



# God Speaks to Samuel

1 Samuel 3:1-21


Your 5- and 6-year-olds still think in literal terms most of the time. If you tell them to listen to God, they may expect God to speak aloud to them as he did to Samuel. Explain to them that God may choose to speak audibly to some of them some day, but we can listen to God all the time through Bible stories, prayer, worship, and learning from other Christians who teach us about God.



► **Bible Point**  
Listen to God.

**Key Verse**  
"Put your hope in God"  
(Psalm 42:11).

**Weaving Faith Into Life**  
Children will remember to listen to God like Samuel did.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<b>1</b> Getting Started <i>about 10 min.</i>	<b>Welcoming Song</b> Sing a song welcoming all their classroom friends.	CD player <b>Teacher Pack:</b> CD	
<b>2</b> Key Verse Activity <i>about 10 min.</i>	<b>Hope in God</b> Say a rhyme to remember the verse.	Bible	
<b>3</b> Bible Exploration <i>about 15 min.</i>	<b>Theo's News</b> Find out what headphones have to do with the Bible story.	Surprise Box (any box will do), Theo puppet, CD player, headphones <b>Teacher Pack:</b> CD	Place the headphones in the Surprise Box, and hide the box where it's easily accessible.
	<b>Bible Time</b> Pretend to be Samuel listening to God.	Bible, CD player, tape or poster tack, scissors <b>Teacher Pack:</b> CD, "Samuel Hears God's Voice" poster (from the Big Bible Poster Pack) 	Cut out the footprints and the praying Samuel figure from the poster. Discard the footprints.

*Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.*



LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Weaving Faith Into Life</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>about 20 min.</i> (Choose 2 centers.)</p>	<p><b>Center 1: What's Missing?</b> Add ears to a picture of Samuel.</p>	My Bible Playground, sponges, scissors, tempera paints, bowls, newspaper	Remove the Lesson 6 pages from each My Bible Playground student book. Cut one 1½-inch half-circle sponge per child.
	<p><b>Center 2: Samuel Faces</b> Make a Samuel face with big, "listening" ears.</p>	several plastic knives, 1 round cracker per child, 2 apple slices per child, 10 raisins per child, 1 spoonful of cream cheese per child	
	<p><b>Center 3: Name That Sound</b> Listen to and identify various sounds.</p>	CD player <b>Teacher Pack:</b> CD	
	<p><b>Center 4: "Lip" Straw Toppers</b> Make straw toppers to remember that God speaks to us.</p>	small piece of cardboard, ½ sheet of red construction paper per child, 1 plastic drinking straw per child, utility knife, safety scissors, pencils, cups, water	Make a cardboard template of a large pair of lips, approximately 3½×1½-inches in size.
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>5</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Lasting Impressions</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>about 10 min.</i></p>	<p><b>Daily Challenges</b> Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.</p>	My Bible Playground	
	<p><b>Listening Prayer</b> Practice listening to God.</p>		
	<p><b>Weaving Faith at Home</b> Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.</p>		

***Bold text** within the lesson is spoken text.*





# God Speaks to Samuel

1 Samuel 3:1-21

BIBLE BACKGROUND  
FOR LEADERS

## Samuel Thinks Eli Calls Him in the Night

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Both Samuel and Eli had gone to bed for the night when God called out to Samuel. Perhaps Samuel was accustomed to calls for assistance from Eli, who was losing his eyesight (1 Samuel 3:2). At first, Eli might well have thought Samuel had been dreaming when he heard a voice calling his name. First Samuel 3:7 explains that Samuel “did not yet know the Lord.” This doesn’t mean that Samuel didn’t understand who the Lord is or hadn’t really been serving him; he simply had never before received a direct revelation from God. So it is not surprising that the boy continued to return to Eli when he was called.

When Eli realized that Samuel was hearing a call from God, he didn’t get up, go with Samuel, and hear what God had to say. He knew that whatever God wanted to say to Samuel was between God and the boy. The prophecy Samuel received echoed the words of a prophecy Eli had received from a “man of God” earlier. Because Eli’s sons had dishonored God in their priestly duties, that prophecy predicted the death of Eli’s sons and their replacement by a priest who would be faithful to God (1 Samuel 2:27-36).

## Samuel Shares God’s Difficult Message With Eli

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The prophecy given to Samuel made it clear that Eli had not raised his sons properly and that Eli would be punished. As difficult as it must have been for Samuel to pronounce judgment upon the priest he served, Samuel faithfully reported to Eli what God had said.

