

date: **1/14/17****Bible Passage: 1 Samuel 3**
(Samuel)

God Speaks

REMEMBER VERSE

Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it.”

Isaiah 30:21

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

The first time I heard God’s voice calling to me was around the time I became a Christian at the ripe old age of seven. I like to think I’ve gotten better at hearing His voice, although I’m not exactly sure how to explain just how I hear Him.

One of the things God has taught me is to resist the urge to put words in His mouth. A couple of years ago, I was praying for God to give me a verse to guide me during the coming year—one way I hear from Him. This had been my custom on New Year’s Eve for about three years, and God had always clearly given me a phrase or a verse that helped me navigate the following year. Unfortunately, I thought I would help the process and decide for God what the verse would be. I smugly closed my Bible, thanked Him, and went off to bed. That night I slept just fine, but when I woke up, a restless heart sent me back to the passage. God was faithful to speak to me, and I continue to learn how to listen for His voice in the quiet of my soul.

I would profoundly miss even one day of talking with God. Hearing His voice brings me joy. Listening to His words gives me peace. Talking with Him lets me know, without a doubt, that I’m never alone. Knowing that He wants me to hear Him makes me feel incredibly loved. I hope I can encourage others along the journey—young and old—to listen and know God’s voice. It’s a voice that has spoken throughout the ages to children and kings, prophets and fishermen. As we listen, He will guide us and show us what piece is ours to play in His master plan. I’m amazed He talks to me at all, but I’m so grateful that He does. I want to live in the expectancy of hearing from Him every day.

Janet Lee
Tru Team

Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

After many years of bringing prayers and petitions to the Lord for a child, Hannah vowed to give any son she was blessed with into the service of the Lord. Hannah kept her promise, for when Samuel was a young child—some scholars speculate him to have been around three or four years of age—his parents brought him to the temple of the Lord in Shiloh. They gave him to minister to God under the guidance of the priest, Eli, to learn the ways of worship and acts of service within the temple.

“But Samuel was ministering before the LORD—a boy wearing a linen ephod. Each year his mother made him a little robe and took it to him when she went up with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice” (1 Samuel 2:18–19). Ephods were sacred religious garments that indicated priestly service. Samuel's specified him as having entered the priestly service as an apprentice. The robes his mother brought for him each year were likely worn under his linen ephod. Samuel faithfully served the Lord and “continued to grow in stature and in favor with the LORD and with people” (v. 26).

In this period of the judges, the Word from the Lord—a spoken message to the people through a prophet—was rare, nor were many people experiencing visions from the Lord. It's important to note that Samuel was still a child when God first called his name. Up to this point, it appears from Scripture that Samuel had not experienced or met God in this way, so it makes sense that the child wouldn't recognize God's voice. As he grew up, Samuel faithfully brought the Word of the Lord to the people as His prophet and as the last judge of Israel until the end of his life.

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word

We were created in the image of God. He has designed us to know His voice. Why then, can it be so difficult to *hear* Him? Many would say that because there are so many voices and so much noise in our daily lives, it can be hard to know whose voice is whose. Or, perhaps we're making hearing and listening to God much too difficult. If He has wired us to be tuned to Him, then it's within our ability to hear Him. We simply need to adjust our focus and tune ourselves in to the Creator. We'll recognize His voice when He speaks because He created us to know Him and recognize His voice. He wants us to know His voice!

This week, adjust your tuning. Spend time connecting with God in the way that suits you. It may be taking your Bible and finding a comfy spot in nature, singing loudly in your car, or finding a quiet place to just be still and meditate on a verse or two. Whatever it is that helps you focus and be present with the Lord, get to that place. If you're not sure what that is, experiment a bit with different settings and situations. Then ask Him to speak to you in a way that you'll recognize His voice.

Lord, as each of us comes before You, we desire to hear Your voice. Please remove any distractions that would hinder us from hearing from and listening to You—things both seen and unseen. Lord, when You speak, let us know without question that it's You we hear. We will listen. Amen.

