

Lesson 2: Samuel

A Boy Who Started To Know God

Information For Teacher

You can continue the teaching of the previous basic lesson by telling the story of Samuel which is an example, from the Bible, of a child who had a true and valid experience with God (as outlined in the first basic lesson), and started a life of service for Him. The story will help the children to see that they too can be saved and sure – and that they can serve Him when they are young.

It's better to teach this lesson the week following the basic lesson, linking the two together. You should therefore take about 5 minutes to show again the eight pictures from the previous week, and briefly describe them, before giving this lesson.

Below you will find an outline which you could follow. This is the story of Samuel, the boy who came to know God when he was young – as it might be told by himself – and it should be interesting especially if you tell it in a lively and realistic fashion – as if you really were Samuel. If you don't want to tell it in the first person you can do so in the third person.

The story is outlined in eight sections, each with a heading, to make it easier for you to remember and teach. Each section has a picture to illustrate it but the heading is not included in the picture.

BIBLE PASSAGE – 1 Samuel 1 v1-28

CENTRAL TRUTH – *It is possible for a child to know God and start a new life of service for Him.*

APPLICATION TO UNSAVED CHILDREN (CTU) - *It is possible for you to trust Jesus Christ and start this new life.*

APPLICATION TO SAVED CHILDREN (CTS) – *God wants you to serve Him – even though you are young.*

Powerpoint Slide 2:1 MY MOTHER'S NAME WAS HANNAH

I was born into a happy home. It was quite different from your home because my father, named Elkanah, had two wives! One of these wives was called Hannah and my father loved her very much (1 Samuel 1 v5) and gave her many nice things. But there was a really serious problem in our home. My father's wife Hannah had no children. She and my father tried very hard to have children – but they couldn't. And another problem was that his other wife whose name was Peninnah had many children – and she often made fun of Hannah (1 Samuel 1 v6) because she had no children. But it was Hannah who became my mother. How did that happen?

My father Elkanah was a very good religious man. He went to our main city Jerusalem once every year to worship God in the temple and he always took both his wives with him. But even on that journey, and when they arrived in Jerusalem, his wife who had children kept mocking and making fun of Hannah his other wife. Hannah often broke into tears and wouldn't even eat.

Powerpoint Slide 2:2 HANNAH PRAYED FOR A CHILD

Hannah's husband Elkanah was upset because she was so sad and because she wept so much, and he tried to tell her not to worry about not having children (1 Samuel 1 v8). He said to her, "You have me, you don't need children." But Hannah was not satisfied and she was still very unhappy. She really wanted a child. Do you think there is anything she could do to solve her problem? (*Give the children the opportunity to respond*).

Yes, there was an answer. She could pray and ask God to give her a child – and that is exactly what she did.

CT Do you have a problem to which you can see no answer? Have you tried over and over again to find an answer – but you couldn't? Have you ever wanted to make a new start in your life? It is possible for you to do so. Have you a problem in your life that you can't handle? You should do what Hannah did – tell God what your problem is and ask Him for the answer.

So Hannah went into the temple and prayed and wept and asked God to give her a son (1 Samuel 1 v10-11). She did not pray out loud but just talked to God in her heart. You don't have to talk out loud when you talk to God. She not only asked for a son but she told God that if He gave her a son she would not keep him at home but give him back to God so that he could work for Him in the temple.

Eli, the priest in the temple, was watching Hannah. He could only see her lips move and he thought she was drunk and was talking to herself. Eli was angry with her for being drunk.

But Hannah told Eli she was not drunk but was talking to God in her heart and that she had made a very special request to Him which she did not explain to Eli. Eli told her that God would grant her request, whatever it was.

Hannah was satisfied. She stopped crying and started to eat. She now believed God would answer her prayer and she didn't need to be sad any more. Did He answer her prayer? Of course He did.

CT And He will answer your prayer also if you are sincere and really mean it. It is possible. He will help you to make a new start in your life and He will help you with any problem you have.

