



LESSON 11 OVERVIEW

GOD SPEAKS TO SAMUEL: 1 SAMUEL 3

Dig In to the Bible

- Read: 1 Samuel 3
- In This Passage: Samuel is a young boy who lives in the Tabernacle. One night, he wakes up to someone calling his name. He thinks it's Eli, the priest, but it's not. The third time Samuel hears his name, Eli realizes it's God. Samuel listens to God's message and passes it along. God speaks, so we listen for him.
- Bible Point: God speaks...
- Application: ...so we listen to him.
- Summary Verse: "The Lord is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love" (Psalm 103:8).

Dig Deeper

- You'll Be Teaching: *God speaks.* Kids have busier schedules than ever. Without a break in their activities, it can be hard for kids to have room to listen for God. Use this lesson to encourage kids to pause for at least a few minutes each day, allowing space for God to speak.
- Think About: Have you ever felt like God was speaking to you? How did you respond?

Dig In to Prayer

- Pray that your kids will hear God speaking to them.

Quick Tip

- Dig In has built in discussion that gives kids a chance to speak *and* listen! You'll often use "pair shares," where kids discuss with a partner. Having kids form pairs makes it easier for kids to share their thoughts and feelings. You might say, "The person wearing the most blue can go first." Also, telling kids that each person will have a short, designated amount of time to talk will help take the pressure off and will keep your class on track. It's also helpful to announce a halfway point so everyone gets a chance to share.

Home Supplies

- Bible
- Electronic Device
- Rulers
- Markers
- Scissors
- Tape
- Pencils
- Crayons



MUSIC VIDEO

Sing songs of praise to God.

“MADE FOR THIS”

(watch or download [here](#))



“MY HELP COMES FROM THE LORD”

(watch or download [here](#))



“I WILL NEVER FAIL YOU”

(watch or download [here](#))



Sing Songs to God: Pick one of the three songs to sing as a family.



OPENING

Share about a topic related to the lesson.

Supply: Bible

Introduce the Lesson

Say: ***Today we're going to learn that God speaks, so we listen for him! We hear noises all the time without even thinking about it. Let's think about sounds we'd enjoy hearing.***

Share

- Tell kids what sound *you'd* want to play on a sound machine to help you sleep.
- Ask kids to share what sound *they'd* want to play on a sound machine to help them sleep.

Summarize

Open a Bible to 1 Samuel 3, and say: ***We talked about sounds that would help us sleep. In the Bible, a boy named Samuel heard a sound while he was already sleeping. It was God! One way God speaks to us today is through the Bible. He's ready to talk to you right now. Let's pray and listen.***

Pray, praising God for speaking to us.



TALK-ABOUT VIDEO

Watch a video and discuss the Bible Point.

Supplies

“ARE YOU LISTENING?”

Teaching Video (watch or download [here](#))



Discuss and Watch “Are You Listening?”

Discuss and Watch “Are You Listening?”

Say: ***Today we’re learning that God speaks, so we listen for him.***

Ask:

- **What are some ways God speaks?**

Say: ***Let’s listen to God as we see a lot of different ways he speaks. Think of this video as a prayer, and listen for God as you watch.***

Watch “Are You Listening?”

Ask:

- **How did you hear God as you watched this video?**
- **How have you heard God as you experienced one of the things from this video in real life?**

Say: ***God speaks through all kinds of normal, everyday things. He spoke to Samuel while he was sleeping! Samuel didn’t think it was God at first, but soon he learned to listen for God’s voice. God speaks, so listen!***



CORE BIBLE STUDY

God Speaks to Samuel (1 Samuel 3)

Supplies

- Bible
- “Good News, Bad News” handout
- Slips of Paper

Easy Prep

- Write a number on a slip of paper for each child, starting with 1 and continuing for the number of kids you have.
- Cut apart the sections of the “Good News, Bad News” handout.

Tip

Play some background music during the “Listen Carefully” section to make it more challenging.



CORE BIBLE STUDY

God Speaks to Samuel (1 Samuel 3)

Listen Carefully

Say: *Today's Bible story shows us how God speaks, so we listen for him. Let's see how he spoke to a boy named Samuel who lived and served in the Tabernacle. That's like what we know as church today. Let's see what happened to Samuel.*

Read 1 Samuel 3:1-5.

Ask:

- **Why do you think Samuel didn't recognize God's voice?**
- **If you were lying in bed and heard a voice, who would you think it was?**
- **Tell about a time you felt confused about what you heard.**

Share your own example first. It might be a time you misheard what someone said or you misunderstood song lyrics.

