

The Call of Samuel

1 Samuel 3:1-12

Teacher Preparation

Read background materials from the Dole *Bible Study Notes*: <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/dbsn-3-02-the-lord-calls-samuel.pdf>

Introduction

Welcome the kids and ask them how they're doing.

Read and Discuss

1. Samuel's mother wanted a baby for a long time, but she wasn't able to. Hannah went to the tabernacle and prayed, and prayed for a baby, and then she had one. She promised the Lord that if she had a baby, she would give him to the Lord, which meant taking him to the tabernacle to live. So even though Samuel was a boy, he lived with the priests. What was the head priest's name? (Eli) So this story happens when Samuel lived far away from his family.
2. Read *1 Samuel 3:1-12*. After you finish reading, tell the kids that the rest of what the Lord tells Samuel is that Eli's sons, who were also priests, were doing evil things and bad things were going to happen to them.
3. At first Samuel didn't know who was calling him, but when Eli realized it was the Lord, Samuel was prepared to listen. Does the Lord call you? The Lord speaks to us, but not with a voice that you hear with your ears. Sometimes the Lord gives us special feelings in our hearts, but that is tricky because we get all sorts of feelings, so it's hard to know if it's the Lord or just your own mind—or even evil spirits. Do you know the way that the Lord speaks to us that we can really trust? (through His Word) The Lord wrote the Word so that we can always turn to Him and know what He wants to say to us. Whenever we want to know what the Lord has to say, we can read the Word at any time.
4. Do you understand everything in the Word? (probably not) And you know what, grown-ups don't always understand either! It takes a lifetime, and then even into Heaven, to understand all the things in the Word. But if we want to understand the Word better, what can we do? (ask the kids for suggestions) One way is to ask our parents, or teachers, or ministers, because they have been living longer, and studying the Word longer, so they know more about the Lord than kids do. One of the reasons that adults know more about the Word than kids is that they have had a chance to read the books called the Writings. Do you know what the Writings are? (explain briefly) The Lord told a lot of things to Swedenborg so that he could write them down so that we could understand the Word better—and actually they *are* part of the Word, because the Lord wrote them too.

Read and Discuss (continued)

5. Many of you have a copy of the Word or the Bible at your home, and maybe your parents have some books of the Writings too. Right now those books are probably sitting on a shelf. Are they calling to you? Well, not with an actual voice, that's for sure. But the Word is sitting there, silently waiting for you to come to and open it up, and read it with an open heart so that you too can hear what the Lord wants to say to you. It's a really good idea for everyone, kids and adults alike, to get into the habit of reading the Word every day. And you know what—some days you're going to read the Word and think "I didn't learn anything special today—it was just stories." But if you make this a habit, and do it because you know it's the right thing to do, more and more you *will* find parts of the Word that speak to you. It will make more and more sense. And even if you don't think that it's making much of an impression, the things you read are getting stored in your mind, and later on, some of those ideas will pop into your head, and you'll say, "Oh, now I get it..."
6. Another neat thing to know is that whenever you (or any person on earth) read from the Word because you know it's a holy book, the angels draw very close. They have a very special connection with the earth when people read from the Word, and the Lord actually tells us that if no one on earth ever read the Word, we would lose contact with Heaven. Can you imagine if we lost all contact with Heaven? It would be terrible if we were cut off from the Lord and His angels. So you can know that you are helping the whole planet be connected with the Lord and Heaven every time you read the Word—and even if you don't really *feel* like reading the Word, that is a pretty good reason to keep doing it, don't you think?
7. So the Lord will probably not call your name in the middle of the night while you're sleeping, but He does call out to you through His Word, and you would be wise to answer His call.

Activities and Project

- Look at the sheet of suggested prayers that one could use to ask the Lord for help in understanding the Word. Write your own prayer, in your own words, that asks the Lord for help with understanding the Word or being able to hear His voice.
- On the other sheet you will see a list of common problems and some references in the Word to places that might be helpful to read when you're facing any of those problems. You can keep this for your own reference.
- When you're done that, you can do the word search.

Supplies

- Copy of the Word
- Print out (or be able to show the pictures on a device) a selection of these pictures illustrating the story from: <https://www.unfoldingword.org/sweet-publishing/1-samuel/>
- Prayer worksheets See below and also: <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-turning-to-the-lord-in-his-word.pdf>
- Print out word search from: https://sermons4kids.com/call_of_samuel_wordsearch.htm
- Pencils and markers

Prayers for Teens on Hearing the Voice of the Lord

O Lord, Help us to be attentive and to listen well to the teaching of Your Word, so that we may learn to love only what is right in Your sight, now and forever. Amen.

Grant us, O Lord, to be inspired by Your Word to do what is right, through Your mercy, O Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Heavenly Father, Teach us to hear Your voice in Your Word, So that we may answer You, as Samuel did, "Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears!" Amen.

Lord, Help us to see that Your Word is a great treasure in our lives, for it is in Your Word that You come and teach us. It sustains our spiritual life as natural food sustains our body.

Let us hear Your voice and invite You in to dine with us. Amen.