feeling tired after running around on the playground or playing with friends, a glass of water can really help.

Ask as you distribute cold water:

How is water used in the Bible?

Jesus described himself as "Living Water." What do people spiritually thirst for?

How does Jesus quench that thirst and revive our spirit?

OATMEAL CEREAL!

A classic bowl of oats is still one of the best things you can eat early in the morning. It's an energy powerhouse thanks to its low (slow) glycemic index—a measure of how quickly the body absorbs carbohydrates and turns them into fuel. Oatmeal is slow burning, so it'll keep you running all morning without causing you to crash and burn in a couple of hours like overly sweet foods and drinks can. It can also be customized with many different ingredients to suit the eater's taste -- which can also have some fun meaning/memory hooks attached to them. If they need to add some brown sugar to get them to try it, don't be a sugar-nazi. This activity is primarily to remind them of the story and reflect on waking up to God's call like Samuel did.

As you demonstrate preparing a bowl of oatmeal, share these thoughts. Then let students prepare their own!

When you wake up in the morning, wake up your FAITH & SPIRIT TOO! God's voice is the energy that wakes up your sense of joy and gratitude for another day of life. God wakes up your sense of purpose and readies you to be loving and forgiving in the day ahead, rather than being tired, groggy, and foggy.

Ask as students mix and taste their own Wake Up Cereal:

1. Do you remember the story of God providing Moses and the Israelites "manna" to feed them in the wilderness?

What basic things does a person need to be a follower of God every day? (love, compassion, perseverance, Word, etc)

2. What are some of the "sweet things" God puts into our days that allow us to enjoy our lives? (a sense of purpose, friends, learning, rest, etc.)

MANNA GRANOLA FOR THE JOURNEY

There are many no bake "make your own" granola bar recipes. Most are as simple as mixing dry granola with peanut butter or bananas, along with sweet ingredients, like smashed M&Ms. Let the children choose what to include. Turn each ingredient into a reminder, a talking point for the things we can do, listen to, and read (and not do!) in order to follow God all day long. Eat some and wrap some to take home.

Our bodies need to wake up and get energized for the day, but they also need refueled during the day too.

When do you start to get hungry during the day? What are your favorite snacks that reenergize you?

In the same way, though Samuel heard God's wake up call, it wouldn't be the last call or fuel Samuel needed to serve God. Samuel would many times turn to God and God's Word to find purpose for his life and listen for God's voice. Eventually, God would tell Samuel to "go get Israel a king!" ...first Saul, and the King David.

How many of you know the story of God giving Moses and the Israelites "manna from heaven"? (Let the retell if they can and fill in as needed.)

Briefly retell this Exodus wilderness miracle story, then begin **making "manna" granola** we can snack on to keep our energy up for following and serving God today.

Closing:

Play "Wake Up Samuel."

Put dry oatmeal or granola into a sealed bag and use it as a "bean bag" to toss at a future of Samuel sleeping in his bed at the Tabernacle. You may otherwise toss a small pile or bean bag.

If the thrower's bag touches Samuel, everyone shouts "Wake Up Samuel!"

Close with a pray that each of us would "wake up and hear God's voice calling us to....."

Samuel: Listening to God

Music/Movement Workshop: Blacklight Theater

Summary of Activity:



Children will perform motions to the song *Here I Am Lord* in blacklight theater as they explore how the lyrics connect to Samuel's story.

A little preface to our blacklight theater Music and Movement lesson for Samuel....

I've also included links to our videos of the performances. Please realize that these were NOT rehearsed -- we basically went over the lyrics, discussed how they fit the story of Samuel and then did it in blacklight! The younger kids did just the chorus; the older kids did the verses (and ended up doing the chorus as well, because I didn't want them to just sit there in the dark on the stage! lol)

For the 3-5 grade group, our adult helper (who had practiced with the poster board signs beforehand) overslept, so we had a totally newbie adult helper who bravely stepped in and did her best, but missed a lot of the neon signs.

