



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

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: paper or plastic disposable cups (at least 4); thumbtack; paper clips (at least 4); string; coloring utensils

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: God Calls Out to Samuel Coloring Sheet (1 per kid)

Greet the kids warmly and briefly explain the play stations to them. Invite them to play at any of the stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help you get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas about what we'll be learning today?

Play Station: Paper Cup Telephones

Set up: Make several sets of paper cup telephones by attaching two paper or plastic disposable cups together with string. Start by using a thumbtack to poke holes through the bottom of each cup. Tie a piece of string to paper clips and put the string through the hole. The paper clip will keep the string from coming out of the cup. Then put the string through the other cup and tie the paper clip to the end of the string. Make at least two sets of paper cup telephones with varying length of string.



Play: Invite the kids to take turns speaking into one cup while another kid listens in the cup on the other end. They can experiment with different cups and sit in a variety of places while talking and listening. Ask whether it's easier to hear with the longer or shorter string.

Play Station: God Calls Out to Samuel Coloring Sheet

Set up: Print one copy per kid of the coloring sheet and set out the coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of their favorite stuffed animal to sleep with.



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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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Game: Listening Four Corners

SUPPLIES: at least 4 different colors of paper (2 sets), painter's tape

Ahead of time, tape a different color of paper in each corner of the room. Keep a second copy of each color for yourself. When you're ready to play the game, gather the kids together in the middle of the room.

We're learning that God speaks, and we can listen to Him. Sometimes He speaks through the beauty of His creation in nature. Sometimes He speaks through the Bible. He might speak through worship, or prayer, or through someone else. We can listen and watch for Him. We're going to play a listening game. You'll need to listen very carefully to what I say. I'm going to hold up a sheet of paper, and you'll say the color it is. Hold up one of the sheets of paper and ask the kids to say what color it is.

Can you find a paper in one of the corners that is the same color? Go to that corner! Allow kids to point out the matching sheet and go to that corner. Continue through with all four colors. Hold up the papers quickly, and encourage the kids to go quickly to each corner.

To make it more challenging, use more than four colors, and put other colors of paper in different spots of the room. To make it more challenging for older kids, hold up a different color up paper than the color you say out loud. Tell them to go to the color you say, not the one you hold up. Then play another round where you switch and have them go to the color you hold up, not the color you say.

Listening can be hard sometimes! We can be thankful that God speaks, and we can listen for Him! If we have trouble hearing from God, we can read the Bible, pray, and talk with parents or church leaders.

Make It Inclusive: Some kids may have difficulty distinguishing colors or understanding directions that are different from visual cues. Make it easier for them by adding dots to the papers and encouraging them to go to the paper with the matching number of dots.



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Responding in Worship: Listen for God

SUPPLIES: modeling clay, 1 per kid

I'm going to give each of you some modeling clay. You're going to practice listening for God as I read some verses from the Bible. Listen with your ears and with your heart. You can use your clay to shape anything that you feel God is speaking to you about. Maybe you feel God telling you that He loves you, and you can make a heart. If you feel God telling you that He forgives you, you could make a cross to think about Jesus dying to forgive you. You could even just make any shape you want and think about God while you're listening. Be creative—there's no right or wrong thing to make with your dough!

Give each kid a package of clay and read the following verses to them while they listen and shape their it.

- **Jeremiah 31:3:** "The Lord appeared to us in the past. He said, 'I have loved you with a love that lasts forever. I have kept on loving you with a kindness that never fails.' "
- **Deuteronomy 31:6:** "Be strong and brave. Don't be afraid of them. Don't be terrified because of them. The Lord your God will go with you. He will never leave you. He'll never desert you."
- **Psalms 46:1:** "God is our place of safety. He gives us strength. He is always there to help us in times of trouble."
- **1 John 3:1:** "See what amazing love the Father has given us! Because of it, we are called children of God. And that's what we really are! The world doesn't know us because it didn't know him."
- **1 Peter 5:7:** "Turn all your worries over to him. He cares about you."

God can speak to us through His Word, the Bible. When you read the Bible, pray and ask God to speak to your heart. Then listen for Him. We can thank God for speaking to us.

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.