Preschool–Grade 6

Hannah's Prayer

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: God hears our prayers, so we can pour out our whole hearts to Him, keep our promises to Him, and thank Him when He answers.
Bible passage: 1 Samuel 1:1–2:21 and 2:26. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him:" *1 Samuel 1:27 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board. Write two words at the top of another part of the board: **ASK** and **THANK**.

1. Opening game: Ask or Thank? (5–10 minutes)

Read each short prayer. If it is asking God for something, kids stand up. If it is thanking God, they raise both hands. 1) "Please help my grandma feel better." 2) "Thank You for my family." 3) "Please help me on my test." 4) "Thank You for answering my prayer." 5) "Please keep us safe on our trip." 6) "Thank You for sending Jesus." Say: "Asking God for something is called a **petition**. In today's story, Hannah prayed both kinds of prayers: a petition first, and then a big thank-you."

2. Bible story: Hannah Prays and Keeps Her Promise (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to 1 Samuel 1. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

A sad family. Elkanah had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none (1 Samuel 1:2). Every year the family went up to Shiloh to worship and sacrifice to the LORD (1:3). Elkanah gave Hannah a **worthy portion**, a big share, because he loved her (1:5). But Peninnah, the Bible says, "provoked her sore, for to make her fret": she upset Hannah badly on purpose, year after year. Hannah wept and did not eat (1:6–7). Elkanah asked her why she was sad and said, "am not I better to thee than ten sons?" (1:8).

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Hannah's prayer. Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD (1:9). Hannah was in **bitterness of soul**, deep sorrow, and she prayed to the LORD and wept (1:10). **Look up 1 Samuel 1:11.** Hannah **vowed a vow**, a serious promise to God: if He would give her a son, she would give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor would come upon his head, which means his hair would never be cut. **Handmaid** means a woman servant; Hannah called herself God's servant. Eli **marked her mouth**, watching her lips. She spoke in her heart, only her lips moved, and Eli thought she had been drunken (1:12–13). He told her to put away her wine (1:14). **Look up 1 Samuel 1:15.** Hannah had not been drinking at all. She had **poured out her soul**: she told God everything in her heart. Eli answered, "Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him" (1:17). Hannah ate, and her **countenance**, her face, was no more sad (1:18).

God answers. The family worshipped before the LORD early the next morning and went home to Ramah, and the LORD remembered Hannah (1:19). **Look up 1 Samuel 1:20.** She had a son and named him Samuel, "Because I have asked him of the LORD."

Hannah keeps her promise. Hannah stayed home until Samuel was **weaned**, old enough not to need his mother's milk (1:22–23). Then she brought him to the house of the LORD in Shiloh with three **bullocks** (young bulls), an ephah of flour and a bottle of wine for the offering. The child was young (1:24). They brought the child to Eli (1:25). **Look up 1 Samuel 1:27–28.** Hannah said she had **lent** him to the LORD, given him to God, as long as he lived.

Hannah's song. Then Hannah prayed a song of praise. "My heart rejoiceth in the LORD" (2:1). **Look up 1 Samuel 2:2.** There is none holy as the LORD, there is none beside Him, and there is no **rock**, nothing strong and safe to stand on, like our God. She praised God who "bringeth low, and lifteth up" (2:7).

Samuel grows. Samuel **ministered**, served, before the LORD as a child, wearing a linen **ephod**, a garment for serving God (2:11, 2:18). **Look up 1 Samuel 2:19.** Every year his mother made him a little coat and brought it when she came up to Shiloh. Eli blessed Elkanah and Hannah, and the LORD gave Hannah three more sons and two daughters (2:20–21). **Look up 1 Samuel 2:26.** The child Samuel grew on, and was in favour, liked and approved, both with the LORD and with people.

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3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Hannah was hurting, and she took it to God (1:10). What can you do when someone keeps upsetting you?
2. Hannah's face was "no more sad" before her baby was born (1:18). Why do you think she felt better after praying?
3. Eli got the wrong idea about Hannah (1:13–14). How did she answer him? How can we answer kindly when someone misunderstands us?
4. Hannah kept a hard promise (1:11, 1:28). Why does it matter to God that we keep our promises?
5. After God answered, Hannah sang a long thank-you prayer (2:1–10). How often do we remember to thank God after He answers?

Recall questions

1. What town did Elkanah's family go up to every year to worship? *(Shiloh, 1 Samuel 1:3)*
2. What did Hannah name her son, and why? *(Samuel, "Because I have asked him of the LORD," 1:20)*
3. What did Samuel's mother bring him every year? *(A little coat, 2:19)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **hath** means has, and **petition** means what you ask for. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Hannah poured out her heart to God, and God heard her. God loves you, and He hears you too. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: write down one prayer request on paper. Pray about it every day, and write down when and how God answers. Then thank Him, like Hannah did.

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6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. 1 Samuel 1:1: What was the name of Hannah's husband? *(Elkanah)*
2. 1 Samuel 1:3: What were the names of Eli's two sons? *(Hophni and Phinehas)*
3. 1 Samuel 1:9: Where was Eli sitting? *(Upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD)*
4. 1 Samuel 1:18: How did Hannah's face look after Eli spoke to her? *(Her countenance was no more sad)*
5. 1 Samuel 1:19: What town did the family go home to? *(Ramah)*
6. 1 Samuel 1:24: What did Hannah bring to the house of the LORD with Samuel? *(Three bullocks, one ephah of flour and a bottle of wine)*
7. 1 Samuel 2:18: What did young Samuel wear as he ministered? *(A linen ephod)*
8. 1 Samuel 2:21: How many more children did God give Hannah? *(Three sons and two daughters)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You hear every prayer, even the ones we pray quietly in our hearts. Help us pour out our hearts to You, keep our promises to You, and remember to thank You when You answer. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

Tell Peninnah's part kindly: say what she did, as the Bible does, without calling her names, and point kids to how Hannah answered: she prayed.
If a child asks why Elkanah had two wives: in Old Testament times some men had more than one wife, and the Bible tells it as it happened. It often brought sadness, as it did here. God's plan from the beginning is one husband and one wife (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4–6).

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