

MESSAGES FROM GOD

Bible Basis: 1 Samuel 1:1–2:2, 21; 3:1–10

Key Verse: The Lord has filled my heart with joy. He has made me strong. —1 Samuel 2:1 NIV

Bible Point: God answered Hannah's prayer. God hears me pray, too.

Resource: *The Story for Children*, Chapter 10: "Messages from God"

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff You Need: simple items that make familiar sounds

Gather several simple items that make identifiable sounds, such as book pages to flip, cards to shuffle, paper clips to jingle, pencil to tap, water to pour from one cup to another, a small ball to bounce, a spoon to clink against a glass. Keep these items out of sight as children arrive. Say, **How well can you listen? Let's see if you can tell me what sounds I'm making.** Have the group close their eyes. **No peeking!** Make sounds one at a time and pause for children to identify them. Have them open their eyes. Ask:

- Do you think you would have heard all those sounds if we weren't listening quietly?
- Why is it sometimes hard to listen quietly?

Say, **In today's Bible story, we'll meet a mother and son who learned how to listen to messages from God.**

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

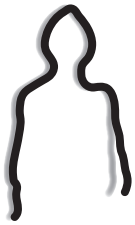
Stuff You Need: copies of *The Story for Children*, Bibles, *The Story Elementary Trading Card 10*, chenille wires, one per child

Optional: Story Wire PowerPoint and projection equipment

Tell the story from *The Story for Children*, Chapter 10. You can also have children find 1 Samuel 1 and mark it in their Bibles. Either you or a child in your class can read the Scripture passages listed throughout the story.

Samuel: An Answer to Prayer

Give each child a chenille wire. As you tell the story, you will demonstrate for them how to twist the wire into a shape representing something from the story. You may use the optional Story Wire PowerPoint if your group is large and children will have a hard time seeing what you're doing.



Our story begins with a woman named Hannah. *Pause and twist the wire into the "Hannah" shape.* Hannah was always very sad, because she didn't have a baby. Hannah decided to ask God to give her a baby. She sobbed and sobbed as she prayed to the Lord. She said, "Don't forget about me! Please give me a son! If you do, I'll give him back to you. Then he will serve you all the days of his life."



Read 1 Samuel 1:20. Pause and twist the wire into the "baby Samuel" shape. She was very, very happy. She loved him as much as a mom can love a child. She prayed again and said, "The LORD has filled my heart with joy. He has made me strong." God had answered her prayer. Hannah took care of little Samuel at her house until he wasn't a baby anymore. After all, she had promised he would serve God. So one day Hannah took Samuel to the temple so he could live with Eli there. Eli was the priest who took care of God's temple, the Lord's house. He would teach Samuel how to become a great servant for God.



In those days, God didn't give many messages to his people, so what happened to Samuel was really amazing. *Read 1 Samuel 3:2-3.* Samuel was in his bed when amazing things started to happen. *Pause and twist the wire into a "bed" shape.*

During the night, Samuel heard a voice call, "Samuel!" He thought it was Eli, so he popped out of bed and scampered over to Eli. "Here I am," he said. "You called out to me."

But Eli said, "I didn't call you. Go back and lie down." So Samuel went back to bed. But it happened again. He heard a voice call, "Samuel!" So he popped out of bed again and scampered over to Eli. "Here I am," he said. "You called out to me."

But Eli said, "My son, I didn't call you. Go back and lie down." So Samuel went back to bed. Samuel didn't know it was the Lord calling him. God had never given him a message before. So when he heard someone say his name for the third time, he popped out of bed for the third time. He scampered over to Eli for the third time. He said to Eli, "Here I am. You called out to me."

Read 1 Samuel 3:8b-9.



The Lord came and stood there, right where Samuel was sleeping! He called Samuel's name, just like he had before. This time though, Samuel didn't pop out of bed. He didn't scamper over to Eli. Instead, he said, "Speak. I'm listening." *Pause and twist the wire into the "ear" shape. (Bend it in half first.)*

God gave Samuel a message for Eli, and Samuel told Eli what God said. As Samuel grew up, he and God talked all the time. Samuel would tell the Israelites what God said, and the people would listen.

God heard Hannah's prayer and answered her. Then he talked to Samuel in the middle of the night. God wants to have a conversation with us! He hears us when we pray.

After you have told the Bible story, give each child a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 10*. Ask children to look at the picture and tell you several things about Samuel's life. As a class, read the key verse from the back of the card or from the Bible. Ask:

- What did Hannah pray for? How did God answer her prayer?
- How did Samuel learn to listen for God's message?

Say, **When Hannah prayed for God to give her a son, she promised to give the son back to God. That little boy was Samuel, who grew up to be one of the greatest leaders God's people ever had.**

Collect the cards for now. You'll send them home with the children later.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help your class explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: NIGHTTIME CHALK PICTURE

Stuff You Need: black construction paper, colored chalk

Say, **God spoke to Samuel in the middle of the night. Use the chalk to draw a picture on black paper of Samuel listening to God.** If necessary, remind children of some of the elements of the scene, such as Samuel in his bed, Eli nearby, they were in the temple. As children work, lead a simple discussion.

- How did God answer Hannah's prayer?
- What did God say to Samuel during the night?

Say, **God heard Hannah's prayer, and he talked to Samuel in the night. God wants us to talk to him and listen to him. That's praying!**

OPTION 2: BIBLE VERSE TARGET

Stuff You Need: Target PowerPoint slide and projection equipment or large piece of butcher paper and marker; beanbags

Project the Target slide on a blank wall where it is safe to throw beanbags. (Or draw a target and hang it on the wall. Write the words of the Bible verse in the circles of the target. At the bull's-eye, write, "God hears me pray.") Say, **When God answered Hannah's prayer, her response was to say, "The Lord has filled my heart with joy. He has made me strong."** (1 Samuel 2:1) Hannah knew the joy that came from knowing that God listened to her prayer. Explain that children will take turns tossing beanbags at the Bible verse target. Read the words written in the target. Whenever anyone



hits the bull's-eye, everyone will say together, "God hears me pray." After the game, gather for a discussion.

- **Why was Hannah's heart filled with joy?**
- **Tell me about some prayers that God has answered for you.**

Option 3: God Hears Me Pray

Stuff You Need: God Hears Me Pray Activity Sheet, pencils

Give an activity sheet to each child. Instruct the children to get into pairs and work together on this prayer. Have the pairs write a prayer to God asking for strength and thanking him for that strength. They can be very specific. The prayer can be decorated and hung or shared with the group.

Option 4: Hannah's Promise to God

Promise Necklace—write a promise on a necklace so students can read it and remember their promise to God.

Stuff you need: string (thick fishing wire or yarn can work well), uncooked pasta, colored noodles work well (noodles must have a hole in them), safety scissors, hole punch, construction paper, markers, stencils (optional)

1. Cut a circle large enough to write a few words or a sentence on. (You can utilize stencils to help cut large shapes.)
2. Have students write down a promise to God, just like Hannah promised God.
3. While students are writing, you can use this time to cut a section of string for each student. They should be long enough that, when tied, the necklace will fit easily over their heads.
4. Use a hole punch to put a hole in the top of the circle.
5. Have students push the string through the hole, so their medallion ends up in the middle of their piece of string.
6. The remaining string can be decorated with the noodles. You might need to help students thread the string through the holes.
7. Tie the necklaces.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Pray together thanking God for hearing your prayers. Encourage children to pray each day this week. Make sure each child takes home a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 10*, Activity Sheet(s)/ Crafts, and the Parents' Page.