

BIG IDEA

God still speaks today, and I can listen like Samuel did.

MEMORY VERSE

1 Samuel 3:10

"Speak, for your servant is listening."

Setting the Scene

Last week we met Ruth, and we saw how God brings people into His family. Today we meet a boy named Samuel. He lives in God's special tent called the tabernacle. It is the place where people come to worship God. It is dark and quiet and holy. And tonight, in the middle of the night, something amazing is about to happen.

The Story

It is night. The world is dark and still. Inside God's tent, a boy named Samuel lies down to sleep. He is young, maybe close to your age. Samuel lives here and helps an old priest named Eli. A priest is a man who helps people worship God. Eli is very old now. His eyes are weak. He can barely see. So Samuel helps him every single day. He sweeps the floors. He opens the big doors in the morning. He keeps the holy lamp burning bright. Samuel loves serving God in this special place.

A small lamp still glows in the dark. The air is quiet. The night feels heavy and slow. Then a voice calls out. "Samuel!" Samuel jumps up. His feet hit the cool floor. He runs to Eli. "Here I am! You called me." But Eli says, "I did not call you. Go lie back down." So Samuel does.

Have you ever heard your name when no one was there? The voice calls again. "Samuel!" Again Samuel runs to Eli. Again Eli shakes his head. "I did not call you, my son." Then it happens a third time. "Samuel!" A third time the boy runs through the dark.

Now something clicks inside old Eli's mind. He finally understands. It is not his voice Samuel hears. It is God. God is calling the boy by name. Can you imagine that? God Himself, speaking to a child in the night.

Eli tells Samuel exactly what to do. "Go lie down. If the voice calls again, say this. Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." So Samuel walks back into the dark. His heart is pounding. He lies down and waits. Then the voice comes one more time. "Samuel! Samuel!" This time the boy is ready. He says the words.

Listen to the words Samuel finally says to God.

1 Samuel 3:10

"Speak, for your servant is listening."

And God speaks to him. God gives Samuel a message. It is not an easy message. It is honest and hard. God is always truthful, even when the truth is heavy. Samuel lies very still and listens to every word. His heart feels heavy and a little afraid. In the morning Samuel is scared to tell Eli. His hands maybe shake a little. But he tells him anyway. That takes real courage.

Samuel learns something big that night. Listening to God means more than hearing. It means obeying, even when it is hard. From that day on, Samuel grows up listening to God. And God is with him every step. Every word God gave Samuel came true. Not one word fell to the ground.

God was not too busy for a child. God knew Samuel's name in the dark. And here is the best part. God knows your name too. You can listen to God, just like Samuel did.

Good Question! Answering What Kids Wonder

Does God talk to me the way He talked to Samuel?

God speaks to us most of all through the Bible. When we read His Word, we are hearing God speak. We can also talk to Him in prayer anytime.

Why did Samuel keep running to the wrong person?

He had never heard God's voice before. He did not know who it was yet. God was patient and kept calling until Samuel understood.

What if God says something that is hard to do?

Samuel had to say hard words too, and he was scared. But he obeyed God anyway. God always helps us be brave when we choose to listen.

Faith Defenders: How to Tell Your Friends

Here is how you can tell a friend about what you learned.

- If a friend says God does not talk to people, you can say: God spoke to a boy named Samuel a long time ago. And God still speaks to us today through the Bible. We just have to listen.
- If a friend says the Bible is just made up stories, you can say: The Bible was written by many people over a very long time, and they all told the same true story about God. That does not happen by accident.
- If a friend asks how you can hear God, you can say: I read the Bible and I pray. That is how God speaks to me, and I am learning to listen like Samuel did.

In the Story and In My Life

In the Story	In My Life
God called Samuel by name in the dark.	God knows my name too, and He is never too busy for me.
Samuel said, Speak Lord, I am listening.	I can quiet my heart and listen when I read the Bible and pray.
Samuel obeyed even when it was hard.	I can choose to obey God even when it is not easy.
Eli almost missed that God was speaking.	I can pay attention so I do not miss what God wants to teach me.

Talk About It: Discussion Questions

Who was calling Samuel in the night, and how many times did the voice call?

Teacher helper: It was God, and He called Samuel three times before the boy understood. 1 Samuel 3:8

Samuel said, Speak Lord, I am listening. What is one way you can listen to God this week?

Teacher helper: Reading the Bible, praying, and obeying parents are all ways we listen to God. 1 Samuel 3:10

Samuel obeyed even when it was scary. When is it hard for you to obey, and how can God help you?

Teacher helper: God gives us courage to do right when we ask Him, just as He helped Samuel. Joshua 1:9

Let's Do It: The Listening Game

Materials: nothing needed, or a blindfold or scarf if you have one.

1. Have the children sit in a circle and close their eyes, or use a blindfold for one volunteer.
2. Quietly whisper a child's name from across the room. They raise a hand when they hear it.
3. Try it with soft background noise, like everyone humming, so it is harder to hear the name.
4. Then go quiet and call again. Ask, was it easier to hear when it was quiet?
5. Explain: Samuel heard God when it was quiet. We hear God best when we slow down and listen.

Say it together one more time.

MEMORY VERSE

1 Samuel 3:10

"Speak, for your servant is listening."

Closing Prayer

Dear God, thank You that You know my name. Thank You that You still speak to me today. Help me listen to You and obey You, just like Samuel did. Speak, Lord. We are listening. Amen.