

MESSAGES FROM GOD

Timeless Truth: God uses willing hearts to serve him.

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

Key Verse: [The LORD] said, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel replied, "Speak. I'm listening."
—1 Samuel 3:10b NIV

Resource: *The Story for Children*, Chapter 10: "Messages from God"

PARENT TIPS

Read the key point from the Sunday school class your child(ren) attended. Use the Table Talk questions to start a discussion around the dinner table during the week. The Living Faith activity will help your family learn to listen for God. The Extra Mile has your family watch a video about God's lost ark and understand that the Bible isn't filled with stories—it's filled with truth.

GET THE POINT

Hannah prayed to God, and Samuel listened to God. God answers me and talks to me when I pray, too.

TABLE TALK

- **Hannah made a very big promise to God by telling him that she would give her first son to serve him. Do you think it was hard for Hannah to hand over her young son to Eli at the temple?**
- **Have you ever made a promise so big that you didn't want to keep it? What did you do?**
- **How did God reward Hannah?** (She had three more sons and two daughters. Plus, she got to see Samuel grow up to mightily serve the Lord.)
- **Later in chapter 10, it says the people of Israel wanted a king, even though God was supposed to be their king. God let Samuel anoint Saul to be king. If you were king, what decisions would you make? Would you order dessert to be eaten before dinner? Would you outlaw tests at school?**

LIVING FAITH

God calling Samuel in the middle of the night is one of the most well-known stories in the Bible. When Eli finally figures out that it's the Lord speaking to Samuel, he tells Samuel to say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:10). What great advice! The Lord wants us to be ready and eager to hear him anytime—day or night.

Construct an old-school “telephone” by using plastic or paper cups, string, and tape. Kite string or yarn works well. Once you gather the needed materials, poke a small hole in the bottom of each cup with a pencil. Thread the string through each hole, tie a large knot and then tape the knot on the bottom of the inside of the cups. When you pull the string tight, you’ll be able to hear each other when one person speaks softly into the cup and another person listens with the other cup to his ear. See if you can say special messages to each other around the corner of a wall or down the stairs. Put the string under furniture or through the banister and see if it works. How long can you make the string and still communicate with each other?

When you’re done experimenting, ask:

- **What was the hardest part of communicating using the old-fashioned telephone?**
- **God doesn’t speak to us through cups (although he could). What ways does God speak to us today?** (Through the Bible; through godly advice from parents or pastors; through our prayers; through circumstances.)
- **Because of the way that God communicates with us today, does it make reading the Bible and going to church more important? How can you make these two activities more of a priority in your life?**
- **What do you think you’d do if you heard a voice in the night calling your name?**
- **What do you think God wants you to do for him?**

EXTRA MILE

In this part of *The Story*, the Philistines defeat Israel in battle, kill 30,000 soldiers (including Eli’s sons Hophni and Phinehas), and capture the Ark of God (1 Samuel 4:10–11). Although King David brought the Ark back to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6), it was eventually lost. Movies, including *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, have been made regarding the quest to find God’s lost ark. Go to YouTube.com and search for “Ark of the Covenant.” Then watch the History Channel special that goes into detail about the Ethiopian Orthodox church having the Ark of the Covenant. The video is in four parts and takes about 35 minutes to watch. Discuss as a family what you learn. Does this video give you more faith that what the Bible says is real?