

God's Special Servant

BC15

Bible Verses: 1 Samuel 1:1-28, 1 Samuel 2:1-10, 1 Samuel 3, Hebrews 11:32.

This session aims to teach the story of Samuel, focusing on his dedication to serving God and his role as a prophet. The session challenges the children to live lives totally committed to serving God, in accordance with the Bible's teaching.

Leader's notes

We recommend that, at the end of the session, leaders give their young people a "Take Away" question, found at the end of the plan.

Encourage the young people to think about the questions, and use them in your discipleship sessions or cell groups, or bring their ideas back next week.

Who was Samuel? Samuel was born in time when Judges led the Israelites. God's people were living in the land promised to them and the Judges helped them continue to love and serve God, repenting from their disobedient ways. Samuel was the final Judge and anointed the first two Kings of Israel – Saul and David.

Samuel's mother was Hannah. She was barren and desperately wanted a baby. She prayed for baby boy promising to dedicate him to God's service. Her prayer was for answered and Hannah took Samuel to the Tabernacle, where Eli brought him up to love and serve God. The story of Samuel's birth is told in **1 Samuel 1:1-20**.

When Samuel was a young boy he learned to listen to God's voice and as he grew older, God continued to reveal Himself to His people through Samuel. The Israelites recognised that Samuel was a true prophet of the Lord. It is well worth reading the narrative in **1 Samuel 3** prior to running this session, which describes Samuel's first encounter with God.

Throughout his life, Samuel served God. He allowed God to be right at the centre of all he did. Samuel did what God required of him by listening to Him speak and following the Law passed down from Moses. Because Samuel was genuinely dedicated to serving God, he was given many different roles: Judge, priest, prophet and counsellor. God used Samuel at a turning point in Israel's history (the appointment of kings to rule over the country), because he was willing to simply be God's servant. Samuel is acknowledged in the 'Hall of Faith' (**Hebrews 11:32**) for his faithful service to God.

When applying this Bible teaching to our lives today we need to consider what it means to be a committed servant of God and how God speaks today. As this meeting plan is for 5-6 year olds, teaching on how God speaks today will be focussed on how we get to know God through the Bible, God's inspired Word to us today.

This meeting plan aims to teach two key points:

- Samuel was dedicated to serving God – right from birth.

- Samuel was a special prophet – he heard God speak and did what God told him.

This meeting plan challenges the children to apply the story of Samuel to their lives, by helping them to be totally dedicated to serving God, following the teaching in the Bible.

There is a significant challenge to leaders when preparing to lead this session. Samuel simply got on with serving God at all times and God used him mightily. Samuel spent time listening to God's voice and being guided by Him alone. His genuine dedication to serving God had a great impact on God's kingdom. Why not commit some time this week to listening to God's voice? And like Samuel, saying to God:

'Speak Lord, for your servant is listening' 1 Samuel 3:10b

How Are You Feeling Today?

Warming Up

10 mins

Activity

Give each child and leader in the group a paper plate. Ask them to draw their face on the plate. They should draw an expression that reflects how they are feeling today.

Before they start the activity, show them a few examples (that you have drawn in advance of the session) to give them ideas of how to portray different expressions. Draw one for yourself in advance and ask the children to guess how you are feeling today.

Possible expressions could include happy, sad, surprised, excited, worried, tired. Give each child a couple of minutes to draw their face on the plate.

Once the faces are all drawn on the plates ask the children, one at a time, to show the rest of the group their face. Encourage the group to guess how that person is feeling. Once you have guessed correctly ask them why they are feeling that way today.

The Point: An opportunity to get to know the group better, with a slight link to the story of Samuel (Hannah was very sad at the start of the story and praising God by the end).

Equipment

Paper plates, felt-tips.

Eggstra Special Delivery!

Warming Up

10 mins

 Game

The aim of this game is to package up an egg in such a way that it can survive a special journey! Divide the group into teams of about six children. Each group will need a leader or helper with them.

Using the newspaper (provide at least 3 full newspapers per team) and Sellotape, wrap up the egg...

protecting it as much as possible for its journey ahead! Give each group about five minutes for this activity.

Once the eggs are all wrapped up, set up a simple obstacle course for each group. Explain to the children that the aim of the game is to complete the obstacle course as quickly as possibly BUT without breaking their egg. If their egg breaks (which will be judged by the package starting to leak!) then the team is disqualified.

Start the race and use the leaders from each team to carry the egg from the end of the course back to the start each time so that the next contestant can compete.