A good reminder that it's the *process* that is the most important... this was our first attempt at blacklight and the kids LOVED it. We will definitely do it again.

I've also attached the video of the K-2 graders signing the memory verse in blacklight. We sign our verses almost every month as it's a great memory tool. Blacklight was extra fun!

Many thanks to Luanne Payne for her [expert advice](#) on setting everything up!!!

Samuel: Listening to God

Music & Movement Workshop

Scripture References:

NIV Adventure Bible - I Samuel 1-3, "The Story of Samuel"

For K-2nd grade: *Deep Blue Bible Storybook* – "Hannah Prays, pages 110-113 and "God Calls Samuel" pages 114-117

Memory Verse: "Speak Lord, your servant is listening." I Samuel 3:9

Objectives and Life Application:

- Children will locate the story of Samuel in the Old Testament.
- Children will retell the story in their own words.
- Children will identify the characters in the story: Hannah, Elkanah, Samuel, Eli.
- Children will discuss ways they can listen to God.
- Children will discuss ways God answers prayer.
- Children will describe ways God can use them in the world.
- Children will memorize I Samuel 3:9.

Blacklight resources:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XoPJ--6U000>

[Blacklight music drama idea](#) which kicked off this whole thing

Preparation:

1. Review the Background Information and Lesson plan.
2. Gather necessary supplies and set up the room – see below. This lesson requires significant preparation time.

Supplies:

- *Here I am Lord* recording and lyrics (the version we chose is slower which made it easier to follow -- John Michael Talbot's version (Table of Plenty, Troubadour for the Lord,1997)
- Black foam core boards – 5
- Neon colored poster board – orange, yellow, pink, green
- Black plastic tarp (large enough to cover from floor to ceiling – 3 sided stage area
- Black plastic (on a roll) or large black trash bags to cover windows and glass in doors
- Painter's tape

- Black lights (at least 2 for an 8 foot stage area)
- White gloves
- Black gloves
- Overhead projector
- Camera
- Tripod
- Transparency sheet
- *Here I Am Lord* lyrics
- Black or dark colored t-shirts
- Tide laundry detergent
- Bibles: *Deep Blue Bible Storybook* (for grades K-2) and *NIV Adventure Bibles* (for 3rd - 5th)

Advanced Preparations:

Copy the lyrics onto a transparency and set up the overhead projector.

Contact parents asking kids to wear dark clothing or bring a large dark t-shirt to wear.

Prepare the black light stage:

Blacklight theater requires a completely dark room. Hang a black tarp from the ceiling to floor creating a 3-sided (back and 2 sides) stage area. The floor and ceiling do not have to be covered. Cover all windows and openings in the doors with black plastic, taping to trim with painter's tape to eliminate any ambient light.





Prepare the black lights:

Secure the black lights vertically to a chair using thick yarn or heavy string. Tape the cords to the floor to prevent tripping hazards. Remember the lights will be off frequently during this session! (See photo one in the slide show below.)

Prepare the Props:

Wash the white gloves in Tide laundry detergent before class to enhance the glow under the blacklight.

Cut out the following props from neon poster board or paint with neon poster paint onto black foam board:

- Tearful face (sad face with tear drops)
- Cross
- Question mark
- Heart
- Broken heart



Setting up the camera/video camera:

Set up a tripod with the camera facing the stage.

Videotape a test run to determine best placement of the camera.

Note after completing this workshop:

The kids had a GREAT time with this. It was very challenging to use the poster boards – although the neon signs were amazing on the video. If you have a very large class you could have one child per board assigned – which would make it much easier – no handing back and forth of boards. Or reduce the number of neon signs and use hand motions primarily.

Lesson Plan**Time Guidelines:**

Welcome and Introductions	5 minutes
Bible Study	15 minutes
Blacklight Drama	25 minutes
Reflection/Closing	5 minutes

Welcome/Introduction

Welcome the children warmly. Help the shepherds distribute name tags. Introduce yourself and invite children to introduce themselves. Please include the shepherd.

