Preschool–Grade 6

Samuel Anoints Saul

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

Main point: God directs your steps through ordinary days and detours. Stay humble, and keep following Him.
Bible passage: 1 Samuel 9:1–10:1 and 10:17–24. Students read 1 Samuel 9:1–21 and 10:17–24 out loud themselves.
Memory verse: "Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?" *1 Samuel 10:1 (KJV)* and "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps." *Proverbs 16:9 (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 8–10 and Proverbs 16:9. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: Plan vs. What Happened (5–10 minutes)

Draw two columns on the board: "My plan" and "What happened." Invite students to call out times a plan went sideways: a canceled trip, a missed bus, a move to a new town. Write a few. Ask: *Did any of those detours lead somewhere good that you didn't expect?* Read Proverbs 16:9 together. Say: "Saul planned to find some donkeys. God planned something much bigger."

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

Read out loud: 1 Samuel 9:1–21. Students take turns, a few verses each. Old words in this passage:

- **a mighty man of power** (9:1): a strong, important man; **a choice young man, and a goodly** (9:2): a fine, handsome young man
- **asses** (9:3): donkeys; **take thought for us** (9:5): start worrying about us
- **peradventure** (9:6): maybe; **the bread is spent in our vessels** (9:7): our bags are out of food
- **the fourth part of a shekel of silver** (9:8): a small amount of money for a gift
- **seer** (9:9): the old name for a prophet; **the high place** (9:12): the place where the sacrifice was
- **told Samuel in his ear** (9:15): told him privately; **captain** (9:16): leader
- **wherefore then speakest thou so to me?** (9:21): why are you saying this to me?

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Tell the middle part in your own words: Samuel brought Saul and his servant into the parlour and sat them in the chiefest place among about thirty guests, and the cook set before Saul the shoulder that had been kept for him (9:22–24). Samuel talked with Saul on the top of the house (9:25). Early the next morning, as they went down to the end of the city, Samuel sent the servant on ahead and told Saul to stand still, "that I may shew thee the word of God" (9:26–27). Then Samuel took a vial of oil, poured it upon his head, kissed him, and said the LORD had anointed him to be captain over His inheritance (10:1).

Read out loud: 1 Samuel 10:17–24. Old words in this passage:

- **adversities and your tribulations** (10:19): troubles and hard times; **rejected** (10:19): turned away from
- **by your tribes, and by your thousands** (10:19): group by group
- **taken** (10:20–21): picked out; **enquired of the LORD** (10:22): asked the LORD
- **hid himself among the stuff** (10:22): hid among the baggage; **fetched him thence** (10:23): brought him out from there
- **God save the king** (10:24): may God keep the king; long live the king

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. The LORD told Samuel about Saul a day before Saul arrived (9:15–16). What does that say about how well God knows your life?
2. Saul's search failed in four lands (9:4). Name a "failed search" in your life. How might God have been guiding you through it?
3. Saul said his tribe was the smallest and his family the least (9:21). Later Samuel reminded him, "When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel?" (1 Samuel 15:17). Why does God value humility?
4. Saul hid among the stuff (10:22). Have you ever wanted to hide from something God was asking you to do?
5. Israel asked for a king "like all the nations" (8:5), and Samuel said they had rejected God (10:19). Where are you tempted to want what everyone else has instead of what God wants?
6. Proverbs 16:9 says we plan, but the LORD directs our steps. How can you plan well and still let God lead?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words: in 1 Samuel 10:1, a **vial** is a little bottle, **anointed** means poured oil on him to show God chose him, and **his inheritance** means God's own people. In Proverbs 16:9, **deviseth** means plans. Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say 1 Samuel 10:1 this week; keep working on Proverbs 16:9 next week too.

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

Say: "God directed Saul's steps to Samuel. The most important steps God directs are the ones that bring us to Jesus. 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. Think of a time my plans went sideways. How might God have been directing my steps?
2. Where do I feel "little in my own sight"? Where am I tempted to be proud?
3. Write a short prayer asking God to direct your steps this week, using Proverbs 16:9.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: when a plan falls apart, stop and pray, "LORD, direct my steps." Write down where the day led.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You direct our steps, even through detours and lost things. Keep us humble, and help us follow You all the way. Thank You for loving us and making a way to save us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student asks what happened to Saul: later chapters tell that Saul did not keep obeying God (1 Samuel 15:17–23). Saul started out small in his own eyes; staying humble and obeying God matters every day, not just at the start.

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