

Samuel hears the LORD

Lesson Overview

Samuel's account begins with a voice he does not recognise and ends with all Israel recognising the LORD's prophet. Follow that whole movement, including the difficult message Samuel faithfully passes on.



Passage

1 Samuel 3:1–21



Focus statement

The LORD makes His word known and faithfully brings it about, so we should listen to Him and receive His truth.



Age-focused objective

Arrange three retelling pieces and explain that the LORD spoke, Samuel passed on His difficult message, and God fulfilled His word.



Memory verse

SCRIPTURE

For the word of the LORD is right,
and all his work is trustworthy.

Psalms 33:4, CSB

Before learners arrive

Read Teacher preparation and 1 Samuel 1–3. Print Printable Resources single-sided at actual size: pages 1 and 4 for display, one uncut page 3 to show its captions, and pages 2–3 for each child plus a teacher sample. Have one Parent take-home and one envelope per child, crayons, a tray, an open Bible and a scrap of paper for memory recall. Before class an adult cuts the three solid outside rectangles on page 3, keeping each

caption and drawing space together. Make one sample set: an ear-shaped curve, two people and a tick, with no picture of God. Try placing and mixing the pieces on page 2's numbered route without glue. Children receive loose, undrawn pieces. With your helper, practise reading captions, distributing three-piece sets and listening to retelling while helping children arrange them.

How the lesson unfolds



Transition – 5 minutes

Recall Scripture's source and introduce Samuel and Eli at Shiloh.



Lesson – 20 minutes

Follow the call, truthful report and fulfilled word; learn Psalm 33:4 with its meaning.



Application – 12 minutes

Draw on three movable pieces, arrange them and retell the whole account.



Prayer – 8 minutes

Thank God for His trustworthy word and pray for one another to receive His truth.

Transition – 5 minutes

Open your Bible at 1 Samuel 3. Recall Paul's teaching in one sentence: Scripture comes from God and makes the Saviour known. Explain that today we will hear about someone through whom the LORD made His word known long before Paul's letter.

Hold up page 1. Point to Samuel beside Eli's sleeping mat. Say, "Samuel thought Eli had called him. Listen to find out who was really calling." Keep the picture visible as you introduce them.

 SAY (SUGGESTED WORDING):

Samuel was a boy helping at the place where God's people worshipped in Shiloh. Eli was the priest there. Samuel's mother Hannah had prayed for a son and brought him to serve the LORD. Our account is about something the LORD did there. Watch how it begins and how it ends.

Lesson – 20 minutes

Interactive Bible teaching – 15 minutes. Use the 15 minutes across the three connected points, giving the longer explanation the time it needs. Include the readings and questions; give children thinking time and hear more than the quickest answer.

1. The LORD makes His word known



Use Samuel hears the LORD picture, page 1. Point to Samuel and Eli. The picture recalls Samuel's first misunderstanding; the Scripture reading tells us who actually called.

READ ALOUD

The boy Samuel served the LORD in Eli's presence. In those days the word of the LORD was rare and prophetic visions were not widespread.

1 Samuel 3:1, CSB

SAY (SUGGESTED WORDING):

God was not often giving new messages through prophets at that time. One night the LORD called Samuel. Samuel thought Eli had called, so he ran to him. Eli said he had not called and sent him back to lie down. This happened again. After the third call, Eli understood that the LORD was calling the boy. He told Samuel how to answer. Samuel had not worked out a clever way to make God speak; the LORD was making Himself known.

Touch the first panel on page 1. Read what happened next.

READ ALOUD

The LORD came, stood there, and called as before, "Samuel, Samuel!"

Samuel responded, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

1 Samuel 3:10, CSB



Ask

Did Samuel make God speak by lying quietly? How did the meeting begin?



Listen for

The LORD called and made His word known. Samuel did not cause the revelation or discover a technique for making it happen.

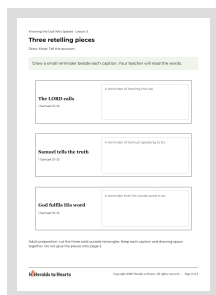


If needed

Return to "The LORD came" in verse 10. Explain that God began the meeting. Then ask, "Does this account promise every child the same night-time call?" Explain that we hear this trustworthy account in Scripture, and invite the child to say where we can hear it now.

God has made Himself known. Now we must hear the message He gives, including the difficult part.

