

A PROPHET SERVES

Samuel
1 Samuel 3
1060–1049 BC

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

God calls us to serve Him.

BIBLE VERSE

Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears. 1 Samuel 3:9

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that God calls me to serve Him.

LAW & GOSPEL

God calls us to follow Him and do His will, but we turn deaf ears to Him and refuse to listen.

God opens our ears to His saving Word in Jesus and empowers us to follow Him and serve others.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

Having been raised in the tabernacle from the time he was a young child, Samuel continues to serve Eli the priest. One night, Samuel runs to Eli, thinking Eli is calling his name. Eli sends Samuel back to bed, assuring him he had not called. As the pattern repeats, Eli tells Samuel to lie down once again but then next time respond, “Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears” (1 Samuel 3:9). When the Lord calls once again, He gives Samuel a vision of how Samuel will succeed Eli, rather than Eli’s “worthless” sons.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read 1 Samuel 3 and notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Read the section “The Fourth Commandment” in *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017).

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- Finger gelatin squares and napkins
- Arch Book *The Lord Calls Samuel*
- Paper strips
- Digital device

FOR EVERY LESSON

- Bible
- Device with prepped music
- Copies of downloadable activity page
- Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- Supply Box

LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

BEGIN

- Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- Sing songs using music found in the digital resource center, or sing your own favorite songs.

SAY

- Watch my hands.** Do finger play actions:
Here is the church. Here is the steeple.
Open the doors, and see all the people.
Today we'll learn about a boy who helps in church.
- Have your parents ever promised someone that you'll do something for them, like take care of their pet or rake their leaves? Did you mind? What if your parents decided what your career or job was going to be when you were born? What would you think of that?**

PRAY

Dear heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together to study Your Word today. Help us to learn how You called Samuel to serve and how You call us to serve. In Your name we pray. Amen.

LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God's Word are true.

TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

DO THIS!

Use one or more of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative after you've read it.

- FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE YOUNGER** Draw sleeping and awake faces of Samuel on two paper plates. Say, **Would you use your hands to help me tell the story? When you see the sleeping face, put your head on your hands and pretend to sleep. When you see the face that is awake, put your hand behind your ear and listen to me.** Show children how to do this. Review the Bible narrative, using the plates and actions.
- FOR A VERBAL GROUP** Tell the story a second time and lead the students in responding with Samuel, "Here I am," and, "Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears." Have children stand up to say these parts.
- FOR AN ACTIVE GROUP** Designate places in the room based on the action of the account: Eli's room and the temple, where Samuel slept. Ask students to recount the key parts of the narrative; move as a group from one place to the other as Samuel did.

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose a few questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- How was Samuel a helper in the temple (church)?
- God spoke very directly to Samuel. How does God talk to us today?
- Who are the people in your church whom God has called to serve Him and His people?
- How can we serve God no matter how old we are?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion using these key points.

- Samuel helped Eli, the priest, take care of the temple. Samuel listened to God's Word and shared God's Word with others.
- God speaks to us today through His Word, the Bible.
- In Bible times, God chose priests, like Eli and Samuel, as His servants. Today God still calls clergy and other church workers to serve His people.
- Each of us are called to love and care for our neighbor and share God's Word with others.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus, God's Son, fulfilled the role of Prophet when He came to earth as our Savior. Jesus paid the price for our sins.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: Invite children to use their hands to do the actions with you as you tell the story.

Hannah was sad. She went to God’s house and prayed (*fold hands*), “Dear God, please give me a baby. I promise to teach him about You so he can be a helper and serve You.”

God heard her prayer. The next year, Hannah had a baby boy. Now Hannah was happy! She named her baby Samuel. Samuel grew and grew. Hannah taught him to pray (*fold hands*). She taught him what God says in the Bible (*hold hands like a book*). Then she took Samuel to God’s house.

The minister who lived there was named Eli. Hannah told Eli, “God answered my prayer (*fold hands*). He gave me this little boy to love and teach. Now I am bringing Samuel to God’s house to be your helper.”

I wonder . . . how could Samuel be a helper? *Pause for answer.*

Let’s find out.

Eli was very old. He told Hannah, “I am happy to have Samuel stay here to help me. I will teach him more about God and His love.” So, Samuel stayed with Eli and helped him take care of the church things in God’s house. At night, he slept by the lampstand to keep the candles from going out.

One night, while Samuel was sleeping (*put head on hands and pretend to sleep*), he heard someone call his name (*cup hand behind ear*). Samuel thought it was Eli calling him. So,

Samuel got up and ran to the room where Eli was sleeping. Samuel said, “Here I am; did you call me?”