Say: *Let's see how well you can identify who's making a noise.*

Give each child a slip of paper with a number. Make sure you give any preschoolers a low number, ideally 1-5. When you give preschoolers the paper, whisper the number to them as well. Have kids memorize their numbers and not reveal them to anyone else. Then have kids scatter around the room, sit down, and close their eyes.

Say: *When I call out a number, the person with that number will make a noise. You might cough, let out a squeak, clap your hands, or anything else you can think of. Everyone else will try to identify who made the sound.*

Call out a number, and after that child makes a sound, tell kids they can open their eyes and point to the person they think made the sound. (You may have some confused preschoolers who either make a sound when it's not their turn or miss their turn. It's okay if there are multiple noises at once; kids can just point both directions.) After kids have guessed who made the noise, have the child (or children) who really did make the sound raise his or her hand.

Repeat several times.

Ask:

- **What helped you identify who made the sound?**
- **When were you most confident you were right about where the sound came from?**
- **How did this experience help you understand Samuel's confusion?**

Say: *The closer you were to the person who made the noise, the easier it was to be sure it was that person. And if you know the person well, you'd have a better idea of his or her voice.*

Ask:

- **Do you see any connections between this experience and how we respond when God speaks? Tell me about that.**



CORE BIBLE STUDY

God Speaks to Samuel (1 Samuel 3)

Say: *The more we know God, the more we can know it's him speaking to us. God speaks, but he didn't speak very much in those days. Samuel had probably never heard God speak before! No wonder he was confused. Listen to what happened next.*

Read 1 Samuel 3:6-8.

Say: *Finally, Eli realized what was happening. Let's see what he said to do.*

Read 1 Samuel 3:9-10.

Say: *Samuel was ready to listen to God.*

Ask:

- If God were to speak aloud to you, what would you want him to talk about? Why?

Say: *God speaks, so we listen for him like Samuel did.*

Share News

Say: *We'd like to hear good news from God. But the message God gave Samuel wasn't so great. God told Samuel that Eli's sons were doing bad things and God was going to punish them. And Samuel had to share that bad news with Eli! Yikes!*

Let's see what it's like to share good and bad news.

Give each pair a section of the "Good News, Bad News" handout. Have pairs team up with another pair and tell the news to the second pair as if it were true. (This is a great chance for older kids to be leaders; they can read the news to their younger partners and coach them on how to tell the news.)

Ask:

- If you shared good news, tell what that felt like.
- If you shared bad news, tell what that felt like.

Say: *If God had told Samuel he was going to give Eli's family tons of money, that would've been much easier to share. But when God speaks, sometimes it's good news, and sometimes it's bad news. We need to listen to God either way.*

Ask:

- **Tell about a time your family got bad news.** Share your own example first, and then have kids share in mixed-age pairs. After kids share, have several kids report to the whole group. If kids share about any current situations, pray together.
- **How do you normally respond to bad news?**

Say: *Let's see how Eli responded when he heard what God told Samuel.*

Read 1 Samuel 3:17-18.



CORE BIBLE STUDY

God Speaks to Samuel (1 Samuel 3)

Ask:

- Choose one word to describe Eli's attitude.

Say: *When God speaks good news to us, it's easy to listen. When God speaks bad news, we can still listen humbly and accept what he says. Let's try that now. I'm going to invite God to speak to us about something we're doing that he's not happy about. Then you'll sit quietly and listen for God to show you something he wants to change in your life.*

Pray: *God, we want to listen to you, even if you have bad news. We invite you now to show us if there are things you want to change about our lives. Show us what we're doing wrong, and show us what you want us to do instead.*

Allow about one minute for silence. Then pray: **Amen.**

Say: *There's one more thing you should know about Samuel. God kept speaking to him!*

Read 1 Samuel 3:19-20.

Say: *A prophet is someone who God speaks to often. A prophet's job is to tell others what God says. Samuel started when he was just a boy by sharing the news about Eli's sons. Sometimes God speaks to other people through us! And sometimes God speaks to us through other people.*

Ask:

- Who are people who speak God's wisdom in your life?