From 1 Samuel 3:19-21 it is clear that this was the first of many times God spoke to Samuel. Samuel grew up listening to God. The phrase “from Dan to Beersheba” (1 Samuel 3:20) was used to describe the entire Promised Land. Samuel became God’s mouthpiece to the nation of Israel. He listened when

God appeared to him, and “Samuel’s word came to all Israel” (1 Samuel 3:21).

## The Jesus Connection

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In our relationship with Jesus, God sometimes speaks to us through the Bible or God’s people. When he does, he wants us to listen and obey.

What does it mean to really listen to God? What might God be guiding you to do? Pray that your ears will be open to hear God speaking to you. You can write your prayer here.

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## Welcoming Song Supplies

CD player

### Teacher Pack

CD: "Are You Listening?"  
(track 7), "Jesus Loves  
Me Rock" (track 5)

# 1 GETTING STARTED

## Welcoming Song




**Tip** Consistently use the same signal to announce a transition to the next activity. You could flip the lights off and on, use a train whistle, have a puppet rustling inside a bag, or sing cleanup songs. Keep it simple, consistent, and fun.

### What You'll Do ■■■■■■

As the children arrive, greet each child and welcome him or her with a smile. When it's time to begin, use your signal to bring the children together in a circle.


Play "Are You Listening?" (track 7 on the CD) to the tune of "Frère Jacques" and lead children in doing the motions.

 **Are you listening** (*cup hands behind ears*)  
**Are you listening** (*keep hands behind ears*)  
**To the Lord?** (*lift your right hand up*)  
**To the Lord?** (*lift your left hand up*)

**Welcome to our church to** (*shake hands with a partner*)  
**Hear what God will tell us** (*shake hands with another partner*)  
**Through his Word.** (*place both hands together like a book*)  
**Through his Word.** (*keep hands shaped like a book*)  
*(Repeat 2x.)*

Say: **Today we'll learn that all things worked together for good for a person named Samuel because he listened to God. Let's sing a song called "Jesus Loves Me Rock."**

Lead children in singing "Jesus Loves Me Rock" (track 5 on the CD).

 **Jesus loves me;** (*echo*)  
**This I know,** (*echo*)  
**For the Bible** (*echo*)  
**Tells me so.** (*echo*)  
**Little children** (*echo*)  
**To him belong.** (*echo*)  
**They are weak, but** (*echo*)  
**He's so strong!** (*echo*)

**Jaaayyy!** (*J*)  
**Eeeeeee!** (*E*)





Ssssss! (S)  
Uuuuuu! (U)  
Ssssss! (S)

And what's that spell? (Jesus!)  
And who do you love? (Jesus!)  
And who loves you? (Jesus!)  
Who died for you? (Jesus!)  
And who's your guy? (Jesus!)  
The apple of your eye! (Jesus!)  
And who's your friend? (Jesus!)  
He'll love ya to the end! (Jesus!)

(Repeat from the beginning.)

"Jesus Loves Me Rock" by Dean-o. © 2003 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.



**2** KEY VERSE  
ACTIVITY

## Hope in God

### What You'll Do

Have the children form a circle and sit down. Open your Bible to Psalm 42:11, and show the children the words.

Say: **Our Key Verse from the Bible says "Put your hope in God." Let's say it together.** Lead the children in repeating the Key Verse with you.

**One way we can put our hope in God is by listening to him and obeying him. If we listen and obey, we show God that we know he has a good plan for us and we are willing to wait and hope for that plan. We listen so that we can learn what God wants us to do. Let's say and do this rhyme together. Repeat the words and motions after me.**

**Speak, God, for we are listening.** (Speak loudly and be very animated. Cup your hands around your mouth and then behind your ears.)

**We want to hear what you're saying.** (Continue to speak loudly and be very animated. Point to the class, and then cup your hands behind your ears.)

**We'll do what you tell us to.** (Continue to speak loudly and be very animated. Point to the class, and then slowly stretch your arms out wide.)

**We want to put our hope in you!** (Point to the class, and then slowly raise your hands, palms up, toward the sky.)

Hope in God  
Supplies

Bible





### Theo's News Supplies

CD player  
Surprise Box (any box  
will do)  
Theo puppet  
headphones  
**Teacher Pack**  
CD: "Here, Theo" (track  
2)

### Theo's News Easy Prep

Place the headphones  
in the Surprise Box, and  
hide the box where it's  
easily accessible.

## Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What are some ways God speaks to us?**
- **How can we show God we're listening to him?**
- **Why do we want to put our hope in God by listening to him?**

Say: **When we listen to stories from the Bible, we are listening to God. It's important to know what God says in the Bible, because he tells us how to live and how much he loves us. We can put our hope in God by listening to him and obeying his words.**

## 3 BIBLE EXPLORATION

# Theo's News

## What You'll Do ■■■■

Say: **Friends, it's time for Theo's News!** Have the children sit in a circle. Then begin "Here, Theo" (track 2 on the CD). When the CD segment ends, bring out the Surprise Box, and put the Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet on your hand. Then follow along with the script.

**Theo:** Hi, everybody!

**Teacher:** Hello, Theo! Tell us what interesting news you've dug up about our Bible story.

**Theo:** I hid it in the Surprise Box.

**Teacher:** Let's look inside to see what Theo found for us today.

*(Choose a child to open the Surprise Box, and have the kids pass the headphones around the circle so the rest of the class can see them up close. Give the children time to guess what the Bible story might be about.)*

**Teacher:** Theo, why did you hide a set of headphones in the Surprise Box?

**Theo:** Well, today's Bible story is about listening.

**Teacher:** Kids, when have you used headphones? What did you hear?

*(Pause to allow kids to answer your questions.)*

**Theo:** People use headphones when they want to listen to music or the radio. Today's story is about a little boy who learned to listen to God.

**Teacher:** Let's put our pretend headphones on and listen to one of God's stories.

*(Have kids mimic your motions as you pretend to put headphones on your head.)*

**Theo:** Have fun, boys and girls!

**Teacher:** Say goodbye to Theo.

Encourage the children to wave or say goodbye to Theo. Then put Theo away in a safe place for next week's use.





# Bible Time

## What You'll Do

Clear space where the children can lie on the floor.

Open your Bible to 1 Samuel 3, and show the children the words.

Say: **Today's Bible story tells us to ► LISTEN TO GOD.** Have kids repeat the Bible Point after you.

**Before we listen to the story, I'd like you to stand up, shake hands with three different people, and tell each person you shake hands with to ► LISTEN TO GOD.**

While kids are doing this, before the noise level lowers, say the following words in a normal tone: **Sit on the floor if you can hear me.** Pause while some children who hear you sit down. Then say in a softer tone: **Sit on the floor and fold your hands if you can hear me.** Pause while more children sit on the floor and fold their hands. Finally whisper: **Sit on the floor, fold your hands, and smile if you can hear me.** Most children should be sitting with their hands folded and smiling! Whisper for children to find a comfortable spot on the floor for Bible Time.

Say: **Late one night, a boy named Samuel was asleep in his bed at God's temple, where he worked for God.** Have the children lie on the floor and pretend to sleep. **Suddenly, Samuel heard a voice call his name...**

Play "Whispered 'Samuel'" (track 19 on the CD), and listen to God whisper, "Samuel." Then pause the CD.

Say: **Samuel jumped up and ran to Eli, the temple priest. "Here I am," he said.** Have the children jump up, run to you, and say, "Here I am." **"I didn't call you," said Eli. "Go lie down again."** Have the children lie down again. **Samuel heard the voice again...**

Play the CD, and listen to God whisper, "Samuel." Then pause the CD.

Say: **Samuel ran to Eli again.** Have the children jump up, run to you, and say, "Here I am." **"I didn't call you, Samuel," said Eli. "Go lie down again."** Have the children lie down and pretend to sleep again. **Again, Samuel heard the voice...**

Play the CD, and listen to God whisper, "Samuel." Then pause the CD.

Say: **Samuel ran to Eli once more.** Have the children jump up, run to you, and say, "Here I am." **This time Eli knew that God was calling Samuel. He told Samuel that the next time he heard God calling, he should say, "Speak, for your servant is listening."** Have the children lie down again.

**This time God called Samuel as before.**

Play the CD, and listen to God whisper, "Samuel."



## Bible Time Supplies

- Bible
- CD player
- tape or poster tack
- scissors
- Teacher Pack**
- CD: "Whispered 'Samuel'" (track 19)
- "Samuel Hears God's Voice" poster (from the Big Bible Poster Pack)

## Bible Time Easy Prep

- Cut out the footprints and the praying Samuel figure from the poster.
- Discard the footprints.