EXPLORE:: 10 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about

the day's portion of The Big God Story.

Do You Hear What I Hear?

In this part of The Big God Story, young Samuel heard something unfamiliar to him—God's voice. He learned what God sounded like and how to respond to Him with his whole life. This activity will get children thinking about listening carefully and understanding what they're hearing.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- Sound effects: Doorbell, Car Engine, Birds Chirping, Snoring, Rainstorm, Wind, Kids Laughing, Fire Engine Siren (see Resources)
- "Do You Hear?" cards (see Resources)
- Paper clips (1 per child)

PREPARE AHEAD

Print or copy and cut out one set of the "Do You Hear?" cards per child. The cards match each of the supplied sound effects. Paper clip each set of cards together.

SET UP

Place one set of picture cards at each child's place at the table.

RELATE

Welcome children to EXPLORE. **In just a moment, you'll hear some different sounds. Each time you hear a new sound, find the picture that belongs to the sound you just heard. When you find the picture, place it in front of you. When we've heard all the sounds, we'll talk about what you heard. Are you ready? Here we go.** Encourage children to listen to the sounds, one by one, and identify the picture that belongs to each sound.

After children have identified all the sounds, ask them to name the sounds they heard using the cards they've selected. Repeat each sound, and allow children to hold up their cards. **How were you able to name the sounds you heard? Did you use your nose? Your eyes? Your hands? Your ears? Which sounds were most familiar to you? Which do you like better: *watching TV* or *listening to music*?**

For a fun, low-tech spin on this activity, have the Small Group Leader hold up a card and encourage children to make the noise for that picture.

DISCOVER:: 25 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Ponder Point God Speaks

Chloe's Rules

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Chloe's Rules videos](#)
- Worship music (suggestions: "I May Be Small" and "I Am Listening to You," TruWorship *Sincerely Yours*)

RELATE

Welcome children as they're entering the large group meeting area. *Tech: Cue Chloe's Rules video.* The theme song will play as the Worship Leader/Host enters and makes his way up front, welcoming and greeting children along the way. This should be a high-energy entrance. *Tech: Cue preschool program theme song.* Choose and play two upbeat worship songs of your choice from a worship album that complements the theme and focus of the lesson.

Mail Time

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Mail Time intro clip and image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [Remember Verse image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [Remember Verse cards \(see Resources\)](#)
- [Mail Time envelope](#)
- Bibles (your personal and large children's)
- Mailbox

PREPARE AHEAD

Print or copy the Mail Time envelope art and attach to a large envelope. Print or copy one Remember Verse card and put it inside the envelope.

RELATE

Tech: Cue the Mail Time intro clip and image. Choose one volunteer to hide the mail and another to find the mail. Have the "Seeker" close her eyes while the "Hider" finds a good place to hide the Remember Verse. Once the mail has been hidden, the Seeker will begin to look for the mail while the children give clues to its whereabouts by calling out "hot" and "cold."

Once the Seeker finds the mail, the Host invites her to pull out the enclosed Remember Verse. Next, the Host should find the Remember Verse in his Bible and read the words aloud. Talk about the meaning of the verse while interacting with the children.

Lead the children in reciting the Remember Verse several times together using a variety of engaging methods. Hand motions, different voices, various speeds, and character integration are all great ways to help commit the Scripture to memory. For longer verses, approach the verse one section at a time, increasing what the children repeat back each week.

REMEMBER VERSE

Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

Isaiah 30:21

REMEMBER VERSE MOTIONS

Whether you turn to the right: Hold an imaginary steering wheel. Turn it to the right.

or to the left: Then turn it to the left.

your ears will hear: Point index fingers to ears.

a voice behind you, saying: With right hand, form index and middle fingers in shape of a V. Start V at throat and move up to chin.

This is the way: Point index finger out to right, away from body.

walk in it: With right hand, index and middle fingers "walk" back and forth as hand moves forward.

