

# Session 6

## Samuel as prophet

Children realize that God speaks to them

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 3–21

**Supplies:**

- A big box for the ark. Put sticks through it to carry it around and put a cloth over it
- Two blankets for Eli and Samuel to lie on
- Cloths or big t-shirts with rope around the waist



### Welcome

**Experiment:** The leader stands on one side as the children come in. Quietly call a child's name and then see how the child reacts. Do this a few times and take note of their reactions.

When everyone is together, tell the children what you saw and have a chat about it.

**Confused temple:** Use the names: Eli, Hophni, and Phinehas. Each child gets one of the three names. Sit on chairs in a circle. Choose someone to start the game and then take a chair away. The child shouts one of the three names and then everyone with that name, must jump up and find a new chair. Meanwhile the caller must try to sit on one of the chairs as well. Another child will fall out and become the caller.



### Worship

**Settle down ritual:** Let the children sit cross-legged and close their eyes. Repeat three times: "The Lord is with us." Now say aloud: "Because the Lord is my shepherd, I am not afraid. He leads me through dark times and takes care of me."



### Word

Last time we learned about Samuel. His mother took him to the temple to grow up there. You'll remember that Eli, the high priest, had sons who were disrespectful and disobedient to God and the people. *Divide the children into the following characters: Samuel, Eli, Hophni, Phinehas, Israelites, Philistines, and the messenger. If possible, drape some material over the children for costumes, or use big t-shirts and belts.*

*Samuel and Eli lie on a blanket in the temple. Eli is to one side and Samuel is near the ark.*

*The Israelites sit in a group on one side of the room, and the Philistines on the other side. Hophni, Phinehas and the messenger sit with the Israelites.*

*After the "battle" divide the Philistines into three smaller groups.*

*If you don't have enough children, you can play out the story with broomsticks, chairs, etc. Use stickers to show who's who.*

Tell the story to the children and let them re-enact it.

Samuel worked with Eli in the temple. At night Samuel would sleep near the ark. The ark was a big golden box with two angels on top of it where God's laws and the manna they found in the desert was kept. One night while they were sleeping, Samuel heard a voice calling to him: "Samuel, Samuel!"

Samuel answered: "I'm coming!" and went to Eli. He woke Eli and said: "Here I am, because you called me." Eli said: "I didn't call you. Go back to sleep."

Samuel went back to bed.

Not long after that the voice called out to Samuel again. "Samuel, Samuel!" Again Samuel got up and went to Eli. Eli was surprised because he didn't call Samuel. "Go sleep again, I didn't call you." Samuel didn't know that it was God who was calling him. He didn't know God that well yet. Then God called out to him again: "Samuel, Samuel!" and Samuel ran back to Eli.

This time Eli realized that it was God calling Samuel. That's why he said to Samuel: "Go lie down and if someone calls you again, say 'Speak Lord, your servant is listening.'"

Samuel went back to bed and the Lord came to him and said: "Samuel, Samuel!" This time Samuel answered: "Speak, Lord. Your servant is listening."

God gave Samuel a very serious message. He told Samuel that he was going to punish Eli and his sons.

Samuel was shocked. He was scared to tell Eli what God had told him. Eli called him: "Samuel, my son!" Samuel went to him. "Samuel, if God spoke to you then you mustn't hide it. He is too great to hide His message."

Samuel told Eli everything and Eli said: "He is the Lord. He will do as He sees fit."

Soon the Israelites realized that God was speaking to Samuel, and they began listening to him. (*Let the Israelites stand closer and pretend to listen closely to what Samuel says.*) The Lord spoke often to Samuel and the people could see that everything he said was true.

One day the Israelites went to war against the Philistines. (*Let the two groups move towards each other.*) The Philistines were too strong for the Israelites. They became scared and thought that God would let them win if they had the ark. They went to fetch the ark. (*Let two of them and Hophni and Phinehas fetch the ark.*) It was a big mistake. Hophni and Phinehas also went with the ark to the Israelites' camp. Everyone cried out when they saw the ark. The Philistines heard the commotion and wondered what was going on. They encouraged each other: "Be brave and fight!"

They fought and the Philistines won. The Israelites retreated back to their homes. (*Let them go back to the original place.*) The Philistines took the ark. Hophni and Phinehas died in the battle (*they fall down.*)

One man ran to the temple and told Eli that his two sons had died and that the ark was taken by the Philistines. Eli was so shocked he fell over backwards and died. He was 98 years old.

(*Divide the Philistines into three groups.*) The first group: The Philistines put the ark in front of their idol. When they got there the next morning, their idol had fallen over. They put him back up again. The next morning the idol was upside down and his head and hands had fallen off. The people of the town got painful sores. They then took the ark to a different town.