Say: *God speaks to us in a lot of ways, but it might not always be an audible voice like Samuel heard. Sometimes it's in our hearts, through the Bible, or through other people. God speaks, so we listen for him. Like Samuel, we can say, "Speak, your servant is listening."*



CRAFT

Morse Code Clickers & Ear Trumpets

Supplies | For Readers

- Card Stock
- Glue
- Buttons (4 per child)
- Rulers
- Markers
- "Morse Code Key" handout
- Scissors
- Pencils
- "Morse Code Messages" handout

Supplies | For Non-Readers

- Paper Plate
- Hole Punch
- Markers or Crayons
- Yarn cut in 2-foot lengths (1 per child)
- Tape
- Decorating supplies such as stickers or foam shapes

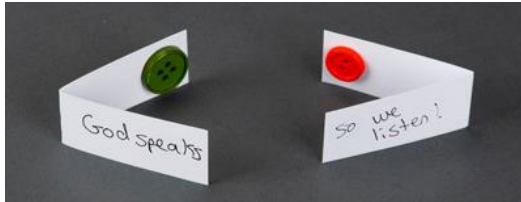


CRAFT

Morse Code Clickers & Ear Trumpets

Easy Prep

- Make a sample of each craft to show kids.
- For Readers: Cut apart the “Morse Code Messages” handout.
- For Preschoolers: Tightly tape one end of each piece of yarn to make threading easier.



Tip

When we tested this, we waited longer on the dashes, even though the sound doesn't last longer. If you're concerned that's not easy enough for kids to distinguish, try using 1-inch metal washers for the "dash" clicker, and buttons for the "dot." Kids will need to hold the clicker with the washers a little differently, with a finger tucked inside to help it open and close.

Readers: Make and Use Morse Code Clickers

Say: ***There are a lot of ways to send messages besides talking. One way people used to send messages, before telephones, was Morse code. Morse code uses a series of dots and dashes to spell words. The dots can be short sounds or flashes of light, and the dashes are longer sounds or flashes of light. We're going to make clickers you can use to send Morse code messages.***

Show kids the sample craft you made. Set out the supplies to share, and have kids follow these instructions to make clickers.

- Cut two pieces of card stock that are each $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide and 4 inches long.
- Fold the pieces of card stock in half.
- Glue a button on each end of the card stock strips, on the same side. The buttons should touch when the card stock is folded.
- Decorate the card stock. Include the point: God speaks.
- Place one clicker in each hand, between your thumb and forefinger. Practice clicking, using one hand for dots and the other for dashes.

Say: ***Now let's practice sending Morse code messages!***

- Give each child a “Morse Code Key” handout, a pencil, and a strip from the “Morse Code Messages” handout. Make sure kids keep the messages on their strips a secret.
- Have one partner use his or her clickers to transmit the message on the strip, one letter at a time. The second partner will use a pencil to record the letters indicated by the clicks.
- Reverse roles so both partners have a chance to transmit and receive Morse code messages.



CRAFT

Morse Code Clickers & Ear Trumpets

Nonreaders: Make and Use Ear Trumpets

Show preschoolers the sample craft by holding the tapered end of the paper plate up to your ear.

Say: ***This is called an ear trumpet. A long time ago, some people used these to hear better when someone talked to them. Let's each make one, and then we can try them out!***

- Give each preschooler a paper plate, and let kids color on both sides with crayons or markers.
- As preschoolers finish coloring, roll their plates tightly on one end to make a cone shape, and let preschoolers help add tape to the overlapped sides of the plate to keep them in place.
- Punch a hole along the wider end of the cone.
- Let preschoolers loop a length of yarn through the hole and tape the ends together to create a handle for their craft.
- Have preschoolers add stickers, foam shapes, or other decorations to their ear trumpets.

Say: **Let's practice listening with our ear trumpets.**

- Help preschoolers get into pairs.
- Have children take turns whispering "God loves you" to their partners without using the ear trumpets. Then have the listening partner put the small end of the cone close to his or her ear, and have the other partner whisper "God loves you" again to compare the difference.

Talk About It

Ask:

- **Besides ear trumpets and Morse code, what are other ways people communicate with each other?**
- **What do you think is better: Morse code or text messaging? Why?**
- **Which do you think is better: ear trumpets or earbuds? Why?**

Say: ***Listening well is hard sometimes! Your ear trumpets helped you hear better, but you still had to pay attention in order to truly listen. If you used Morse code, you might've struggled with understanding your message at first. But back when Morse code was common, there were people whose whole job was to send and receive Morse code messages. With a lot of practice, they could do it quickly! When we practice listening to God, we'll hear how God speaks to us.***

Have kids take their clickers or ear trumpets and use them with their friends and families, explaining how God speaks to us.