

# Art Center... Samuel

## Purpose

In this workshop, children will explore noise, and then hear and act out the story of Samuel. This interactive story will help children understand that God called a young person to ministry and that it is important to listen to God. They will create a picture in a frame of themselves.

## Advance Preparation

This workshop requires a photo of each child that can be placed in the frame they create. Several options are available to you.

- Photos can be taken of the children on a prior evening, developed, and then are ready to use. A Polaroid should be on hand to take pictures of children who were absent when the original shots were taken.
- All the pictures could be taken with a Polaroid (we felt that was cost-prohibitive)
- If you have access to a digital camera and a printer on-site, this would be a great idea. We would suggest 2 camera/printer setups, since time is a factor with this project.

## Supplies

CD or tape player and music

Extension cord

Cardboard frames, precut

Polaroid camera and film (see above)

“stuff” to decorate frames

commas, poms, scraps, etc

scissors

glue bottle/sticks

## Lesson

As the children arrive, have a musical cassette playing very loudly. Speak in a soft voice and tell the children you're glad they came today. Spend a few moments telling each child how special they are. Make sure the volume drowns out your voice.

After a few minutes, turn off the music. Gather the children around and ask:

*Did you like what I said to each of you?*

*Why did you have such a problem hearing me?*

*Why is it important to listen carefully?*

*Sometimes we have to listen very carefully to hear what's being said, like when you're getting instruction about schoolwork, or when your parents tell you what you can have for a snack.*

*Tonight, we're talking about listening to God. We want to be careful listeners and not let other things like loud music get in the way.*

*Our Bible story is about a young person, named Samuel. He had been sent to the temple to learn about being a priest. This was an honor, not a punishment.*

Let's see what good listeners you are. Each time I say the name "Samuel," you are to jump up and say, "Here I am!" and then lie back down again. To begin, direct children to lie down and pretend they're sleeping.

Samuel (pause while children jump up and down) was a young person who loved God and did what God asked. Samuel (pause) lived at the church with Eli, the minister. One night while sleeping, Samuel (pause) heard a voice calling his name. He ran to Eli and said, "Here I am." Eli was very sleepy. He yawned and said, "I didn't call you. Go back to sleep." Then Samuel (pause) heard a voice calling his name again. He ran to Eli and said, "Here I am." Eli was still very sleepy. He yawned and said, "I didn't call you. Go back to sleep." For the third time, Samuel (pause) heard his name. He ran to Eli and said, "Here I am." This time Eli realized that God was trying to speak to Samuel (pause). Eli told him to say, "Speak, God, I am listening." One more time Samuel (pause) heard a voice calling his name and he said, "Speak, God, I am listening." And God told Samuel (pause) many important things. Samuel (pause) listened to the Lord that night and for the rest of his life.

To help us remember about Samuel, a young person who listened and heard God's voice, we're going to each have our picture to put into a frame we'll decorate. We too can listen to God.

Have frame forms set out... "stuff" to decorate with, and work with shepherds to get photos of each child to them. Encourage them to decorate all the way into the photo, since the frames are bigger than the pictures will be.

### **Closing**

(shepherds): *Did you know that we can listen when we pray? We usually think of praying as talking to God. Right now, when we pray, let's listen to God. I'll begin, and then we'll quietly listen with our hearts to see what God might be saying.*

*Dear God, we're so glad you love us and want to speak to us. Please teach us new ways to listen to you more carefully. Help us still our hearts and be quiet so we can hear you better.* Silence (about a minute) *In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Invite the children to share what they thought and felt as they listened.

# Storyteller center . . . Samuel

## Purpose

In this workshop, the children will take about listening, first through an exercise, then through the story of Samuel. Younger children will costume and re-tell the story. Older children may connect the story to God speaking today and role play various contemporary situations, good and bad, and discuss the differences. All the children will make a bracelet of purple beads, the color of priests and royalty in the Bible, as a way to remember the story of Samuel and Eli as well as God's "ruling" presence in our lives today.

## Advance prep

Make phones, and test.

Look over script of drama and think about how you'll act it out with younger children.

Prepare contemporary scenario slips for older children.

## Supplies

Plastic cup phones – enough sets for younger children to use – see below for instructions

Box of toothpicks

Bibles (oldest group)

Biblical costumes, include belts and head bands

Paper, pencil, clipboard

Slips of paper with scenarios for older youth to act out.

## Lesson

Have several sets of plastic cup phones prepared before class. To make one, you'll need a pair of plastic cups or yogurt containers and a long piece of string. With a tack, make a small hole in the center of the cup bottoms. Tie an overhand knot at one end of the string and feed the other end through the hole in each cup. Then, knot the free end. Slide the cups to opposite ends of the string, so the knots rest inside the bottom of each cup.

To use the phone, pair up participants. Hand one of the cups to each, and ask them to move apart until the string is taut. Now, one child can talk into a cup while a partner holds the open end of the cup up to an ear.

*How clearly did you receive the message? (The reason the conversation is clear is that sound travels even faster and farther through a solid or liquid than it does through air.)*

*Just as you each received a message, God has a message for you. God called out to a young person in the Bible. Samuel was a young child, maybe 8 or 9 when this story happened. Let's put on our costumes, and we'll act out the story of Samuel.*

Dress up...Script attached. (Note: Our script was from BibleZone, published by Abingdon. Due to copyright, we can't reproduce it here. That script essentially is a narrator(leader) telling the story of Samuel as found in 1 Samuel 3:1-18. The children physically move around the room, from a sleeping area to Eli's room, etc. acting out the story. Using the text, it would not too difficult to prepare your own script, using modern language and adapting to your own classroom area.)

When finished, collect costumes...discuss.

*Why do you think Samuel thought it was Eli calling?*

*Who do you think God might use in your life to help you hear God calling?*

*What are other ways we can hear God speaking to us?*

*What do you think it might feel like to hear God?*

### **Upper elementary option:**

*Let's see how good you are at giving and following directions:*

Listening exercise: Have students gather in pairs. Each pair sits back to back on the floor. They are each given 8-10 toothpicks. Have the person with a birthday is closest to New Year's Day begin by placing a toothpick on the floor. They have to tell the person behind them how to place their toothpick.

So they would say something like "place your toothpick so that the points face your knees (if the know vertical/horizontal - those are good words also).

This needs to be done with all the toothpicks (watch the participants to make sure they are not looking over the shoulders to see where to place). It's okay to get it different; we are just learning how difficult listening can be.

*Let's find the story of Samuel in our Bibles. 1Samuel 3:1-18*

*How did God talk to Samuel?*

*How might God talk to us today?*

*How do we know what God wants us to do?*

*We can listen for God's voice. Sometimes we hear God as we read the Bible. Sometimes we hear it in church, or through adults in our lives...*

Have slips of paper ready with various scenarios. Partner and present the scene for the group. Do like Charades, but those in skit can talk. As they're presented...good or bad actions. (Add others if you have ideas)

Volunteer to help with Special Olympics. Get your friend to help also.

Skip church and go swimming.

Go to the movie on Sunday night.

Collect blankets for the homeless.

Spread a rumor about a classmate

Participate in a canned food drive

Play with your friends in the park

Spend your church offering money on candy

Do extra chores for your neighbor who's sick

Laugh at a new kid

*God called Samuel to be a servant. What are some things we can to be servants?*

Talk about these ideas, if time

### **Closing**

With shepherd:

Make bracelet to remember being called. *Eli was a priest. Purple is the color of royalty. Who is our ruler? Whose example can we follow?*

Discuss what they can do.