

Samuel Listens

(1 Samuel 2:18-21; 3:1-10)

Introduction

[Teacher, softly whisper, “If you can hear me, wiggle your fingers.” Repeat the request in louder and louder whispers until all children have responded.] What did you have to do so that you could hear me? (Listen.)

Do you listen when someone speaks to you? How do you show that you have heard what that person has said? [Teacher, discuss how you show that you are paying attention; that you have listened and heard what was said.]

[Teacher, another opening activity option is the following: Have children sit in a circle and play a game like *Telephone*. Whisper the first phrase of Proverbs 19:20 to a child. Children pass the phrase around the circle by whispering it to each other. Last child says the phrase aloud. Repeat activity using other phrases from the verse. Repeat the verse aloud with the children.] What did we need to do with our ears to play this game? (Listen.) What words in this verse tell us how we can be wise?



In our Bible lesson today, we'll find out how Samuel did some very important listening.

Opening Prayer

Father, we want to learn how to listen to Your voice. Open the ears of our hearts this morning, Lord, so that we might learn more about the sound of Your voice. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Get all the advice and instruction you can, so you will be wise the rest of your life. (Proverbs 19:20 NLT)

Lesson

We learned last week that Hannah had not been able to have babies. So she prayed and asked God to give her a son. She told God that if He gave her a son, she would dedicate him to serve the Lord in the Tabernacle.

God heard Hannah's prayers and gave her Samuel. Then when Samuel was three years old, Hannah kept her promise to God and gave him to Eli, the priest, to serve God in the house of the Lord.

But she didn't forget Samuel. Hannah loved him and visited him as often as she could. Each year when Elkanah and Hannah went up to Shiloh to celebrate one of the Jewish holidays, Hannah would visit Samuel and bring him a new little robe to wear.

1 Samuel 2:18-20

But Samuel, though he was only a boy, served the LORD. He wore a linen garment like that of a priest. (19) Each year his mother made a small coat for him and brought it to him when she came with her husband for the sacrifice. (20) Before they returned home, Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife and say, "May the LORD give you other children to take the place of this one she gave to the LORD."

Each time Hannah visited Samuel, Eli, the priest, would pray that God would bless her with more children because she had given her first born to the Lord.

1 Samuel 2:21

And the LORD blessed Hannah, and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, Samuel grew up in the presence of the LORD.

Because Hannah kept her promise to God, he blessed her and gave her three more sons and two daughters. God is very pleased with us when we keep our promises to Him.

Samuel was a boy now. And he spent his days helping Eli take care of the Tabernacle, making sure there was oil for the lamps and wood for the fire. He probably swept and dusted and polished everything.

1 Samuel 3:1

Meanwhile, the boy Samuel served the LORD by assisting Eli. Now in those days messages from the LORD were very rare, and visions were quite uncommon.

In Samuel's day, God did not speak to his people very often. Remember, this was during the period of time when the judges ruled the children of Israel. In those days, the people did not have a strong leader, so they did not have strong faith in God. And because the people did not believe and obey God, God stopped speaking to them. We have to make sure our hearts do not get so hard that we won't listen to God's word. God only speaks to those who are listening.

It is important to take time to listen to God. We hear His voice through reading the Bible. Start by reading a few verses. Then stay quiet for a few minutes and think about what you have read. If you want to "hear" what God is saying to you, you must get alone and think quietly and deeply about what you are reading.

Most of us never take the time to really listen to God speak to us. We may read a verse or two, but then we close our Bibles and run off to play or go to school. We don't really let God's word help us that day. In order to get to know God, we need to know what He is really saying to us. If you take time to think about what God is saying in His word, you can tell what He wants you to know. Next time you read the Bible, ask God to help you keep His word in your mind throughout the day.

God wanted His people to know His will in Samuel's day, too. And one night the Lord called to Samuel.

1 Samuel 3:2-4

One night Eli, who was almost blind by now, had gone to bed. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle

near the Ark of God. Suddenly the LORD called out, "Samuel!" "Yes?" Samuel replied. "What is it?"

One night, Samuel had finished all his chores and went to bed. He was almost asleep when he heard someone calling, "Samuel! Samuel!"

1 Samuel 3:5

He got up and ran to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?" "I didn't call you," Eli replied. "Go back to bed." So he did.

Eli might have thought that Samuel was just hearing things, so he told Samuel to go back to bed.

1 Samuel 3:6

Then the LORD called out again, "Samuel!" Again Samuel got up and went to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?" "I didn't call you, my son," Eli said. "Go back to bed."

It must have seemed strange to Samuel that Eli hadn't called him; he knew he had heard someone call. There was no one else in the Tabernacle. But, Samuel went back to his bed.

1 Samuel 3:7

Samuel did not yet know the LORD because he had never had a message from the LORD before.

Samuel didn't know the Lord and had never heard His voice before. So, he didn't know it was God speaking to him. So, once again, Samuel went back to his bed and he was about to drift off to sleep. Suddenly the same voice called again.

1 Samuel 3:8

So the LORD called a third time, and once more Samuel got up and went to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?" Then Eli realized it was the LORD who was calling the boy.

Finally, Eli realizes that Samuel is not making this up, so it must be God who is trying to speak to Samuel.

1 Samuel 3:9-10

So he said to Samuel, "Go and lie down again, and if someone calls again, say, 'Speak, LORD, your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went back to bed. And the LORD came and called as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel replied, "Speak, your servant is listening."

God was speaking to Samuel! Imagine how excited Samuel must have been. It is an exciting thing to hear God's voice.