Powerpoint Slide 2:3 I WAS BORN

This is where I come into the story. Elkanah and his two wives, Peninnah and Hannah returned home. Soon after, Hannah came to her husband with the good news that she was going to have a child. And that child was me. My mother and father were so happy when I was born and my mother was so thankful that God had answered her prayer. So she called me Samuel as you can see in our picture (*Advance Slide*). Why? Did you know that in my country all those years ago parents often gave their children a name which meant something? Have you any idea why my mother called me Samuel? (*Give an opportunity to respond*). She called me Samuel because my name means "Asked of God". She had asked God for me – and here I was.

But my mother had made a promise to God that when He gave her a son she would give him back to God and bring him to the temple so that he could live there and serve God. She knew it would not be easy for her to be separated from me – but she had made a promise and she did not forget it. She told her husband, my father, that she would stay at home and only return to the temple in Jerusalem when I was old enough to go with her and stay there and serve God there.

Powerpoint 2:4 MY MOTHER BROUGHT ME TO THE TEMPLE

I really enjoyed those first years with my mother. She loved me and I loved her. I was her only child – the child she had waited and hoped for. We had wonderful times together. But when I was about four years old my mother felt it was time to take me up to Jerusalem to the temple. It was not easy for her to do so because it meant that she would be separated from me and would only see me once each year. And it was not easy for me because I knew I would miss her very much. Neither of us looked forward to the day we would be parted.

But she kept the promise she had made to God and brought me to the temple and took me to Eli the priest – the same man who had told her that God would

answer her prayer (1 Samuel 1 v26-27). That's him there. And my mother told him that I was the child she had prayed for years ago in the temple when he had thought she was drunk. I was the answer to her prayers. And she told Eli that she had promised to give me to the Lord so that I could serve Him and that I was to live with him in the temple and serve the Lord there from that moment onward.

CTS If you are a Christian are you serving the Lord as you should? It is possible for children to serve the Lord. Samuel did so – and so can you. This is the most important thing you can do. Why not start today? Ask God what He wants you to do – and then do it.

Powerpoint Slide 2:5 I SERVED GOD IN THE TEMPLE

My mother was happy that she had kept her promise and that I was serving the Lord. She told God how happy she was and praised Him in a very special prayer right there in the temple (1 Samuel 2 v1-10). My mother was a wonderful person who really loved God and knew how to pray.

But, like any mother, I knew she was also sad, because she would be separated from me. However, she came up to the temple once every year (1 Samuel 2 v19) and always brought me a lovely new coat. I really looked forward to those visits.

We had wonderful times together and I was very happy when I heard that my mother was going to have another baby. Indeed later on she was to have two more boys and two girls. So God really blessed her and rewarded her for her faith and her decision to give me to the Lord and His service.

I was glad to work in the temple and serve the Lord there. This was my new home and I was very happy. I also tried to help Eli as much as I could (1 Samuel 2 v18; 3 v1). He really needed my help because he was so old. For example, it was my job to open the doors of the temple each morning. It wasn't very much – but I felt I was serving God in doing this.

CTS Are you boys and girls who are Christians serving God? Even though you are young and cannot do very much you can ask God to show you what you can do – and then do it – like I did.

Everyone seemed to like me and all the time I was growing and getting bigger – but I was still very young (1 Samuel 1 v26).

Then one night something very strange and very special happened. I was just settling down in my bed, almost asleep, when I heard a voice.

Powerpoint Slide 2:6 I HEARD THE VOICE OF GOD

This voice called me by name – “*Samuel*” (1 Samuel 3 v4). I thought of course that it was the voice of Eli the old priest and so I called out to him, “Here I am”.

Then I ran to his room where he was sleeping (as you can see in our picture) to ask what he wanted me for. But what a surprise it was when he told me that he had not called me and that I should go and lie down again. I was puzzled and lay down but to my surprise I heard the voice again calling my name. I was sure it was Eli who was calling me and I hurried back to his room and told him that he had definitely called me. But again he told me he hadn't and that I should go and lie down. When I heard the voice for the third time I was really confused and went back to Eli and told him again. Whose voice do you think it was? (*Give the children the opportunity to respond*). At last Eli understood Who it was and he said, "It was not me calling you, Samuel, it was the Lord. Go back and lie down and when He calls you again tell Him that you are listening to Him."

