Preschool–Grade 6

God Calls Samuel

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

Main point: Listen to God, then do what He says. God spoke to a young person, and He can use you right now.
Bible passage: 1 Samuel 3. Students read 1 Samuel 3:1–10 and 3:15–21 out loud themselves.
Memory verse: "And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth." *1 Samuel 3:10 (KJV)* and "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." *James 1:22 (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 1–3 and James 1:22–25. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses.

1. Opening game: Through the Noise (5–10 minutes)

Students pair up. One partner in each pair draws a simple picture of a house, a tree and a sun on paper without showing it. That partner then tells the other partner how to draw the same picture, without saying the names of the things, while everyone else in the room talks at once. After two minutes, compare drawings. Ask: *What made it hard to hear your partner? What kinds of "noise" make it hard to hear God?* Say: "Today we'll read about a young person who heard God call his name, and what he said back."

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

Tell the beginning: Hannah prayed for a son. When the LORD gave her Samuel, she brought him to the house of the LORD in Shiloh and lent him to the LORD as long as he lived (1 Samuel 1:24–28). The child ministered unto the LORD before Eli the priest (2:11).
Read out loud: 1 Samuel 3:1–10. Old words in this passage:

- **ministered** (3:1): served; **precious** (3:1): rare; **no open vision** (3:1): God was not often showing Himself to people
- **wax dim** (3:2): grow weak; **ere** (3:3): before. The lamp in God's house burned from evening to morning (Exodus 27:21), so it was night.
- **calledst** (3:5): you called; **perceived** (3:8): understood
- **heareth** (3:9–10): is listening; **thy servant** (3:9–10): me, Your servant

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Tell in your own words: God told Samuel He would do a thing in Israel that would make the ears of everyone who heard it **tingle** (3:11). God would judge Eli's house, because his sons made themselves **vile** (did very wicked things), and Eli **restrained them not** (did not stop them) (3:12–14). Eli's sons were priests who took the people's offerings for themselves and would not listen to their father (2:12–17, 2:22–25).
Read out loud: 1 Samuel 3:15–21. Old words in this passage:

- **feared to shew** (3:15): was afraid to tell; **God do so to thee, and more also** (3:17): a strong way of saying "you must tell me everything"
- **every whit** (3:18): every bit; **seemeth him good** (3:18): seems right to Him
- **let none of his words fall to the ground** (3:19): everything God gave Samuel to say came true
- **from Dan even to Beer-sheba** (3:20): from the north end of the land to the south end; **established** (3:20): made sure, known by all

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. The word of the LORD was precious in those days (3:1). Why do you think God chose to speak to a child instead of a grown-up?
2. Samuel got up and went to Eli three times in one night (3:4–8). What does that show about how he served?
3. Samuel "did not yet know the LORD" (3:7), and Eli helped him. Who has helped you learn to listen to God? How can you help someone younger?
4. Eli's sons would not listen to their father (2:25). Samuel listened to God. What is the difference between hearing and listening?
5. Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the hard message, but he told him every whit (3:15–18). When is telling the truth hard for you?
6. James 1:22 says to be "doers of the word, and not hearers only." What is one thing God's Word has told you to do that you haven't done yet?

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4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words: in 1 Samuel 3:10, **as at other times** means "like before," **thy servant** means "me, Your servant," and **heareth** means "is listening." In James 1:22, **doers of the word** means people who do what God's Word says, and **deceiving your own selves** means fooling yourself.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say 1 Samuel 3:10 this week; keep working on James 1:22 next week too.

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

Say: "God called Samuel by name, and Samuel listened. God calls each of us too. 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). Hearing this is the first step. James 1:22 says to be a doer, not a hearer only."
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 "noise" in my life makes it hard to hear God? What could I turn down this week?
2. Write "Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth" at the top of the page. Under it, write one thing God's Word has asked me to do.
3. Who is an Eli in my life, someone who helps me know God? Write them a thank-you note.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: read one chapter of the Bible each day. Before you read, pray Samuel's words. After you read, write down one thing to do, and do it.

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7. Prayer

"Dear God, You still speak through Your Word. Turn down the noise in our hearts so we can hear You. Make us doers of Your word and not hearers only. Give us courage to tell the truth, and use us to serve You now, while we are young. Thank You for loving us and making a way to save us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

Reading out loud: the read-aloud parts skip 1 Samuel 3:11–14 on purpose. Those verses are told in your own words above, so the class hears God's message about Eli's house in plain words.
For the teacher: the Bible says God would judge Eli's house "for ever" (3:13–14). If a student asks, answer honestly and gently: Eli's sons did wicked things in God's house, and Eli knew it and did not stop them (3:13). God is holy, and He takes sin seriously. He is also kind: He kept speaking to His people through Samuel, and the word of the LORD was no longer rare (3:19–21).

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