Say: **Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”** Have the kids sit up and repeat the line. **Samuel was ready to ► LISTEN TO GOD and to do whatever God wanted him to do.**

Show the children the “Samuel Hears God’s Voice” poster. **Look, in this poster, Samuel is still in bed. Let’s stick this praying Samuel over the Samuel that’s still in bed.** Give one child the tape or poster tack and the praying Samuel figure. **But there’s a trick! You have to stick the figure on with your eyes closed! That’s going to be pretty tough, isn’t it? What if we help you?** Lead the other children in whispering directions to the child with his or her eyes closed. Give every child a chance to stick the praying Samuel onto the poster.

**Listen to your friends’ directions. They will help you stick the figure in the right spot!**

### Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- How would you feel if God spoke out loud to you?
- What do you think God might say to you?
- What do you think you might say to God?

Say: **God talks to us through the Bible. When we ► LISTEN TO GOD the way you listened to your friends earlier, he tells us how to live and that he loves us very much. Samuel learned to listen to God, and we can listen to God, too.**

### Center 1: What’s Missing? Supplies

My Bible Playground  
sponges  
scissors  
tempera paints  
bowls  
newspaper

### Center 1: What’s Missing? Easy Prep

Remove the Lesson 6 pages from each My Bible Playground student book. Cut one 1½-inch half-circle sponge per child.

## 4 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Choose at least two of the learning centers to help reinforce today’s Bible lesson. Gather the needed materials, and put the supplies in an out-of-sight area until you’re ready for them. Allow the children to choose which center they’d like to explore first. Then circulate among the children as they create and explore. Encourage them to make connections between their activities and the Bible by asking them the questions included with each center’s description.

### ■ CENTER 1: What’s Missing?

#### What You’ll Do ■■■■■■

Distribute the Lesson 6 pages from My Bible Playground and let kids write their names on the pages.







Hold up one of the student pages.

Ask:

- **What's missing from this picture?** Allow children a moment to respond.

Say: **That's right. Samuel's ears are missing from this picture. Let's make ears for Samuel. Samuel used his ears to listen to Eli and to ► LISTEN TO GOD.**

Show the children how the sponges are shaped like ears. Help the children dip the sponges into the paint and press the sponges against the side of Samuel's head to make ears.

### Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **How do you think Samuel felt when God spoke to him out loud?**
- **If you were Samuel, what would you do if God spoke to you?**

Say: **Just like Samuel, we should always ► LISTEN TO GOD. God may not speak out loud to us like he did to Samuel, but we can listen to God by learning Bible stories and listening to Christians who teach us about God.**

## ■ CENTER 2:

# Samuel Faces

### What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Have the children wash their hands (or use wet wipes) and then sit down to prepare their snacks.

Say: **In today's Bible story, Samuel thought that he was hearing Eli call his name in the night. Finally, Eli realized that God was calling Samuel, and he told Samuel to ► LISTEN TO GOD and answer by saying, "Speak, God, for your servant is listening." We are going to make a Samuel face for our snack.**

Give each child one round cracker, two apple slices and ten raisins. Put a spoonful of cream cheese on the children's crackers, and allow them to use plastic knives to spread it around. Show the children how to make Samuel's face by using the raisins for the eyes, nose, and mouth and the apple slices for the ears. When children have finished making their snacks, invite one child to pray for the snack.



### Center 2: Samuel Faces Supplies

- several plastic knives
- 1 round cracker per child
- 2 apple slices per child
- 10 raisins per child
- 1 spoonful of cream cheese per child

**! ALLERGY  
■ ALERT**





### Center 3: Name That Sound Supplies

CD player

#### Teacher Pack

CD: "Name That Sound"  
(track 21)

### Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What part of Samuel's body did he need to use to ► LISTEN TO GOD?**  
Encourage children to shout "ears."
- **How can we listen to God?**

Say: **God speaks to us through our parents and teachers and through the Bible. We can use our ears and our hearts to ► LISTEN TO GOD and to obey him.**

### ■ CENTER 3:

## Name That Sound

### What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Gather the children around you on the floor.

Say: **Samuel learned to ► LISTEN TO GOD. Let's learn to listen by playing "Name That Sound." I'm going to play a sound from our CD. When you think you know what the sound is, raise your hand. I'll call on you, and you can tell me what it is.**

Play "Name that Sound" (track 21 on the CD). There are eight sounds on the CD: a truck engine, a telephone, a cat, a bicycle horn, a train, an electric can opener, a dog, and hands clapping. After each sound, push pause on the CD player, allow the kids to give their answers, and then press play to continue.

### Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **How does listening help you each day?**
- **Why should we always ► LISTEN TO GOD?**

Say: **Listening helps us know what to do. For example, if we hear a barking dog, we might need to feed him. If we're playing outside and hear an electric can opener, we would know food is being made. Listening to God helps us know what to do, too. Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." Samuel listened to know what God wanted him to do.**





**CENTER 4:**

# “Lip” Straw Toppers

## What You’ll Do

Say: **What do we use to talk with? What do we use to listen with? God may not have lips, but he did speak to Samuel during the night. And Samuel used his ears to listen to God. Let’s make some of our very own lips to remind us that God can speak to us and we should listen to him.**

Let the children trace around the lip template onto red construction paper. Have them cut out the lips. In the middle of each set of lips, make two diagonal 1/4-inch slits in the shape of an X with the utility knife. Have the children each slide a straw through the slits to make a straw topper. Serve the kids some water so they can try out their new straw toppers.

## Talk With Kids

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- Can you remember a time you told a story and everyone listened to you?
- How do you feel when you talk and no one listens?

Say: **Samuel was willing to listen to and obey God. We want to ► LISTEN TO GOD, too. When we hear God’s Word, the Bible, that is God speaking to us. By listening to the Bible, we, too, can ► LISTEN TO GOD.**

# 5 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

## Daily Challenges

## What You’ll Do

After the children have cleaned up the centers, sit with kids in a circle on the floor. Review the lesson activities and the Bible Point, and then encourage the children to share what they enjoyed learning from the Bible today.

Also use this time to challenge kids in their faith. Encourage them to choose a Daily Challenge for applying today’s lesson to their lives this week. Use this challenge to encourage your children’s growing relationships with Jesus.

## Talk With Kids

Say: **Today we learned that we ► LISTEN TO GOD. I’d like each of you to choose one of these Daily Challenges to think about how to listen to God.**



## Center 4: “Lip” Straw Toppers Supplies

- small piece of cardboard
- ½ sheet of red construction paper per child
- 1 plastic drinking straw per child
- utility knife
- safety scissors
- pencils
- cups
- water

## Center 4: “Lip” Straw Toppers Easy Prep

Make a cardboard template of a large pair of lips, approximately 3½×1½-inches in size.

## Daily Challenges Supplies

My Bible Playground





Give kids these three Daily Challenge ideas to choose from:

- 1. Ask your mom or dad to read a Bible story to you. Talk with your mom or dad about the Bible story and think of how God can speak to you through the Bible.**
- 2. Put on a pair of headphones and sit quietly by yourself for a while. Think about how you can listen to God, too.**
- 3. Blow bubbles with a friend. As you pop each bubble, tell your friend different ways you can remember to listen to God.**

Say: **If you want to read the Bible, circle choice number 1. If you want to sit quietly, circle choice number 2. If you want to blow bubbles, circle choice number 3.** Check that each child circled a choice on his or her My Bible Playground page. Make sure you tell kids the challenge you choose. Your commitment will inspire children and will give them an opportunity to see God at work in your life as well as in theirs!

## Listening Prayer

### What You'll Do

Say: **Today we learned to ► LISTEN TO GOD. Let's practice listening again before we pray.** Have the children close their eyes and cup their hands behind their ears—the sign for “hear” in sign language.

**For a few moments, let's be very quiet and just listen.** Pause for a few moments.

**We may or may not have heard God's voice, but we listened and we heard the sounds of things God has made. Even those sounds can remind us of God's love. Let's thank God for the sounds we heard.**

Let each child thank God for something that he or she heard. Close by saying the following prayer, one sentence at a time. Have kids repeat each sentence after you.

**Dear God,  
Thank you for ears to hear.  
Help us listen to you always.  
In Jesus' name, amen.**

## Weaving Faith at Home

Have children take home their My Bible Playground book pages whether they worked on them or not. Have the children tell their parents the challenge they committed to in the “Daily Challenges” activity. Encourage parents to help their kids fulfill this commitment throughout the week. By working together and focusing on the same goals, you and parents can help children weave faith into their lives!

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at [group.com/digital](http://group.com/digital).