Opening Prayer

Light the Christ Candle and place in the middle of the table where all can see.

Say: We light this candle to remind us that Jesus is the Light of the world. God is with us wherever we go. God is with us here in this place today.

Pray: Heavenly Father, We thank you for today and this time together. This month we are learning about Samuel, and how he listened carefully to you. Help us to have open eyes, ears, minds and most of all hearts. Help us truly listen this month so we can draw closer to you. Thank you for loving us. Thank you for sending Jesus to save us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

(the candle should remain lit until the end of the session)

Introduce the Story

Say: Many years before Jesus was born, Moses led the Israelite people out of Egypt and through the desert. Then Moses died. The people came into the Promised Land. They needed leaders to help them and guide them like Moses had done. *Judges* became the new leaders for Israel. Judges were religious leaders in the community who helped the people follow God. (This

is different than judges today.... If necessary, explain this difference to the children.) Samuel was the last and greatest judge in Israel. This is his story...

Bible Study: Grades K-2 *Deep Blue Bible Storybook*

Where would we find a story in the Bible that takes place many years before Jesus was born? (Old Testament) Let's find the story of Samuel in our Bibles now.

Pass out Bibles to children who did not bring one from home. Help the children turn to **page 110** and read the following two stories: Hannah's Prayer and God Calls Samuel. Have the children follow along in their Bibles.

Bible Study: Grades 3-5: *NIV Adventure Bible*

Help the children locate I Samuel 1 in their Bibles. 1 and 2 Samuel are books of history. Due to the length of the story, paraphrase the first part of the story: Hannah's prayer (1 Samuel 1:1-17), Hannah dedicates Samuel (1 Samuel 1:26-28).

Read heading: "The Lord Calls Samuel."

Read 1 Samuel 3:1-10.

Memory Verse Work - Sign the verse

"Speak Lord, your servant is listening." I Samuel 3:9

Say : God called Samuel in an audible voice. God most often speaks to us in quieter ways. How might God be calling you?

Do: Use these signs to learn the verse:

Speak – hold right index finger next to lips and wiggle up and down slightly

Lord – with index finger and thumb make "L" sign, place on opposite shoulder and bring across chest diagonally to right hip

I (your servant) – make fist with right hand with little finger extended up, placing thumb side to chest

Listening – place right hand behind right ear

Black Light Drama - Here I am Lord

Say: We are going to listen to a song or hymn that tells about listening to God's voice and responding to it. There are many stories in the Bible where people heard God's call and responded. Sometimes they followed God -- like Abraham. Sometimes they hesitated -- like Moses. Sometimes they tried to hide or run away -- like Jonah. It's one thing to know what God wants you to do. It's another thing to be willing to do it! God wants us to listen for his voice.... to spend time in prayer and quiet time. But when we know what God wants us to do, it's important to obey. In our story this month, God called Samuel -- a young boy. Even a child can

be used by God to do important things if he or she is willing to listen and obey. Samuel wasn't too young and neither are you!

Introduce the Song and the Motions:

Display the "Here I Am" lyric transparency on the overhead projector.

Gather the children near the overhead so they can see the words.

First we're going to listen to the song and create motions to act it out. Then we'll perform the motions under the blacklight! Blacklight is a special type of drama that is done in the dark with special lights called blacklight. Neon colors and white show up, but everything else is dark.

Note: If time is short – review the song quickly and just begin the blacklight drama. Teacher can stand behind the camera and make the motions (wearing gloves) and have the children follow your lead. We found that the kids easily followed the signs -- but we do this every month so our kids are used to this! Our kids also had suggestions for signs to use -- for example they came up with the "make your darkness bright" sign -- coming together to form a "sun")

Verse 1:

Sea – make waves by moving right hand up and down from right to left.