The winning team is the first to complete the course with their package intact!

Note: It is important that the children do not get raw egg on their hands. Have leaders looking out for any packages that start to leak during the game (it is quite unlikely if the eggs are wrapped with lots of newspaper). If this happens ensure that all children in the team who have handled the package wash their hands thoroughly immediately.

The Point: Just for fun.

Equipment

Eggs (one per group), newspaper, Sellotape, items for simple obstacle course.

What's In A Name?

Teaching Time

15 mins

 Bible Study

Start the session by telling the group that names mean different things. Ask the group if any of them know what their name means.

Once those who know the meaning of their name have shared it, bring out a book of names and ask who wants to find out what their name means. Look up the names of all those who want to know (or as many as you can in the time you have).

Note: If you have a large group it may be worth having a couple of books and splitting into smaller groups.

Introduce today's Bible character: Samuel. Look up his name in the book. It means 'Asked of God'. In today's story the children will find out why he was given this name.

Using a children's Bible read the story of Samuel. **'The Lion First Bible'** and **'The Beginner's Bible'** both contain clear, helpful versions. Read the story up to the point where Hannah takes Samuel to the temple to be brought up to serve God.

For leader's reference: This story is found in **1 Samuel 1:1-28**.

After you have read the story, ask the group the following questions:

How did Hannah (Samuel's mum) feel at the start of the story? And how did she feel at the end? Why? (Even though Samuel was going to live at the temple she was happy because God had heard her prayer and answered it. She knew God had blessed her and would continue to do so.)

Why did Hannah take Samuel to the Tabernacle to live? (She promised God that if He gave her a baby, she would 'give him back to God – to be dedicated to serving Him. In those days, that meant Samuel would be taught to be a priest, which is why he went to live at the temple.)

Can anyone remember what Samuel's name meant? Can you explain why Hannah called him that? (Hannah asked God for a son– and He gave her Samuel.)

Explain to the group what happened next in Samuel's life – he grew up to be a prophet (someone who hears God speak), a Judge (leader of the nation) and most importantly someone who served God. God used Samuel to do some very important things – because Samuel was totally committed to serving Him.

What can we learn from this story for our lives today? (Answers could include praying for things we want, talking to God about things that make us sad. But try and focus the discussion onto Samuel learning to serve God...and the impact that had on his adult life).

Finish the discussion by challenging the group to each think of one way they could serve God – at school, home or with friends and family.

The Point: To teach the story of Samuel, focussing on his dedication to serving God, right from his birth.

Equipment

Baby names book, children's Bible.

Total Dedication

Teaching Time

15 mins

Activity

Start the session by asking the children to think of someone famous who is totally dedicated to their profession (give some examples if necessary – musicians, footballers, dancers, athletes etc). Ask the group to describe what they think that person does each day (warming up, practising skills, fitness training, learning new dance routines etc). If the room is large enough ask the group to mime certain activities that these people would do (e.g. practicing taking a penalty) or run a five minute aerobic session!

From the discussions above draw out the following point; that famous sports people are really dedicated to their sport. They have to practice lots and it is really hard work! They have to be incredibly dedicated. Paula Radcliffe, a famous British marathon runner, had the following quote written about her in a newspaper:

'Six days of every seven, her life is a regimented routine of running, eating and sleeping'

Usain Bolt, the most successful Olympic sprinter of all time (with eight gold medals), said:

'Easy is not an option. No days off. Never Quit. Be Fearless. Talent you have naturally. Skill is only developed by hours and hours of work'.

Introduce today's Bible character, Samuel. Tell the story of Samuel from a children's Bible. **The Lion First Bible** and **The Beginner's Bible** both contain clear, helpful versions. Read the story from the point where Hannah takes Samuel to the Tabernacle to be brought up to serve God until after Samuel hears God speak and is declared a prophet.

For leader's reference: This story is found in **1 Samuel 3**.

Explain to the group that Samuel was a prophet – someone who heard God speak. Later in the Bible we learn that Samuel did the things that God told him to do - he was totally dedicated to serving God in every part of his life.

This story challenges us to think about how dedicated we are to serving God. God tells us how to live 'His way' in the Bible. We can be decided to serving God by living in the way the Bible describes.

Split the group into smaller groups of around six children. Ask them to spend some time thinking how they can be dedicated to serving God in particular situations: school, home, playing with friends, family time. Select situations that are appropriate for the children in your groups' situation.

Assign a helper or leader to each group and record the ideas they come up with. After five minutes, come back together as a group and share your different ideas.