And that is what I did. The voice came again, this time speaking my name twice – "Samuel, Samuel", and I replied, "Speak for Your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3 v10).

There were many adults in Jerusalem and in the temple, but God didn't speak to any of them – not even to Eli, the priest. But He spoke to me – a little boy.

CTU And God still speaks to boys like me and also to girls. He wants children to get to know Him. You will not actually hear His voice as I did. But He speaks to you through the Bible which is the Word of God and He tells you that even though you are young you can know Him and start a new life with Him if you will trust Jesus Christ as your Saviour. Have you trusted the Lord Jesus? Have you started a new life? If you are still not sure how to do so your teacher would be glad to speak with you and help you. Just remain seated after the meeting and he will know you want him to come and speak with you and show you how to trust the Lord Jesus."

Powerpoint Slide 2:7 I STARTED TO KNOW GOD

This was the first time I had ever heard God's voice. Although I had been serving God in the temple (and living there) I did not yet really know Him and had not yet become a believer. But now God was speaking to me even though I was young because He wanted me to hear His voice and put my faith and trust in Him and start a new life.

When He spoke to me I answered immediately and told Him that I was His servant and I would listen to Him from now on. He told me what was going to happen in our land in the future (1 Samuel 3 v11-14), and from that moment on the Lord was with me. So, I had now started to know Him as a child and I had started to trust Him when I was still young and as I grew older He was with me and continued to help me (1 Samuel 3 v19). He was now my Lord and Saviour and I was sure that He would always be with me and help me.

That was the beginning of a wonderful life for me. Eli asked me to tell him what the Lord had said to me and I did so (1 Samuel 3 v17, 18). And then God helped me to tell many people about Himself and what God wanted them to do (1 Samuel 3 v19). I became known as a prophet which means that God spoke TO me many times (1 Samuel 3 v20) and He also spoke THROUGH me to many other people.

I haven't time to tell you all that happened in the years which followed. I had a wonderfully happy life. I became the religious leader of my country and God used me in many ways to be a help and blessing to my people. I was even the one who chose the first two kings of Israel (1 Samuel 10 v1; 16 v13).

But this all started many years before when as a young child I heard God's voice and began to know Him. That was the time I started to walk with Him and I have done so ever since (1 Samuel 12 v2).

CTU So you can see that it is possible for someone young like me – or you – to hear God's voice, to come to know Him and to start to live for Him. And if you hear God's voice and do what He says and begin to know Him, God will use you also in a special way and you too will have a wonderful and happy life.

Listen to God. Trust the Lord Jesus and start to know Him and live for Him.

CTS If you have trusted Him are you serving Him? I was really happy to serve Him and help others. You can do the same today and for the rest of your life. And God will use you as He used me.

Powerpoint Slide 2:8 HAVE YOU HEARD GOD'S VOICE?

Could I ask you a question?

CTU Have you ever heard the voice of God? You will probably say "No". Well I know that you have not heard His voice in the same way as I did. But God does speak today to boys and girls like you. How? Through the Bible. When you read the Bible as this girl is doing God speaks to you. Do you always listen when someone is speaking to you? Do you listen to your chum when he asks if you would like to play football? Do you listen to your mother when she tells you it's time to eat. Do you listen to your teacher when he asks you a question? You should. But it is even more important to listen to God when He speaks to you. If you are not a Christian He tells you in the Bible that you need to trust the Lord Jesus.

Let me ask you another question. Have you obeyed God when He spoke to you? Have you trusted the Lord Jesus? Have you started to know Him? Is He with you and helping you in your life every day? It is important not only to know what God wants you to do. You need to do it.

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Your Bible says, "Trust the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" (Acts 16 v31). That is God speaking to you. Listen to Him. Trust the Lord Jesus and He will save you. You will start to know Him and He will really help you every day as He helped me.