Sky – birds with hands, cross thumbs together and move fingers like wings flapping

Cry – **sad face poster board - 1**

Dark – hide hands behind

Hand – raise one hand, palm out

Save – **hold up cross poster board - 2**

Verse 2:

Stars - flick hands open and shut, twinkle hands

Darkness bright – all hands come together to form a bright "sun" like ball

Bear light – grasp right wrist with left hand, right hand with flickering fingers

Whom – **question mark poster board - 3**

Chorus:

Here I am – hands on chest, then move forward as if presenting self

Is it I? Index fingers point to chest

I have heard you calling - hands to ears, phone sign

I will go – stepping motions with hands

lead me – hands in fists move outward and to right

hold – hands cupped together

heart – **poster board heart - 4**

Verse 3:

wind and flame – swirl hands around, flicker for flames
tend the poor and lame – rocking arms
set a feast – move hands up and down outward from sides
hand – raise one hand, palm facing out
save - **cross poster board - 2**

Verse 4:

Finest bread I will provide p – move hands forward as if holding a platter
Till their hearts be satisfied – hands crossed over heart, **heart poster board – 4**
I will give my life to them – brush hands up on chest, then palms up in front, sign life
Whom shall I send? – **question mark -3**

Note: This version eliminates two verses that are found in other recordings.

Do: Play the song through one time with the lyrics displayed.

Say: Next we will use hand motions and props to act out the song.

Assign 1 child (2 if you have a large class) to handle the foam board props. The remaining children will perform hand motions. Show the props. Line up the children in two lines, with the prop holder center stage in back, behind the children doing hand motions.

Assign an adult helper to stand at the side of the stage and hand the poster boards in the correct order to the prop holder as needed. Be sure to keep the poster boards turned around with black side facing outward, until it's time for them to be revealed.

Read through the lyrics and demonstrate the suggested motions having the children follow along.

Some tips/directions:

- All the neon and white glove movements will show. When not performing the specific movements, children should place their hands behind their backs.
- When turning or moving, have all children turn/move to the right – for us this was toward the door.
- Have children performing hand motions put on white gloves. Prop holders should wear black gloves or bare hands.
- If children are wearing white or neon colored shirts, have them put on a black t-shirt to cover their clothing.

- Turn out the overhead lights and turn on the blacklights.
- Start the video camera! *(Note: I was really nervous about how this would work, but it was mostly great. There is one place in the video, where the hands were blurry, but otherwise it worked really well. It would be helpful to have a separate adult monitoring the video camera. I was busy leading the signs and didn't realize that the kids weren't centered in the video frame. Oops. Process not product, right?)*
- Recite the lyrics to the song (slowly), allowing the children to demonstrate the motions. Prop-holder should hold the poster up high above the heads of the front line. Or simply play the song and demonstrate the motions as the children follow along.
- It's helpful to have the adult helper be familiar with the order of the poster board props.

For younger grades, you may not want to do the entire song. Do just the chorus and allow the older groups to do the verses.

Discussion

What parts of the song remind you of the story of Samuel? (a voice calling in the night, Samuel being willing to trust God and later becoming a great leader of God's people)

Do other words remind you of other stories? (creation, slavery in Egypt, sending Jesus, prophets)

Closing prayer

Invite children to stand in a circle.

Say: Today we explored a well-known hymn about God calling us and about how we will respond to God's call. Will we be like Samuel and "go where God leads us" and "hold God's people in our hearts?"

Where might God lead us? What might God want us to do to hold his people in our hearts (love and care for them)? (be kind, be loving, share with others, be helpful, think about what others need, encourage others, etc.)

When it's your turn, please say one way you think God might be calling YOU to follow him more closely and to love others better. This is important prayer time, not play time – so please remember to be respectful of God and others.

Go around the circle asking for each child's prayer. Add your own. Then close with the Lord's Prayer. Extinguish the Christ Candle.