The second group: These people also got sores. They sent the ark away again.

The third group didn't want the ark either. They made plans to send the ark back to where it came from. They made golden gifts and put it in a box with the ark on a wagon. They strapped in two oxen and let them walk where they wanted. The oxen walked straight to the Israelites. (*Carry the ark to the Israelites.*) The people of the town were busy with their harvest and then looked up to see the ark approaching. They were very excited and made offerings to God.

*Stop the re-enactment of the story. Let the children sit together and continue as follows:*

Samuel was their leader, judge, and prophet. As long as he was their leader, there wasn't any trouble with the Philistines. Samuel was a very good leader. He always spoke the truth and helped people to solve their problems. The Lord spoke to him often and he always listened.

But the people weren't satisfied. They wanted a king. It made Samuel very sad, because he knew it was because they didn't love God that they wanted a king.

Children reflect on the story:

1. I wonder why Samuel thought it was Eli who was calling him
2. I wonder what part of the story you enjoyed the most
3. I wonder what you think is important in the story

4. I wonder who you would like to be in the story

Let's pray together and ask God to forgive us for not always being obedient. Ask Him to help us make the right choices.



### Working and Playing

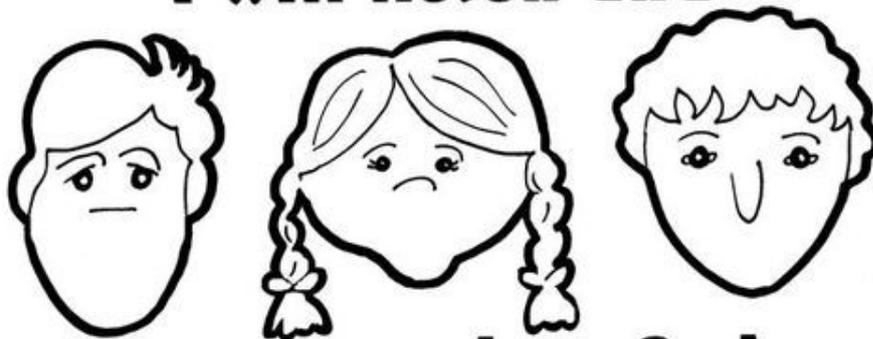
- Give the children a copy of the “faces without ears and mouths” and let them draw the mouths and ears themselves
- Make Samuel in his bed

