Preschool–Grade 6

God Calls Samuel

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

Main point: Listen to God and obey Him. Even kids can serve God.
Bible passage: 1 Samuel 3. Read it before class.
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)*
You need: a Bible, 7 paper strips, a marker, tape, a chair, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the 7 paper strips (see part 4). Put a chair at one side of the room for "Eli's place." Put bookmarks in your Bible at 1 Samuel 3:9 and 1 Samuel 3:10.

1. Opening game: Who Called? (5 minutes)

One child sits in a chair with their back to the class and eyes closed. Point to another child, who says the sitting child's name one time in a normal voice. The sitting child turns around and guesses who called. Let several kids take a turn. Then ask: *How did you know who called you? Was it ever hard to tell?* Say: "Today we will hear a true story about a boy who heard his name called in the night, and he did not know who was calling him."

2. Bible story: Speak, LORD (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to 1 Samuel 3, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

Samuel was a boy who lived at the house of the LORD in Shiloh (1 Samuel 1:24; 3:21). His mother Hannah had prayed for a son, and she brought Samuel there to serve the LORD (1:27–28). Samuel **ministered** unto the LORD before **Eli** the priest (3:1). That means he served God by helping Eli. In those days God did not speak to people very often. The Bible says the word of the LORD was **precious**, which means rare (3:1).

Eli was old, and his eyes had grown so dim that he could not see (3:2). One night Eli was lying down in his place. The **lamp of God** had not gone out yet in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel had lain down to sleep (3:3).

Then **the LORD called Samuel!** Samuel answered, **"Here am I."** He ran to Eli and said, "Here am I; for thou calledst me." That means, "Here I am. You called me." But Eli said, "I called not; lie down again." So Samuel went and lay down (3:4–5).

The story continues: The LORD called again, "Samuel." Samuel got up and went to Eli: "Here am I; for thou didst call me." Eli said, "I called not, my son; lie down again" (3:6). Samuel did not yet know the LORD, because God had never spoken to him before (3:7). So he did not know it was God calling him.

The LORD called Samuel **the third time**. Samuel got up and went to Eli again: "Here am I; for thou didst call me." Then Eli **perceived**, which means he understood, that the LORD had called the child (3:8). **Read 1 Samuel 3:9 from your Bible.** Eli said, "Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth." So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Then the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, **"Samuel, Samuel."** And this time Samuel answered, **"Speak; for thy servant heareth"** (3:10). Say: "That means, 'Talk to me, I am listening. I am Your servant, ready to obey.'"

God told Samuel something very important that He was going to do (3:11). Samuel lay down until the morning, and then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. He was afraid to tell Eli what God had said (3:15). But when Eli asked him, Samuel told him everything and hid nothing (3:16–18).

Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him (3:19). All Israel knew that Samuel was a **prophet** of the LORD, someone God speaks to and through (3:20).

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. Who did Samuel help at the house of the LORD? *(Eli the priest, 1 Samuel 3:1)*
2. What was still burning in the temple when Samuel lay down to sleep? *(The lamp of God, 3:3)*
3. How many times did Samuel run to Eli? *(Three times, 3:4–8)*
4. What did Eli tell Samuel to say? *("Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth," 3:9)*
5. What did Samuel say when the LORD called, "Samuel, Samuel"? *("Speak; for thy servant heareth," 3:10)*

4. Memory verse: Speak Strips (5 minutes)

Tape the 7 strips up in order: *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.* Explain the old words: **as at other times** means "like He did before," **thy servant** means "me, Your helper," and **heareth** means "is listening." Read the verse together, and cup a hand behind your ear on "heareth." Then take one strip away and read it again. Keep taking strips 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: "Samuel was just a boy, but he listened when God called, and he served God. God speaks to us today in His Word, the Bible, and He wants us to listen and obey. 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: be a listener like Samuel. When your Bible is read at home or at church, listen closely and do what it says.

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **God calls Samuel word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/samuel-word-search), crossword (vbshq.com/puzzles/samuel-crossword), maze (vbshq.com/puzzles/samuel-maze) or worksheet (vbshq.com/worksheets/samuel-worksheet), the coloring page or craft (vbshq.com/bible-stories/samuel), or **Here Am I:** the kids lie down on the floor like Samuel. You stand by the chair, "Eli's place," and call, "Samuel!" The kids get up, walk quickly to the chair and say, "Here am I!" You answer, "I called not; lie down again," and they go back and lie down. Do it three times. The fourth time, call, "Samuel, Samuel!" The kids stay in their places, sit up and say, "Speak; for thy servant heareth!"

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for speaking to us in Your Word. Help us listen to You like Samuel did, and help us obey what You say. Thank You that kids can serve You too. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks why Samuel kept running to Eli: say, "Samuel did not yet know the LORD. God had never spoken to him before, so he thought it was Eli" (3:7).
Left out on purpose: this lesson says only that God told Samuel something important (3:11). God's message about Eli's house (3:11–14) is not told. Read the whole chapter yourself before class. If a child asks, keep it short: Eli's sons did very wrong things, and Eli did not stop them, so God said He would judge Eli's family (3:13). Samuel told Eli the truth, even though it was hard (3:18).

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