2. Samuel passes on the difficult truth



Use Three retelling pieces, page 3. Keep an uncut copy visible and point to “Samuel tells the truth”. Listen for what he did with the LORD’s difficult message; nobody acts as God or Eli.

 SAY (SUGGESTED WORDING):

The message was serious. Eli’s sons were doing wicked things, and Eli had not stopped them. The LORD said He would judge Eli’s household, just as He had warned. Being a priest’s family did not make their sin safe or right. In the morning Samuel was afraid to tell Eli. But when Eli asked about the message, Samuel did not choose only the comfortable parts.

 READ ALOUD

So Samuel told him everything and did not hide anything from him. Eli responded, “He is the LORD. Let him do what he thinks is good.”

1 Samuel 3:18, CSB

Touch “Samuel tells the truth” on page 1.

 SAY (SUGGESTED WORDING):

God’s truth can show us something wrong that we would rather ignore. We need to hear His correction as well as His comfort. This does not mean a child must face an unsafe adult alone. If someone hurts or frightens you, tell a safe adult who can help. Samuel’s special work as God’s prophet is not a command to keep danger secret or deal with it by yourself.



Ask

Why did Samuel tell Eli the warning instead of changing it to something easier to hear?



Listen for

It was God's message, including His serious judgement of wrongdoing. Samuel told it truthfully; the warning was not his invention.

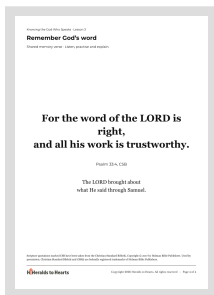


If needed

Read the caption on page 3 and recall verse 18. Explain, "Samuel's job was to pass on what God said." Then ask, "Could Samuel make the warning untrue by leaving it out?" Listen for why the truth must be received, without asking for private examples.

Samuel has passed on the word. The chapter's ending shows why Israel could recognise him as God's prophet.

3. The LORD proves His word trustworthy



Use **Remember God's word poster, page 4**. Point to "trustworthy". Read the end of Samuel's account to discover what gave Israel reason to recognise God's prophet.

READ ALOUD

¹⁹ Samuel grew. The LORD was with him, and he fulfilled everything Samuel prophesied. ²⁰ All Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a confirmed prophet of the LORD. ²¹ The LORD continued to appear in Shiloh, because there he revealed himself to Samuel by his word.

1 Samuel 3:19–21, CSB

SAY (SUGGESTED WORDING):

A prophet brings God's message. People throughout Israel came to recognise that Samuel was the LORD's prophet because God fulfilled His word. The account began when new messages were rare. It ends with the LORD making Himself known through Samuel. His word was dependable then, and the Scripture He has given us is dependable now. We hear it when the Bible is read and explained. We do not need to wait in bed for a voice like Samuel heard.

 SAY (SUGGESTED WORDING):

Later, God sent His Son, Jesus. Hebrews tells us that God spoke through prophets and has now spoken through His Son. Jesus shows us God truly. Jesus is God's Son, truly God and truly human. He lived without sin and took the punishment our sins deserve when He died. He rose again; His body was alive. His forgiveness is a gift we cannot earn by listening well or doing a task. We all need that forgiveness. Listening to God's warning can help us stop pretending we are fine and turn to the Saviour. We can ask Him for mercy and help to receive His truth.

Invite questions without requiring anyone to describe personal sins in front of the group. If a concern is disclosed, follow the church's safeguarding procedure privately.



Ask

How did Israel know Samuel's message was dependable? Must we wait for a voice before we can listen to God?



Listen for

The LORD fulfilled what Samuel prophesied. We can hear God's trustworthy word in Scripture; Samuel's special encounter is not a promised experience for every child.



If needed

Point to "trustworthy" on page 4 and explain, "God did what He said." Then ask, "What happened that showed Samuel's word was from God?" After the child answers, point to the Bible and invite them to explain how we hear this account today.

Remember with understanding — 5 minutes

Show page 4, "Remember God's word". Read both parts of the verse.

 READ ALOUD

For the word of the LORD is right,
and all his work is trustworthy.

Psalm 33:4, CSB

Explain *right* as true and good, and *trustworthy* as dependable. Point to "For the word of the LORD is right" and let the children echo it. Then point to "and all his work is trustworthy" and echo that phrase. Join the whole verse and "Psalm 33:4". Keep the verse visible while the children learn its two phrases; use the short recall below next.



Ask

“Which part of Samuel’s account helps us understand “trustworthy”?”



Listen for

God brought about what He said through Samuel.