Wardrobe of Wonder

Storyteller/Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Wardrobe of Wonder intro clip and image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [What'slt: Call \(see optional image and sound effect in Resources\)](#)
- Wardrobe of Wonder
- Small stools or chairs (2)

What'slt: A Call

Samuel heard God call his name when he was a child. The Lord called to Samuel three times in the night. From this night forward Samuel knew God's voice and responded to Him when He called. The audio cue helps us to remember that God wants us to know His voice too.

RELATE

Tech: Cue the Wardrobe of Wonder intro clip and image. Invite a child volunteer to "spy" on the What'slt by peeking into the wardrobe. Each time the wardrobe door opens, *cue Call sound effect*. Have him whisper the identity of the What'slt in your ear to ensure he knows what it is.

Invite your assistant to sit on the stools with you. Then lead the group in asking the assistant yes-or-no questions about the What'slt. Once the children have guessed correctly, ask your assistant to retrieve the What'slt from the wardrobe and bring it to you. Thank your volunteer and encourage him to sit with his small group.

ASK

Tech: Cue What'slt: Call sound effect. **What did you just hear?** (Volunteer's name), **why do you think the Wardrobe of Wonder has someone calling a name as the What'slt?** Pause for volunteer to give you some suggestions. **I'm sure you've all heard someone call your name. When would someone call to you?** Children respond. **I wonder where we'll find the What'slt in this part of The Big God Story today! Friends, what do you think? Let's find out because, do you know what time it is? It's time for ...**

The Big God Story

1 Samuel 3

God Speaks

Storytelling Technique: Interactive Storytelling

SUPPLIES

- [The Big God Story intro clip and image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [What'sIt: Call \(see optional image and sound effect in Resources\)](#)

SET UP

Consider including children in the storytelling each time God calls Samuel. One option would be to have two children act out the roles of Eli and Samuel. Or, to include everyone, cue the children to lie down when you say, "One night while Samuel was sleeping." When you say, "He got up ..." direct the children to sit up and say, "Here I am; you called me!" Then when Eli tells Samuel to go back to bed, have the children lie down again. Repeat this pattern as cued. If you'll be doing either of these options, explain to children how it will work before beginning your storytelling.

RELATE

Tech: Cue The Big God Story intro clip and image. Hello, friends! It's so good to see you here today! Before we jump into The Big God Story, let's stop and ask God to be the one to teach us. Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

This part of The Big God Story took place many years ago, when the judges were leading the people of Israel. A judge was a special person called to listen to everything God said and follow His directions for the best way to lead the people. During this time there lived a boy named Samuel. When he was young, he went to the temple of the Lord to live with the priest, Eli. Eli taught Samuel all about the Lord and how to serve God in the temple.

One night while Samuel was sleeping (cue children to lie down), he woke up because he heard someone calling his name. *Tech: Cue What'sIt: Call sound effect. Wait a minute. Where did we just hear a call? Wait for children to answer. In the Wardrobe of Wonder! That's right! The call was our clue to The Big God Story! When Samuel heard the call, he got up (children sit up and say, "Here I am; you called me!") and ran to the priest Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I didn't call you; go back and lie down." Children lie down. So, Samuel went back to his bed to lie down. Tech: Cue What'sIt: Call sound effect. Again, he heard someone call, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up (children sit up and say, "Here I am; you called me!") and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." "My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." Children lie down.*

If it wasn't Eli calling to Samuel, who do you think it was? Children respond. It was the Lord God, you're right! *Tech: Cue What'sIt: Call sound effect. The Lord called to Samuel a third time and once again Samuel got up (children sit up and say, "Here I am; you called me!") and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." You see, Samuel had never heard God's voice, so he didn't know it was God calling him. Finally, Eli realized it was God who was calling to Samuel. He told Samuel that he should go back to bed and if the Lord called to him again, he should say, "Speak, Lord, Your servant is listening." What do you think Samuel did? Children respond. He went back to bed and lay down. Children lie down.*

Then the Lord came to Samuel and called to him a fourth time, "Samuel! Samuel!" Children sit up. And what do you think Samuel said? Children answer. That's right! He said, "Speak, for Your servant is listening!" What do you think God did? Children answer. Yes, God spoke to Samuel and gave him a special message for Eli and

his family. This was Samuel's first job as a prophet of God.

