



LESSON 1 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Speaks

SCRIPTURE: 1 Samuel 3

WORD OF WONDER: James 4:8a

The average person hears 25,000 words per day. With so much going on in the world, it can be hard to hear what truly matters. Samuel heard God's call and responded with these words: "Speak, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:10 NIV).

Those are very powerful words as we reflect on the work we get to do. When we hear God and respond in a humble manner, we create the opportunity for wonderful things to happen.

Remove all distractions and ask God to speak; let Him know that His servant is listening. When you think about distractions, what comes to mind? What do you need to hand over to God so that you can be fully present for His work? Make a list of those things and begin praying that the distractions would be removed.

Read 1 Samuel 3:1–10, 19–20. Great things are about to happen. Now the question is, "Do you believe it?" Read the verses again. Ask God to help you hear His voice and be fully present as you serve kids and families.

Say this with me: *Your servant is listening because I know You are speaking.*

—**Andrae Jones**

Nextgen Pastor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

LESSON 1 FOR LEADERS

GOD CALLS OUT TO SAMUEL

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

At this point, Samuel was a boy, probably about 12 years old, who lived in the tabernacle with Eli the priest. Eli's sons had disobeyed God, and Eli had a special relationship with Samuel, loving him as a son. This relationship would be key as God speaks to Samuel.

WHAT?

This moment of awakening Samuel as a prophet was significant in the future of Israel. As Samuel grew, the Bible says God was with him and fulfilled all that Samuel prophesied. Every word Samuel spoke was from God.

WHERE?

Samuel was sleeping in the tabernacle, which is where the ark of the covenant was kept. The ark represented God's presence among His people. While Samuel wouldn't have been sleeping near the ark, merely being in this special place invited the presence of God.

WHEN?

This passage takes place during the time when judges led Israel. The Bible tells us that at this time, "The word of the Lord was rare" (1 Samuel 3:1 NIV). With God's people desperate for a word from Him, this moment established Samuel as a prophet who spoke for Him.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Samuel became the last of Israel's judges. When the people asked for a king, God called on Samuel to anoint Saul as Israel's first king. When Saul disobeyed God, God called Samuel to anoint a new king—David. Hundreds of years later, Jesus, the eternal King, was born from David's line.



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Curiosity Activity: Listen for Your Name

SUPPLIES: blindfold

In God's big story today, we're going to hear about a boy who heard his name called several times. The boy had to listen carefully to know out who was talking. Let's play a name game and listen for someone calling our names.

Gather the kids in a circle and go around the circle, letting the kids say their names. Then choose one kid, and invite him to say the name of the person next to you in the circle. Continue choosing other kids and inviting them to say the name of a kid in the circle until every kid has heard her name being called out. Then do it again but using silly voices and letting the kids choose someone at random to call out to. The next time, invite the kids to do something silly when their name is called, such as a silly dance or make a funny face.

To make it more challenging, blindfold one kid and have the rest of the kids spread throughout the room. Point at one kid, and have her call the blindfolded kid's name. The blindfolded kid can guess who called his name. Give him three guesses. After three guesses, blindfold another kid and have the kids move around the room to different spots and play again. Repeat until everyone has a turn, or as time allows.

Make it Inclusive: Keep in mind that there may be kids in your group who have visual or verbal limitations or delays. They may not be physically able to (or have the desire to) participate in this activity. Include them by allowing them to help choose the person to be blindfolded or allowing them to play quietly on their own.

You did a great job listening to who was saying your name. We're going to learn today about a boy in the Bible who listened, and we'll learn about how God speaks.

LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **Thank You for giving us the Holy Spirit to help us hear Your voice. Help us to know and follow Your voice. We love you! In Jesus' name, Amen.**

God's Big Story

Pull out the Bible

Ask: What is this called? ***The Bible***

Ask: Why is the Bible special? ***Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.***

Tell the Bible Story

The Beginner's Bible, pages 160-163

A Voice in the Night

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Who did Samuel think was calling his name the first few times?** (*Eli*)
- **Who was really calling Samuel's name?** (*God*)
- **What did Eli tell Samuel to say when he realized who was calling Samuel's name?** (*"Speak, Lord. I'm listening."*)
- **How do you respond if you hear someone calling your name?**
- **Who is a person you enjoy talking with? Why do you like to talk to that person?**
- **What is a way we can talk to God?** (*If kids need help, offer ideas such as: praying, singing, talking to God silently in our head, through art, etc.*)
- **What is a way God speaks to us?** (*If kids need help, offer ideas such as: through the Bible, prayer, singing or worship, through nature, an adult leader or parent, etc.*)
- **What is something you think God is saying to you or speaking to you about?**

We can listen for God and talk with Him any time we want! Let's take a minute to talk with God and listen for Him to speak to us by praying.

Word of Wonder

WORD OF WONDER

Come near to God, and he will come near to you.

—James 4:8a



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Craft: Make a Telephone

SUPPLIES: paper or plastic disposable cups (2 per kid), thumbtack, scissors (prep only), paper clips (2 per kid), yarn or string (at least 4' per kid), stapler, markers, stickers

Before the kids arrive, prepare two paper or plastic disposable cups per kid. Use a thumbtack to poke a hole in the bottom of each cup. Cut a piece of yarn or string long enough for each kid to have at least four feet.

In today's story, we heard about when God spoke to Samuel. At first, Samuel didn't recognize that it was God speaking, but after three times, Samuel said, "Speak. I'm listening" (1 Samuel 3:10). We can listen for God too. Let's make a paper cup telephone to help us remember to listen to God.



Give each kid two cups and a piece of yarn or string. Help them put the string through the holes in their cups and tie it in a knot with a paper clip on the end. They will put the string through the cup hole in one cup and then put the other end in the other cup. The paper clips should keep the string secure.

To make it more fun for kids, you can allow them to decorate their cups using markers, paint, or stickers.

When the kids finish making their paper cup telephones, show them how to use them by allowing one person to hold one cup and another person to hold the cup on the other end of the piece of yarn, while they pull the yarn so it's tight. Then one will take a turn saying something into one cup while the other person listens to the cup on the other end of the yarn.

Let's take turns speaking and listening as we share God's messages with one another! Find a partner and use your paper cup telephones. Take turns telling each other one thing about our story today that stood out to you or one message from God that you've heard from the Bible. When you finish, share whether it was harder to speak or to listen. Allow the kids to use their paper cup telephones to talk and listen to one another.

Take your telephone home as a reminder that we can always listen for God!



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Game: I'm Listening

Today we learned from God's big story that God can speak to us as he spoke to Samuel. When Samuel was in bed, God was calling his name. What did Samuel say when he realized who was calling His name? Allow the kids to respond. He answered, "Speak, Lord. I'm listening."

In our game, we're going to pretend we're Samuel and we're listening. One of you will close your eyes and everyone else will spread out through the room. The one with closed eyes will call out "Samuel," and one person in the group can answer "I'm listening." Silently choose a person to answer, "I'm listening" during each round. The person with closed eyes will guess who said, "I'm listening." Continue playing with different people calling out "Samuel" and guessing.

Choose one person to start with eyes closed and play the game. Play multiple rounds as time allows.

Make It Inclusive: Include kids with hearing impairments by adding a head tap (with eyes closed) instead of just kids calling out and having the kid guessed who tapped him. Remind kids that everyone can hear from God even if we can't hear God audibly; He can speak in many different ways.

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish the activity, pray with them and thank God for speaking to us.

God, help us have ears that listen for You and hear Your voice this week. We thank You that You care about us and speak to us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: May you draw near to the God who loves you every day of your life. May He speak to you, and may you listen to His voice.