You can hear God speaking to you when you read His word. But, you have to take the time to listen. It is important for you to get into a quiet place, alone with God each time you read your Bible. Then while you are reading, ask yourself these three questions:

1. What does this passage of Scripture say?
2. What does it mean?
3. What is God saying to me?

[Teacher, discuss these questions with the children using the following passages:]

Matthew 6:19-21

"Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be."

John 3:16

"For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."

Ephesians 4:32

Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

Psalm 95:1-3

Come, let us sing to the LORD! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come to him with thanksgiving. Let us sing psalms of praise to him. For the LORD is a great God, a great King above all gods.

You may not understand everything you read, but the more you read and think about what you are reading, the more God will open His word to you. When you take time to listen to God, He will help you understand what He wants you to know.

God's word is like a love letter written to us personally by the Lord Himself. If you got a letter from someone, you would read it as soon as you got it, right? God loves you and wants you to hear His voice. He wants to speak to you. He wants to encourage you and help you live your life in a way that is pleasing to Him. So, it is very important for you to pay attention to what He is saying to you and then to do whatever it is that He is telling you to do. To hear God's messages we must be ready to listen and to do what He tells us to do.

Samuel listened to God and obeyed him. God wants you to do the same thing each and every day.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You that you haven't left us to wonder what to do to live a life that is pleasing to You. Thank You that You have given us Your word and that You speak to us every time we read it. Lord, we want to be ready to hear to Your voice. We want to be just like Samuel who said, "Here I am" when You called his name. We want to have our ears tuned to hear Your voice. Then we want to be willing to do whatever You ask of us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Ear headbands

(See pattern on last page of this lesson)

Have children cut out a left and right ear and attach them to a headband. On the headband write "I will listen to the Lord!"

Game Center

Play this Listening Game:

[Teacher, stand near one wall of the room and have the children line up at the opposite wall.] As I read the following story, listen for the word "lead." It's the word that's in the saying, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." When I say "lead," take two giant steps toward me. The person that touches the wall behind me first will get a prize. But remember, you can only move when you hear the word "lead." If you move at the wrong time, take two steps backward. Listen carefully!

[Teacher, read the following story slowly, drawing out the underlined words to make children anxious to move.]

Once there was a boy name Lee who loved to rake leaves. Lee would rake the leaves into a huge pile, lean his rake against the tree and leap into the pile. Sometimes Lee would even lead his dog, Levi, on his leash, walking around the neighborhood and picking up leaves. Then he'd lead Levi to the baseball park, where he would show off his treasures. Well, Lee's love of leaves soon caught on. Before long, all the kids in Little League were collecting, raking, and at least, jumping into piles of leaves. Lee would lead his friends on great expeditions into the forest, where they would see who could find the biggest leaf. Lee was always in the lead!

[Teacher, reward the child who touched the wall first, or came the closest, with a treat. Then toss handfuls of wrapped candies in the air saying you think they all deserve a treat. Then gather the children in a circle and ask:]

- What were you thinking of as you listened to the story?
- Why were you so excited to move ahead?
- How were you like Samuel in this game?
- How can you show God that you're ready to listen to Him and obey?

Samuel was the same age as many of you when God spoke to him, and he went on to be a great prophet and leader of God's people. You don't need to wait until you're older to serve God – you just need to be willing to listen. I believe that God can do great things through you just as he did through Samuel.

Or, use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. What was Hannah unable to have? (A baby.)
2. In what way did Hannah show Samuel that she remembered him and loved him? (She took him a little robe every year.)
3. How did God bless Hannah for dedicating Samuel to Him? (He gave her three more sons and two daughters.)
4. Why was the word of the Lord rare in those days? (This was the period of the judges when they didn't have a strong leader. So, they didn't have strong faith in God. They didn't believe and obey God so He stopped speaking to them.)
5. What's the best way to hear God's voice speaking to you? (By reading the Word of God, the Bible.)
6. What do you need to do to really listen to God's voice as you read the Bible? (You need to get alone and stay quiet and think about what you are reading.)

7. Why is it important to really listen to God speak to us? (So we can get to know God and know what He wants us to do.)
8. Why didn't Samuel know it was God speaking to him? (He didn't know God and had never heard His voice before.)
9. What three questions should you ask yourself every time you read the Bible? (What does it say? What does it mean? What does it mean to me?)
10. Who did Eli say Samuel should listen to? (God)
11. Why do you think Eli told Samuel to listen to God? (Eli knew God's instructions are important. Eli wanted Samuel to listen to God and obey Him.)
12. What did Samuel do to learn God's instructions? (Listen.)
19. In order to become wise, who or what can we listen to for advice and instructions? (Parents, teachers, the Bible, a pastor, grown-ups who love God, or friends who make good choices.)
20. What can we do to learn about God's instructions? (Read verses in the Bible, ask parents or teachers for help understanding what the Bible says, listen to Bible stories, and ask God to help us learn.)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit <https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]

Questions regarding the memory verse:

13. Read Proverbs 19:20 aloud with the children and ask:
14. What does this verse tell us to do? (Listen to advice and accept instruction.)
15. What are some ways we can learn about God's instructions? (Listen to Bible stories, read Bible verses, talk to parents or teachers about God, listen to Christian music, or pray.)
16. Which word in Proverbs 19:20 tells what you will be if you listen to advice and instruction? ("Wise.")
17. What are some instructions God wants us to obey? (Be kind, tell the truth, help others, or be thankful for what you have.)
18. How can we be wise? (Listen to advice and accept instruction.)