But Eli said, “I didn’t call you. Go back to sleep.”

Samuel went back to bed (*pretend to sleep*). Again the voice called, “Samuel!” Samuel sat up and listened (*cup hand behind ear*). He ran to Eli, but Eli told him again, “I didn’t call you. Go back to bed (*put head on hands and pretend to sleep*).” This happened again. Finally, Eli knew it was God calling Samuel. He told Samuel, “If you hear the voice again, say, ‘Speak, Lord. I am listening.’”

Samuel went back to bed. Soon he heard the voice calling his name again, “Samuel, Samuel” (*cup hand behind ear*).

Samuel sat up and answered, “Speak, Lord. I am listening.”

Samuel listened (*cup hand behind ear*) to everything God told him. He stayed in God’s house and helped Eli. As Samuel grew bigger, he kept listening (*cup hand behind ear*) to God and obeying Him. God told Samuel He wanted him to be one of His special helpers called a prophet. Samuel would tell people about God’s love and forgiveness.

We can hear (*cup hand behind ear*) God talking to us too. He talks to us in the Bible. He calls us by name and makes us His children in Baptism. He wants us to know how much He loves us. He wants us to be His helpers too.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

God raised up one last judge. He chose a woman named Hannah to be his mother. Hannah was married but couldn’t have a baby. So she went to the tabernacle and prayed, **“If You give to Your servant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life.”** When her baby was born, **Hannah named him Samuel.** When Samuel was still young, **Hannah kept her promise and brought him to the tabernacle. Samuel stayed there and grew up with the high priest named Eli.**

One night, young Samuel heard a voice call, “Samuel, Samuel.” He climbed out of bed, ran to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But Eli said, “I didn’t call you,” and sent him back to bed.

Again the voice called, Samuel went to Eli, and Eli sent him back to bed. When the voice called a third time, Eli

realized God was calling Samuel. He told Samuel what to say if his name was called again, and he sent him to lay back down.

When God called again, Samuel answered, “Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears.” The Lord told Samuel He would punish Eli’s two grown-up sons who were priests. They had been breaking His commands in front of the Israelites. Eli would also die, because he was their father and didn’t stop them.

When Samuel woke up the next morning, Eli asked him what God said. Samuel was afraid, but told Eli everything. Eli said, “It is the Lord. Let Him do what seems good to Him.”

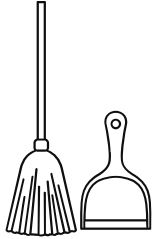
Samuel grew up to be a powerful prophet and a good judge for God’s people.

LIVE


Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

Helping Hands

Get permission for children to do simple tasks around church (e.g., dust pews, water plants, or take used papers out of the church bags). Talk about how Samuel was helping in the church when God called him to be His special helper. Say, **We are using our hands to be helpers at church too. Someday God may call you to be a special helper in church like our pastor** (or other church workers).



Serving Snack

 Serve finger gelatin on small plates. Have children use their hands to hand out napkins and the snack. Say, **You are using your hands to serve one another. What are other ways you can show love for others?**

Picture Book

Use the Arch Book *The Lord Calls Samuel* by Susan Hammond, or another Bible story picture book, to retell this story. This is an especially good option if you have many younger students or visual learners.



Prayer Chain

Cut strips of paper and ask the children for suggestions for things to pray for. Write these on the strips of paper and tape into a chain. Each week, remove some prayer links and include these prayer requests in your worship. Say, **One way we can show love and help others is to pray for them. Let's fold our hands and do that now.**



Sing and Move

Sing this song to the tune of "Skidamarink."

God is calling my name today; God is calling you too.

Stop! Be still! (*Freeze; fold hands in prayer.*)

God is calling my name today; God is calling you too.

Stop! Be still! (*Freeze; fold hands in prayer.*)

Chorus

I'll listen in the morning (*cup hands behind both ears*) and in the afternoon.

I'll listen in the evening and underneath the moon.

God is calling my name today; God is calling you too.

Stop! Be still! (*Freeze; fold hands in prayer.*)

Stanza 2: Change last line of each repeated section to "Go and help!" (*Extend hands.*)

Stanza 3: Change last line of each repeated section to "I love you." (*Hug self.*)



LEAVE

SAY

God calls all of us to serve Him in many different ways. We are never too young to serve God, and we are never too young to be served by God.

PRAY

Dear heavenly Father, thank You for calling us to be Your own and thank You for calling us to serve. Show us how we can use our gifts to serve others no matter what our age. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.