

MESSAGES FROM GOD

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

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

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

Resource: *The Story for Kids* 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 kids arrive. Say, **How well can you listen? Let’s see if you can tell me what sounds I’m making.** Have kids close their eyes. No peeking! Make sounds one at a time and pause for kids to identify them. Let kids 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 WORD

Stuff You Need: copies of pages 67–71 from *The Story for Kids*

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story. Then gather kids to debrief.

Samuel: An Answer to Prayer

Today your kids will get a taste of what it’s like to teach a Bible story. Have kids work in groups of three to five. (Smaller groups will work if your class is small; if you have more than thirty students, consider dividing into two or more “large” groups before dividing further into small groups.)

Assign each group a portion of the Bible story. You might want to mark up the copies of the pages from *The Story for Kids* in advance so each group knows what to work on. Below are some suggested story divisions, but you can adjust these segments to match the number of groups you expect to have.

Explain that each group's task is to present their portion of the story to the larger group. They'll have about ten minutes to prepare a presentation using any items available in your classroom (furniture, art supplies, Bibles, and so on). Encourage creativity! Give a two-minute warning when the work time is almost over. Then begin with the first group and enjoy the presentations.

Possible Story Segments

Segment 1: Start on page 67 and go through "But she wasn't making a sound" at the top of page 68.

Segment 2: Start on page 68 with the summary that begins, "The person who took care of the temple ..." and continue through "Her face wasn't sad anymore."

Segment 3: Start on page 68 with, "After some time, Hannah became pregnant" and continue through "There isn't any Rock like our God" on page 69.

Segment 4: Start on page 69 with, "The boy Samuel served the Lord ..." and go through "So Samuel went and lay down in his place" on page 70.

Segment 5: Start on page 70 with, "The Lord came and stood there" and go through the summary on page 71 that ends with "When Samuel got very old, he decided to make his sons the new leaders of the Israelites."

At the end of the story time, give each child a copy of *The Story Card 10*. Ask children to recap the story by telling you what they see on the front of the card. Then turn it over and read the Bible verse on the back. Ask:

- **What did Hannah pray for? How did God answer her prayer?**
- **What do we learn from this story about prayer?**

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 children later.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose any or all of these activity options to help your kids explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: PRAYER JOURNALS

Stuff You Need: copies of "Prayer Journal Pages" handout, supplies to make a journal cover, art supplies. Journal cover supplies can be as simple as construction paper and a stapler, or you might provide brightly covered three-pronged folders, wallpaper samples, or cardstock.

Say, Hannah prayed to God, and God heard her prayer. Then she celebrated God's answer to her prayer by saying, "The Lord has filled my heart with joy. He has made me strong." (1 Samuel 2:1) Let's make prayer journals to help us see how God answers our prayers. Provide multiple copies of the handout for each child to put between two cover pieces. As kids work, talk about:

- What is the hard part and the easy part about praying?
- What is the first prayer you would like to write in your journal?

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 for kids 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 bulls-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 bulls-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: BIBLE PRAYERS

Divide the group into pairs and give each pair a Bible. Direct each pair to find three instances of prayer in the Old Testament and three examples in the New Testament. Have each group share one of the prayers. Answer: Who was praying; for what; how did God answer?

OPTION 4: LESSON TEN EXTENDER:

There are so many ways to pray. Our very existence should be like a prayer of praise and thanks, giving glory to God.

Begin this activity with a prayer together. Have volunteers continue the prayer with a line or two after you.

Most Loving God, you have given us everything we have, you have given us your only Son. And we thank you in many ways ...

After the children that want to have said their prayer, continue in a discussion about prayer. Ask:

- **Do we know that God answers every one of our prayers? How?**
- **Do we always like or agree with the answers we get from God? Is there anything we can do about that?**
- **Have you ever prayed for something that you thought was very important and felt that you did not get an answer? What did you do? How did you feel?**

Become prayer warriors. As a group choose an intention and dedicate your prayer for the next three Sundays to this cause or person that needs your prayers. Let that person know that you care and are praying for him/her.

Close your class time with a prayer that children will talk to God and listen to him speak to them in prayer. Send *The Story Card 10* home with kids.