Closing prayer to end the session

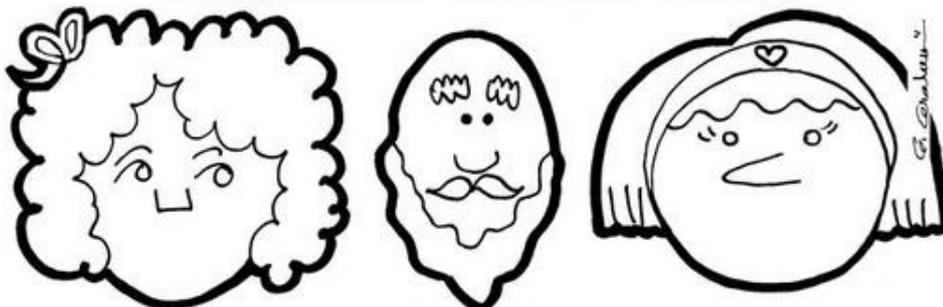
**Like Samuel. . .**



**I will listen and**



**answer when God**

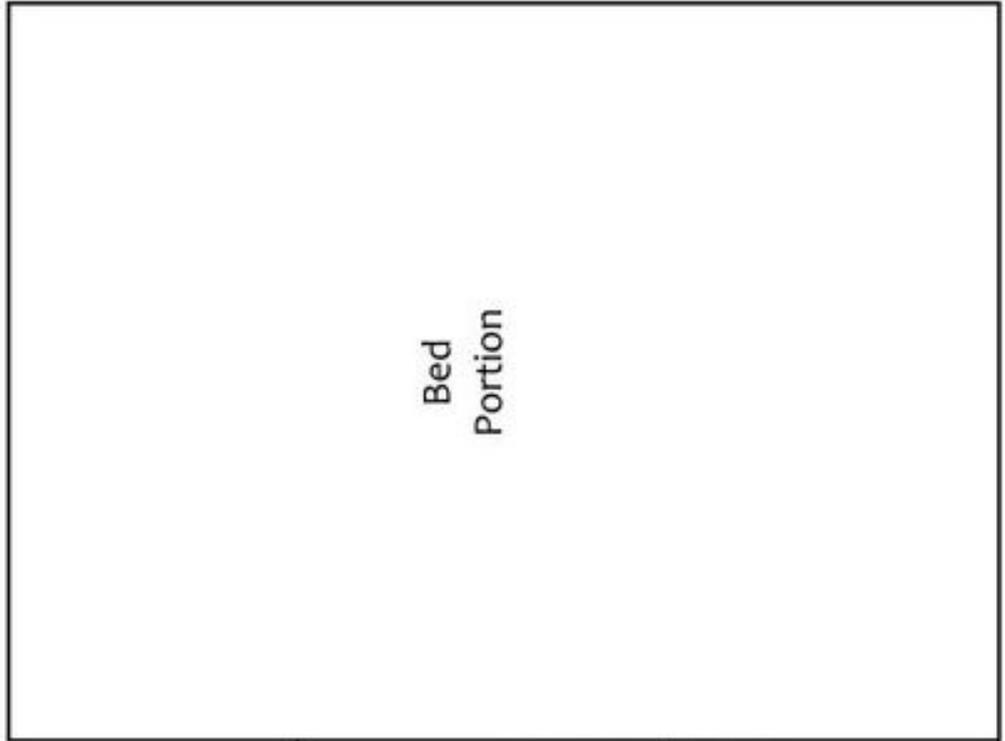
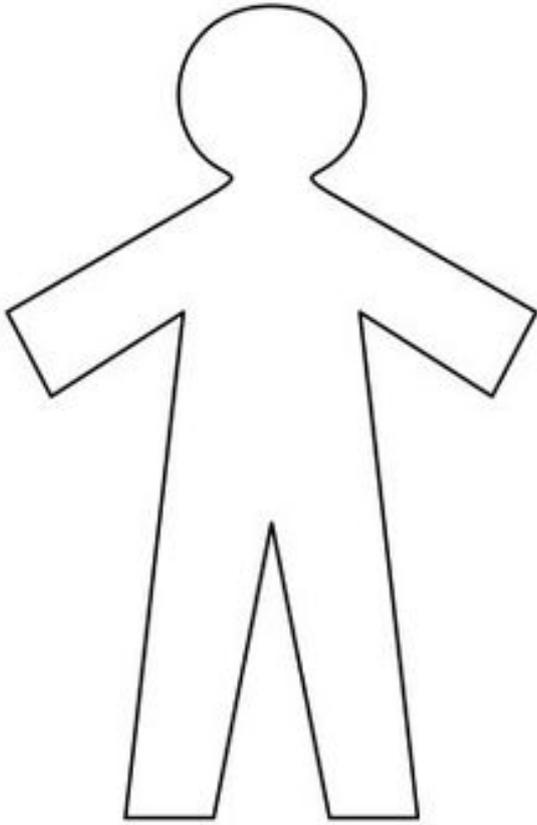


**speaks to me.**

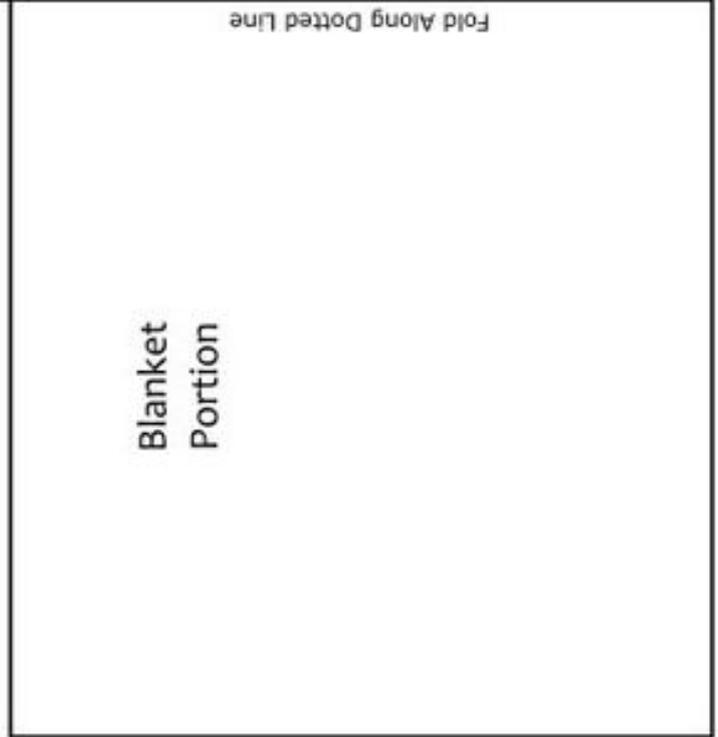
Add ears and a mouth to these faces.

We need to listen with our ears and then speak with our mouths about God and His love.

# Samuel's Calling, Bed and Puppet



Bed  
Portion



Blanket  
Portion

Fold Along Dotted Line