If needed

Point to the last panel on page 1. Say, “The LORD did what He said. We can depend on His word.”

Try remembering: Cover “trustworthy” on page 4 with the paper. Begin the second phrase and pause for a supported answer. Uncover it, read both phrases and the reference, then ask, “What did God do that helps us know what trustworthy means?” Let a child recall fulfilled words, using the last retelling card if needed.

Application — 12 minutes

The movable pieces keep the account from stopping at the night-time call. Children explain God’s initiative, Samuel’s faithful report and God’s fulfilled word. You and your helper listen during making as well as the final explanation. Ask the question below while children work, hear children you have not yet heard, and offer help with the actual operation.

Demonstrate and distribute — 2 minutes

Demonstrate with pages 2 and 3. Put page 2 flat with the numbers upright. Hold up each prepared page 3 piece and read its caption. Draw an ear-shaped curve, two simple people and a tick in their respective spaces. Place the three pieces in order on spaces 1, 2 and 3. Mix them, then move each back while giving one sentence about the event.

Give each child page 2, the three prepared pieces and crayons. Read each caption aloud and let children point to the corresponding space.

Make and explore — 7 minutes

1. Invite one reminder drawing on each piece. Offer the same simple marks you modelled; children may choose another clear reminder and explain it.
2. Children lay the pieces on the numbered spaces, leaving them loose. Read the captions together. Invite children to mix them and arrange them again with a neighbour.
3. Give each child an envelope for the pieces after the closing explanation. Do not glue them down: moving and retelling are the purpose.

Help a child by reading the caption and asking which event came first. Place one piece together, then invite the child to move the next. No reading test or copied sentence is needed.

While children work, ask this question and help them try the explanation again:

**Ask**

“Use your three pieces to tell what the LORD did and what Samuel did.”

**Listen for**

The LORD called and gave His message; Samuel told it truthfully; the LORD fulfilled His word.

**If needed**

Touch space 1 and ask “Who called?” Then space 2: “Did Samuel hide the warning?” Then space 3: “Who brought His word about?”

Explain and respond — 2 minutes

Invite neighbours to take turns showing and explaining their work. Use your sample if work is unfinished. Give a child time to point and speak; you and your helper listen for the connection to Scripture.

**Ask**

“Where can we hear God’s trustworthy word today?”

**Listen for**

In Scripture as it is read and explained.

**If needed**

Hold up the actual Bible. Say, “We read Samuel’s account here. We can keep listening to the words God has given.”

Clear materials — 1 minute

Put all three pieces into each child’s envelope, keeping the route sheet beside it. Collect crayons in the tray and settle for prayer.

Prayer — 8 minutes

We can speak honestly to God and listen while others pray. Children may pass, ask an adult to pray for them or listen. Speaking aloud is not a test of faith.

Model a prayer — 1 minute

Offer this short prayer for the children to hear:

LORD, thank You for making Your true word known. Help us receive Your correction and trust the Saviour You have given. Thank You for Jesus, who makes You known and saves sinners. Amen.

Hear voluntary requests — 2 minutes

Invite a few brief, voluntary thanks or requests. This is not a round in which everyone must speak. Children may ask for help to understand a difficult passage, receive correction or listen patiently to someone else. Do not ask for private wrongs, family details or another person's story. A child may simply pass.

Pray for one another — 4 minutes

Invite short prayers for the requests freely shared. Give thinking time. Offer "Father, please help..." or "Thank You for..." when a child wants help beginning. No one must take a turn or repeat your words. You and your helper may pray for requests children would like you to carry; if nobody wishes to speak, pray gently for the shared concerns yourself, pausing between them.

Close — 1 minute

Thank God that His word is dependable and that Jesus gives sinners reason to seek mercy. Send the work and Parent take-home page with each child; invite them to explain the picture to a parent or caregiver without requiring homework.

After teaching

Check that retelling reaches the fulfilled word and does not imply that a teacher has Samuel's prophetic authority or that a child must confront an unsafe adult. Compare what you and your helper heard: what children explained without help, what needed prompting, and what needs teaching again. Keep brief anonymous notes of understanding and actual timings, without recording private disclosures. Finished work, accurate recitation and spoken prayer do not establish faith. If harm is disclosed, listen without investigating or promising secrecy and follow the church's actual safeguarding arrangements.

At the next meeting: Before showing the route ask, "How did God show that Samuel's message came from Him?" Use the third card after thinking time if needed. Recall Psalm 33:4 and introduce Jeremiah, another prophet whose message met resistance.

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