The Lord God was with Samuel as he grew from a boy into a man. When he was grown, Samuel became the last judge for Israel before they started having kings. Not only was he a judge for Israel, but he was also a prophet! God wanted His people to know Him, so He chose Samuel to tell them everything He said. People everywhere knew Samuel as a prophet who listened to God. The Lord told Samuel many things about Himself and His plans. Samuel knew God and loved Him all the days of his life. Wow, God had a very special plan for this little boy! I wonder what special plan God has for each one of you in His big story.

Why do you think God kept calling Samuel's name? Interact with children's answers. God wanted Samuel to know His voice. God's voice was not like anyone else's. He called to Samuel until Samuel knew it was God and no one else. Did you know God speaks to us too? There are many ways we can hear from God. What are some of the ways we can hear Him? Pause for responses. Those are good thoughts. God speaks to us in lots of different ways. He speaks to us when we're praying, singing, or reading The Big God Story from the Bible. God speaks, and He wants us to know His voice.

Worship as Response

SUPPLIES

- Worship song focusing on listening for God's voice (suggestion: "I Am Listening to You," TruWorship *Sincerely Yours*)

RELATE

Samuel was a young boy who heard God speak, and he listened. As soon as Samuel knew it was God's voice he was waiting to hear, he got ready to hear from God. Samuel didn't know for sure that God would speak again in the same way, but no matter how God decided to speak to Samuel, he was ready to listen.

God wants all of us to know His voice. God will speak to us in many different ways. He may choose to speak out loud, or to our hearts. He may speak when we pray, or when we're listening to or reading the Bible. No matter how God decides to speak to us, we can get ready to hear from Him. We're going to take just a moment to pray and ask God to speak to us. We can say what Samuel said: "Speak, Lord, Your servant is listening." God will probably not speak to us the same way He spoke to Samuel—in a voice we can hear out loud—but no matter *how* He chooses to speak to us, or *when* He chooses to speak to us, we can get our hearts ready and tell Him we will listen to Him every day, wherever we are.

Lead by praying: **Speak, Lord, Your servant is listening.** Repeat this a few times. Encourage children to stand and pray, "**Speak, Lord, Your servant, (insert name), is listening,**" or "**Speak, Lord, I am listening**" when they're ready.

Close with a worship song. At the close of the song, end in a prayer of corporate blessing.

Wonder Questions

Small Group Enhancements, coloring pages, and discussion questions help your group go deeper into today's portion of The Big God Story.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Wonder Questions coloring pages \(see Resources\)](#)
- [TruWonder Small Group Enhancements timeline and images \(see Resources\)](#)
- Crayons

RELATE

Today in The Big God Story we heard about a young boy named Samuel and the very first time God spoke to him. He didn't know it was God right away. But when Samuel knew it was God's voice he would be hearing, he waited and God called to him again. God wants to speak to you—and me too. He wants us to know His voice.

I wonder ... What does God's voice sound like?

I wonder ... What does God want to say to me?

I wonder ... How will God speak to me today?

BLESS::: 5 min.**Small Group Leaders**

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)

RELATE

Today we talked about how God speaks and wants each of us to know His voice. I hope you understand more about the different ways God might to speak to you, and that you'll be listening for His voice. Invite children to place their hands out in front of themselves, palms up as if cupping them together to hold water. Suggest they close their eyes and repeat after you: **Speak, Lord, Your servant is listening.**

Read the Remember Verse over children: "**Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it"**" (Isaiah 30:21). Then close your time with a prayer of blessing.

Children, may you always hear and know God's voice. May His words stay with you as you trust Him each day.