Preschool–Grade 6

Hannah's Prayer

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: God hears our prayers, so we can pour out our hearts 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, 6 paper hearts, a marker, tape, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child. If you have one: a small child's coat or sweater.
Before class: write the memory verse on the 6 paper hearts (see part 4). Put a bookmark in your Bible at 1 Samuel 1:20.

1. Opening game: Read My Lips (5 minutes)

Move your lips to say a word with no sound at all: "hello," "apple," "thank you," "Jesus." The kids guess each word. Then let a few kids take a turn. Ask: *Was it hard to know what someone was saying when you couldn't hear them?* Say: "Today we will meet a woman who prayed so quietly that only her lips moved. A man watching her got the wrong idea. But God heard every word."

2. Bible story: Hannah Prays (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to 1 Samuel 1, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

Long ago a man named **Elkanah** had two wives, **Hannah** and **Peninnah**. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children (1 Samuel 1:2). Every year the family went up to **Shiloh** to worship the LORD (1:3). Elkanah loved Hannah, and he gave her a special share of the food (1:5). But year after year, Peninnah provoked Hannah. That means she upset her on purpose, because Hannah had no children. Hannah cried and would not eat (1:6–7). Elkanah asked her why she wept and would not eat. He said, "Am not I better to thee than ten sons?" (1:8)

One year at Shiloh, Hannah went to the temple of the LORD. **Eli** the priest was sitting by a post of the temple (1:9). Hannah was very sad. She prayed to the LORD and cried (1:10). She made a **vow**, a promise to God. She asked God for a son, and said, "I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life" (1:11).

Hannah prayed in her heart. Only her lips moved, and no one heard her voice. Eli watched her mouth, and he thought she had been drinking too much wine (1:12–14)! "No, my lord," Hannah said. "I have poured out my soul before the LORD" (1:15). That means she told God everything that was in her heart. Then Eli said, "Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition" (1:17). That means "May God give you what you asked for." Hannah went her way, and she ate, and her face was not sad anymore (1:18).

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The story continues: The family went home to Ramah, and the LORD remembered Hannah (1:19). She had a baby boy! **Read 1 Samuel 1:20 from your Bible:** "...she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD." Say: "Hannah named her baby **Samuel**, because she asked God for him."

Hannah did not forget her promise. When Samuel was **weaned**, old enough that he didn't need his mother's milk anymore, she brought him to Eli at the house of the LORD in Shiloh. The child was still young (1:24–25). Hannah said, "I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD. For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him" (1:26–27). So she lent him to the LORD as long as he lived (1:28). **Lent** means given.

Then Hannah prayed again. This time it was a thank-you prayer: "My heart rejoiceth in the LORD" (2:1). That means "My heart is so happy in God!" She said, "There is none holy as the LORD" (2:2). Samuel stayed and served the LORD with Eli the priest (2:11, 2:18). Every year his mother made him **a little coat** and brought it to him when the family came up to worship (2:19). *(Hold up the small coat if you brought one.)* God gave Hannah three more sons and two daughters (2:21). And the child Samuel grew, and both God and people were pleased with him (2:26).

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. Where did Hannah pray? *(At the temple of the LORD in Shiloh, 1 Samuel 1:9)*
2. What did Hannah ask God for? *(A son, 1:11)*
3. Only Hannah's lips moved. What did Eli think? *(That she had been drinking too much wine, 1:13–14)*
4. What did Hannah name her baby, and why? *(Samuel, because she asked the LORD for him, 1:20)*
5. What did Hannah make for Samuel every year? *(A little coat, 2:19)*

4. Memory verse: Heart Verse game (5 minutes)

Tape the 6 hearts up in order: *For this child I prayed; / and the LORD / hath given me / my petition / which I asked of him: / 1 Samuel 1:27.* Explain the old words: **hath** means has, and **petition** means what you ask for. Read the verse together. Then take one heart away and read it again. Keep taking hearts away, one each time, until the kids can say the whole verse by themselves.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Hannah told God everything in her heart, and God heard her. You can talk to God about anything, too. God loves you very much. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: '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 we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (Acts 2:4)."
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: tell God about one thing on your heart every day. When God answers, say, "Thank You, God!" like Hannah did.

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Hannah's prayer word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/hannah-word-search), the Hannah and Samuel crossword, maze, worksheet, coloring page or craft (vbshq.com/bible-stories/hannah), or **Pass the Heart:** kids sit in a circle and pass a paper heart while you clap. When you stop clapping, the child holding the heart says one thing to ask God for or one thing to thank God for. Keep going until everyone has had a turn.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You hear us when we pray, even when we pray quietly in our hearts. Help us tell You everything, keep our promises, and 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 without calling her names. If kids say she was mean, ask: *How can we be kind to someone who is sad?*
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).
If a child asks why Hannah left Samuel at the house of the LORD: she had promised God (1:11), and she kept her promise. Samuel served the LORD with Eli, and Hannah saw him every year when she brought his little coat (2:19).

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