

GOD CALLED LITTLE SAMUEL

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: 1 SAMUEL 2-3

*In the midst of Israel's great sin, God raised up a prophet.***The STORY**

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

The word of the Lord was rare in the midst of sin – Samuel was born when Israel was, for the most part, a disobedient people. In contrast to the godly Samuel, the priests of Shiloh (Hophni and Phinehas) were vile and corrupt (see 1 Samuel 2:12). The Lord sent a man of God (1 Samuel 2:27) to warn Eli that his sons would be destroyed because they were corrupt. The prophet also warned that God would abandon the priesthood, but would raise a faithful priest (1 Samuel 2:35). In the midst of this evil time, the word of the Lord and visions were rare (1 Samuel 3:1). Yet, God spoke to the boy Samuel.

The word of the Lord came to Samuel – Samuel worshipped with his mother (1 Samuel 1:28) and performed the “duties of the tent of meeting” under Eli’s supervision (1 Samuel 2:11). But Samuel did not personally know the Lord or his voice (1 Samuel 3:7) because the word of the Lord had not been revealed to him.

While Samuel slept, the Lord spoke to the boy three times. The third time, Eli instructed Samuel to respond. The Lord came and stood before Samuel (1 Samuel 3:10). In a time when the word of the Lord and visions were rare, God gave both to Samuel.

The word of the Lord came to Eli through Samuel – The word that God gave to Samuel was a word of judgment over Eli’s household. The most horrible part of the prophecy was that no sacrifice or offering could ever atone for the sins of Eli’s household. Eli and his son’s rejected God and His plan of salvation. By rejecting God’s plan in their day, they were also rejecting Jesus. (Eli is never mentioned in the New Testament.) As Samuel grew, the Lord was with him, and all of Israel realized that he was a prophet of God. The Lord appeared to Samuel again at Shiloh (1 Samuel 3:21).

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Where Is Jesus?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

In the midst of corruption within Eli's household, God sent a man to prophecy the coming of a faithful priest who would be obedient to the heart and mind of God. The final fulfillment of this promise came in the life of Christ, see John 14:31. Jesus did only what His Father commanded Him to do. Jesus is a faithful high priest forever, see Hebrews 7:21-24. Samuel was also a foreshadowing of Christ. Very similar language is used to describe both Samuel and Jesus, see Luke 2:52 and 1 Samuel 2:26.

ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

Bible Passage: Psalm 94:2

Connecting the passage to Christ:

In Acts 17:31, Luke describes a day when God will appoint a man to begin His judgment. Jesus is that judge who will separate the sheep from the goats (see Matthew 25:31-34).

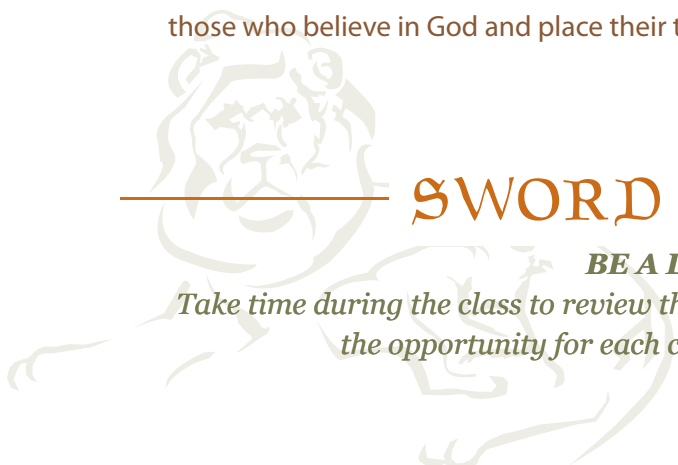
Questions for reflection:

- Who is the judge referred to in this Psalm? (Jesus is the judge.)
- Read Matthew 25:31-34. Who are the sheep and the goats? (The sheep are God's chosen people: all those who believe in God and place their trust in Him. The goats are the unbelievers.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.



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ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

ONLY GOD MAKES CHRISTIANS

Supplies

- professional baseball team cap
- stethoscope
- hammer and nails
- pair of scissors
- a laptop computer

The point of this activity is to emphasize that, like Samuel, we do not just become Christians because we grow up in the church, have Christian parents, or do good works. We become Christians when the Lord reveals Himself to us and causes us to be born again. Likewise, Samuel worshipped with his parents but did not know the Lord until God revealed Himself to Samuel, see 1 Samuel 3:7.

Ask for five volunteers and give one prop to each of the volunteers. Announce to the class that these volunteers have just been commissioned as a professional baseball player, doctor, carpenter, barber, and computer technician.

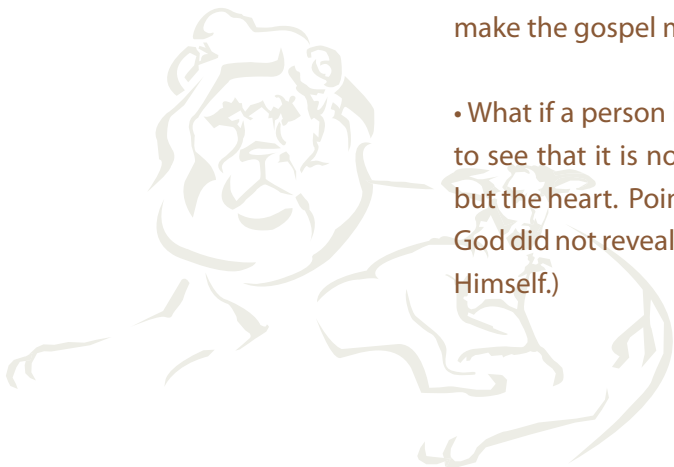
Then ask the class the following questions:

- If you were sick would you trust our new doctor to take care of you? If not, why not? (They will likely say that the student is not a doctor. You should argue by presenting the evidence that they have a stethoscope. Make similar announcements about each of the other volunteers.)