If appropriate, pray for the children, that they will be committed to serving God in all parts of their lives.

The Point: To teach the story of Samuel, focussing on his role as a prophet and his dedication to serving God. To encourage the children to think about how God wants them to live; totally committed to serving Him in all parts of their lives.

Equipment

Children's Bible, large sheets of paper, felt tips, CD player and lively upbeat music (optional).

Prayer Square

Response

5 mins

 Prayer

Give each child a piece of A4 paper and ask them to divide it into four squares.

In one box write a heading 'At Home'. Ask the children to think of something in that situation where they can do what God asks them to do (serve Him). This could include practical things such 'tidying up' or feeling-based things like 'loving my brother'. Ask the children to draw a picture of something they would like God to help them with.

Repeat this process with the remaining three squares. Pick headings that are most suitable for your group, but possibilities could include:

At School
With Friends
On Holiday
Playing Sports
At the Park

Once all the pictures are finished, pray for the children. Ask God to help them be dedicated to serving Him in the situations they have drawn.

Note: This activity links to the teaching time activity 'Total Dedication' and for younger groups, it may be worth preparing these sheets before the session.

The Point: To encourage the children to pray and consider how they can live a life totally dedicated to serving God.

Equipment

Paper, felt-tips and pens, rulers.

Say Thank You Or Sing Thank You?!

Response

5 mins

 Music

After Hannah (Samuel's mother) gave birth to Samuel she said a special 'thank you prayer' to God.

Note for leaders: This prayer is in **1 Samuel 2:1-10** and this activity will work well with teaching time activity 'What's In A Name?'

We can say thank you to God by praying and singing (and other ways too!).

Spend some time singing family worship songs that help the children understand more about our God: He keeps His promises, loves us and challenges us to love Him back!

If available, give the children tambourines, jingly bells etc to play as they sing along. Some suitable songs include:

'My God is a Good, Good God'

'Great Big God'

'Blessed be the Name of the Lord'

Man Looks at the Outside, God Looks in the Heart

Other songs that your group are familiar with

The Point: To worship God and reflect on who He is. Knowing God intimately is the best motivation to live a life dedicated to serving God, like Samuel did.

Equipment

Jingly children's instruments (optional).

Shout It Out

Response

5 mins

 Memory Verse

Samuel said, 'Speak Lord. I am your servant. I am listening.'

1 Samuel 3:10

(International Children's Bible – second part of verse)

Write the verse out – writing each word on a separate piece of paper and numbering the pieces of paper sequentially:

1. Samuel
2. Said
3. Speak
4. Lord etc

Screw the paper up into small balls and put them in a bowl or similar and put the bowl on the far side of the room.

Write the numbers 1 – 12 (as a list) on a large sheet of paper.

Tell the children this is an activity that involves listening (like Samuel did to God). The aim is to find out the full memory verse, but to do so, they will have to listen to each other!

Invite one child at a time to run across the room and pick out a paper ball. They are to unscrew it and read what is on it. Have a leader next to the bowl to help the younger children read and the any older children who pick out the longer words!

The child then shouts out the number and word written on their bit of paper to the group on the other side of the room. The rest of the group LISTEN to the word and a leader should write down the word down next to the appropriate number on their sheet of paper.

Send a child to get the next paper ball and continue until you have the whole verse. Once the verse is all written out, repeat it out loud together at least five times.

When you think the group know it, split them into two groups and get them to say half each (one group after the other)...then swap the parts of the verse over – continue until everyone really knows the verse inside out!

The Point: To learn Scripture by heart.

Equipment

Paper and pens, bowl.

Samuel's Story

Take Away

10 mins

 Craft Ideas

This item can be shared with your group using the QR code:

This activity will work well with the following Teaching Time activities: 'What's In A Name'



Give each child a copy of the worksheet 'Samuel's Story'. Explain that they are going to draw out the story they have learned about today.

Describe the four pictures they need to draw. It may be helpful to have a version already completed the children can use to assist them.

Note for leaders: The reading ability of children this age varies greatly. Older children will be able to read most of the text on the worksheet but younger ones will need to have it read to them. If the group is younger then it may be a good idea recap the first part of the story and then draw each picture together. Once the children have completed this, then recap the second part of the story and draw the associated picture etc.

The Point: To recap the story of Samuel, focussing on his dedication to serving God, right from his birth.

Equipment

Copies of 'Samuel's Story' worksheet, felt-tips or colouring pencils.
