Preschool–Grade 6

Hannah's Prayer

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Bring God your whole heart in prayer, even the painful parts, keep the promises you make to Him, and thank Him when He answers.
Bible passage: 1 Samuel 1:1–2:21 and 2:26. Students read 1 Samuel 1:1–20 and 2:1–10 out loud themselves.
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)* and "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." *Philippians 4:6 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read 1 Samuel 1–2 and Philippians 4:6. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: What Do You Do With It? (5–10 minutes)

Read each situation. Students call out what most people do with that feeling, then what they think would actually help. 1) Someone at school keeps picking at the one thing you are most sensitive about. 2) You have wanted something for a long time, and everyone around you seems to have it. 3) You tried to explain how you feel, and someone got the wrong idea about you. Ask: *Where do you usually take your hurt: to a friend, to a screen, to an angry text, or to God?* Say: "Hannah faced all three of these, and she knew exactly where to take it."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: 1 Samuel 1:1–20. Students take turns, a few verses each. Old words in this passage:

- **worthy portion** (1:5): a large, special share; **shut up her womb** (1:5): she could not have children
- **adversary** (1:6): someone against you, here Peninnah; **provoked her sore, for to make her fret** (1:6): upset her badly, on purpose
- **bitterness of soul** (1:10): deep sorrow; **vowed a vow** (1:11): made a serious promise to God
- **affliction** (1:11): trouble and pain; **handmaid** (1:11): a woman servant; **no razor** (1:11): his hair would never be cut
- **marked her mouth** (1:12): watched her lips; **a daughter of Belial** (1:16): a worthless, wicked woman
- **petition** (1:17): request; **countenance** (1:18): face

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Tell the middle part in your own words: Hannah stayed home until Samuel was weaned, and Elkanah agreed: "only the LORD establish his word" (1:21–23). Then she brought the young child to the house of the LORD in Shiloh with an offering of three bullocks, flour and wine, and brought him to Eli (1:24–25). She reminded Eli that she was the woman who had stood there praying: "For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him" (1:26–27). She had **lent** him to the LORD as long as he lived (1:28).

Read out loud: 1 Samuel 2:1–10. Old words in this passage:

- **rejoiceth** (2:1): is glad; **mine horn is exalted** (2:1): God has made me strong and lifted me up
- **there is none beside thee** (2:2): there is only one God; **rock** (2:2): someone strong and safe to stand on
- **arrogancy** (2:3): proud bragging; **actions are weighed** (2:3): God sees and judges what we do
- **girded with strength** (2:4): given strength, like putting on a belt; **the barren** (2:5): a woman who had no children
- **the dunghill** (2:8): the trash heap, the lowest place; **his saints** (2:9): God's faithful people

Then finish the story: Samuel ministered before the LORD as a child, girded with a linen ephod (2:11, 2:18). His mother made him a little coat and brought it to him from year to year (2:19). Eli blessed Elkanah and Hannah, and the LORD gave Hannah three sons and two daughters (2:20–21). While Eli's own grown sons "knew not the LORD" (2:12), the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men (2:26).

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3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Peninnah provoked Hannah "year by year" (1:7). The Bible tells us Hannah took it to God (1:10). What does that look like for you when someone keeps hurting you?
2. Hannah "poured out" her soul (1:15). She didn't pretend to be fine in front of God. Why is it good to be honest with God about how we feel?
3. Eli misjudged Hannah (1:13–14), but she answered him respectfully (1:15–16). How do you respond when someone gets you wrong?
4. Hannah's countenance was "no more sad" (1:18) before anything had changed. What changes in us when we really leave something with God?
5. Hannah kept her vow even though it cost her (1:11, 1:28), and she still cared for Samuel every year (2:19). What promises have you made to God or to others? How are you doing at keeping them?
6. Samuel served God as a child, while Eli's grown sons did not (2:12, 2:18, 2:26). What does that tell you about your age and serving God?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words in Philippians 4:6: **be careful for nothing** means don't be anxious or worried about anything. **Supplication** means asking earnestly, from the heart. **With thanksgiving** means thanking God while you ask. **Let your requests be made known unto God** means tell God what you need.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say 1 Samuel 1:27 this week; keep working on Philippians 4:6 next week too.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Hannah sang, 'I rejoice in thy salvation' (1 Samuel 2:1, KJV), and 'there is none beside thee' (2:2). There is one God, and He saves. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, 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.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. What is weighing on my heart right now that I need to pour out to God, like Hannah did?
2. What is one promise I made to God or to someone else that I need to keep?
3. Write a short prayer: ask God for what you need, and thank Him for one prayer He has already answered.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: pray about the thing you wrote in question 1 every day. When you see God answer, write it down and thank Him.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You hear us when we pour out our hearts to You. Help us bring You our hurts instead of fighting back, keep the promises we make, and never forget to thank You. Thank You for loving us and saving us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

Leaving out on purpose: 1 Samuel 2:12–17 and 2:22–36 tell what Eli's sons did wrong and the judgment on Eli's house. This lesson only mentions that they "knew not the LORD" (2:12); that part of the story comes back in God Calls Samuel (1 Samuel 3).
If a student 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, including the sorrow it caused in this family (1:6–7). God's plan from the beginning is one husband and one wife (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4–6).

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