- What does it take to become a professional baseball player, doctor, carpenter, barber, or computer technician? (Call on individuals for each specific answer.)

- What does it take to become a Christian? (God needs to change your heart and make the gospel message alive to so that you believe.)

- What if a person has a Bible – does that make him a Christian? (Help the children to see that it is not the outward appearance that makes an individual a Christian but the heart. Point out to them that even though Samuel did the duties of a priest, God did not reveal Himself because of Samuel's good behavior. God chose to reveal Himself.)



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EXPLAIN FOREVER

Supplies

- Hoola hoop or large ring
- white board

This exercise is to help the children understand the incredible concept of forever.

Ask for two volunteers. Explain to the class that you are going to have a competition between mind and matter. Place one student at the white board and tell him or her to start with any number he wants and start writing higher numbers on the board one after another when you say "go."

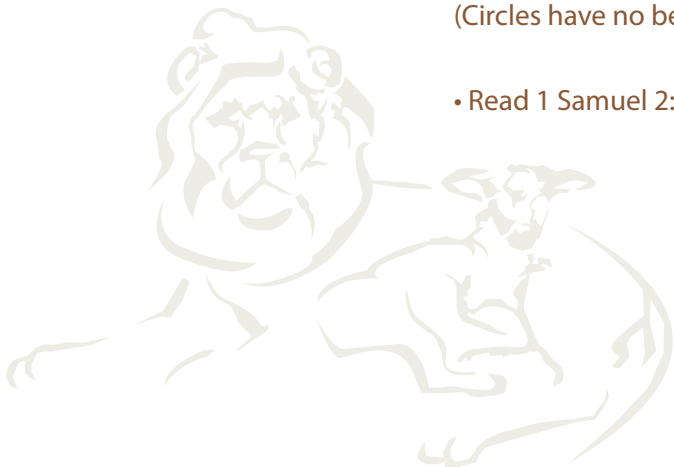
Tell the second volunteer to trace his finger around the hoola hoop and count the number of times he goes around. Both should start when you say the word, "Go".

Give the signal and let them continue for a while. After a bit make this announcement: "You can stop on the board when you have run out of numbers or when you come to the end of the hoola hoop circle. Until that time, keep on writing numbers and tracing round and round the hoop".

You are likely to get objections, but keep them going and encourage them not to give up so easily. Make the point that they could keep doing this forever and never come to the end. Then excuse them to sit down.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- How long would it take to run out of numbers? (There is always a higher number and you would never get to the end. They go on forever.)
- What happens if I count backwards with negative numbers? (They go on forever in the opposite direction.)
- How long would I need to trace a circle until I found out where the line begins? (Circles have no beginning and they have no end.)
- Read 1 Samuel 2:35. Who is the one who is anointed forever? (Jesus.)



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WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WERE ELI?

After the prophecies against him in both 1 Samuel 2:31-33 and 3:12-14, Eli did not repent. He seemed indifferent to God's message, see 1 Samuel 3:18.

Ask for four volunteers. Tell them that they are all transported back in time and are now the high priest Eli. Tell them you are going to read to them two prophecies that were spoken to Eli. Read the prophecies and then have the children consider how they would like to respond. Tell them you want them to act out their response before the class.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- When God pronounces judgment, does He ever change based on the repentance or appeal of the person He is judging? (Yes, for example, after Israel made the golden calf. Read Exodus 32:8-14 to the class.)
- How can God not punish someone when they have sinned against Him? (There is only one way for a person to be released from the punishment they deserve for their sin. That can only happen if Jesus takes the penalty for their sin. That is why we must place our hope in Jesus.)

PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

The first and second grade children can use the preschool coloring sheet and questions. Have the older children draw a picture of Samuel rising out of bed to God's call. Have them put the words "Samuel!" in a cloud in the corner of their picture.



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FOR OLDER GRADES

Ask the class to think of ways Samuel's early childhood are similar to that of Jesus' childhood.

- Both were born miraculously (Hanna was barren and Mary conceived when the Holy Spirit came upon her).
- Both were called to be prophets.
- Both were born to godly parents.
- Both were born in a time when a foreign nation oppressed Israel (the Philistines and Romans).
- Both were born in a time when the word of the Lord was infrequent (prior to John the Baptist, there were no prophets for over 200 years).
- Both grew up with the favor of God upon them (compare 1 Samuel 2:26 with Luke 2:52. See also 1 Samuel 3:19 and Luke 1:80).

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Shiloh – Shiloh was the place Joshua brought the Ark of God and set up the Tent of Meeting. All through the period of the Judges the Ark remained there. An annual feast was held to worship Yaweh. Elkanah, Samuel's father,

traveled to the temple in Shiloh for this feast in order to worship God. The Ark of God, except for a time when it was at Bethel, see Judges 20:26, remained at Shiloh until it was captured by the Philistines.