Clean-up

Encourage the children to help you clean up. Place all props and other materials in the prop closet or the storage cabinet. Remove the black light tarps after the last session.

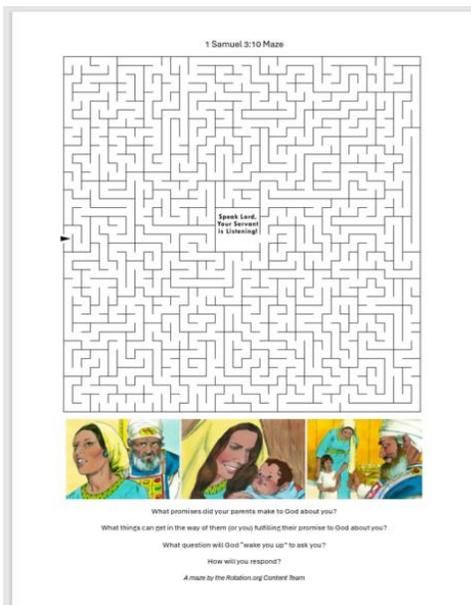
Samuel

A-Mazing Resources and Ideas for a Bible Skills and Games Workshop

Summary:

The following "Maze" and "Blindfold-follow" game ideas examine the question of "how we listen and hear God's voice" in our lives -- just like Samuel did that night in the Tabernacle (1 Samuel, 3). The games includes some possible discussion questions for you to work with and adjust.

This lesson also includes a printable complex maze with discussion questions for grades 2-6. You can also "make your own maze" or have the kids make their own (suggestion below). As part of this lesson sketch, we created this [printable Samuel Maze. PDF attached,](#)



The "maze" is a metaphor for desiring to find/listen to God, to following him. Feel free to expand on that metaphor and tweak it after playing it.

Tip: After playing the maze and discussing it, have students illustrate "barriers" and "things in the way" of someone who is trying to "find their way to God," "listen to God's voice trying to answer God's call."

After playing the PDF maze, invite students to **make their OWN maze** with illustrations representing their own journey from child to disciple of the

Lord. QUICKLY make copies of these completed mazes on the church copier and pass them around to other students to play in class or at home.

Another a-Mazing option: Hand out copies of the **attached SIMPLE MAZE** and follow its directions for a stimulating metaphor-rich discussion about listening to God and following him.



Use different colors for each "try."

1. Try this with your eyes shut.
2. Now try this with someone giving you directions while your eyes are shut.
3. Now try this with someone guiding your hand while your eyes are shut.
4. Now try this with your eyes wide open!

Note: We all fail and fall off the path. God doesn't "wait" for us to get to him. Instead, he is the Good Shepherd who comes looking for us and carries us home! He is the Prodigal's Father who watches and when he sees his son when he is yet far off, comes running to welcome him home!

Children's Bible Game: Listening to God

This game is similar to a "maze" but it's more interactive.

Form pairs. Have one person in each pair be blindfolded and lead them across the room at least 20 feet away, then return to the other side of the room. Place several chairs as obstacles in their path.

Round 1: Let one person guide their partner by voice. If you bump into a chair your turn is over.

Round 2: Let all pairs simultaneously try to guide their partners, listening carefully for ONLY your partner's voice. If you bump into a chair your turn is over.

Round 3: Secretly tell the guiding partner to give the wrong instructions, but change the rule that if they bump into a chair their can continue to try.

Round 4: Secretly tell the blind folded person to do the opposite of what their partner says to do.

DISCUSSION:

Have some discussion in between rounds.

How easy or difficult was it to listen to your group members' voices? How did other people's instructions affect you? What techniques did you use to listen well?

Say: Listen to this story about a little boy who learned to listen well — and heard God's voice.

Read aloud 1 Samuel 3:1-11.

Ask:

Think of the techniques we used in our game to listen well.

How can we use some of those same techniques to listen well to God?

What will God's "voice" sound like to you?

Add your own insights and life application questions that work for your students!

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