

Session 1

Saul, the first king

We discover what happens to the Israelites when they think God isn't a good enough king.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 8–15

Supplies:

- Copies of crowns on cardboard
- Koki pens, glitter, sequins, rhinestones and any other decoration for the crowns
- Stapler, sticky tape or double-sided tape
- Copy of the cartoon "The people ask for a king"



Welcome

Game 1: "Crabs and Crows"

Game 2: "K.I.N.G. spells KING"

- Leader stands in front and the group lines up alongside each other on the opposite side
- The leader spells the word king, letter by letter. On each letter the group takes one step closer to the leader.
- The one who touches the leader first, wins.



Worship

Settle down ritual from Psalm 23

The children sit down with legs crossed and eyes closed. Let the children repeat this phrase 3x with you: "The Lord is with us". Now say: "Because the Lord is my Shepherd, I am not afraid. He leads me through dark times and cares for me."



Word

Explain to the group that they have to listen very carefully for 3 specific words. When they hear the word "Samuel", they need to clap their hands together as in prayer and say "Samuel". When they hear the word "king" they need to place their hands above their heads like a crown and say "king". When they hear the word "listen" they need to put their fingers in front of their ears and say "listen". Print this Bible story, put it in your Bible and read it out loud.

When **Samuel** was very old, the leaders of Israel came to him, requesting that they also need a king like the countries around them. **Samuel** was not happy with this idea because God was Israel's **king**. **Samuel** first talked to God in prayer about this. God answered **Samuel** by saying: "Give the people what they want, it is not that they don't want you **Samuel**, it is about Me, they don't want me as **king** any longer". **Samuel** then told the people: "You have to **listen** carefully how it will be when you get a **king**, it will be like having a boss. He will use your sons as soldiers and guards, your daughters as servant girls. People will have to work in the palace as slaves and pay taxes. Please remember it will be your decision to have a **king**, don't complain afterwards. Do not go to God for help". They still didn't **listen** and still wanted a **king**. God then talked to **Samuel**: "Tomorrow at the same time I will send a man to

you. He descends from the family of Benjamin. I want you to make him **king** of Israel. Pour a bit of oil on his head, it is the sign that I want that person to serve Me and that he is special to Me”. There was a rich man from the family of Benjamin by the name of Kish. He had a son by the name of Saul, who was young and strong.

Saul was taller and more handsome than any other man in Israel. Saul was looking for some of his father’s lost donkeys when a slave gave him advice to go to the prophet **Samuel** to ask if he could help him to find the donkeys.

When Saul found **Samuel**, the Lord told **Samuel**: “Here is the man I told you about, he is the one who will be the **king** of Israel”. Saul asked **Samuel**: “Sir, can you please direct me to the prophet’s house?” **Samuel** then told Saul: “I am the prophet, come with me to the place where we will bring a sacrifice to God. Stay and visit me for a while. Do not worry about the donkeys, they are already home. The whole of Israel needs you. You are called to do an important job.” The next morning **Samuel** waited to be alone with Saul; he then took out the special oil and poured it out on Saul’s head. It was the sign that was very special to God. After that they shook hands and **Samuel** said: “God chooses you to be **king** of Israel.” **Samuel** gave Saul instructions that he had to follow. After **Samuel** had greeted Saul, God changed Saul’s heart. People who knew Saul for a long time asked one another what happened to Saul. Saul did not tell anyone that **Samuel** told him that he will become **king** of Israel. **Samuel** gathered all Israelites in their families. Saul was chosen by lot as **king**. Everyone was very happy and shouted: “Long lives the **king**!” **Samuel** then told the people to **listen** to their **king**. He said: “God gave you this **king**, if you and your **king** love God and do as He says, He will be good to you. If you don’t, it will not go well with you.” When Saul **listened** to God, he was blessed by God. They won all their battles against their enemies when they went to war. God protected the Israelites against their enemies. Unfortunately, as time went by, Saul did not **listen** to God any longer. He thought he was smarter than God. Saul became disobedient and dishonest, and he did not **listen** to **Samuel**’s good advice. God was disappointed that He chose Saul as **king**. God sent **Samuel** again to Saul and **Samuel** told him: “Because you did not **listen**, God doesn’t want you as **king** any longer; you will be torn away from the Israelites and God will choose someone better than you.” **Samuel** never saw Saul again and was very sad that Saul did not **listen** to God.

Children reflect on the story

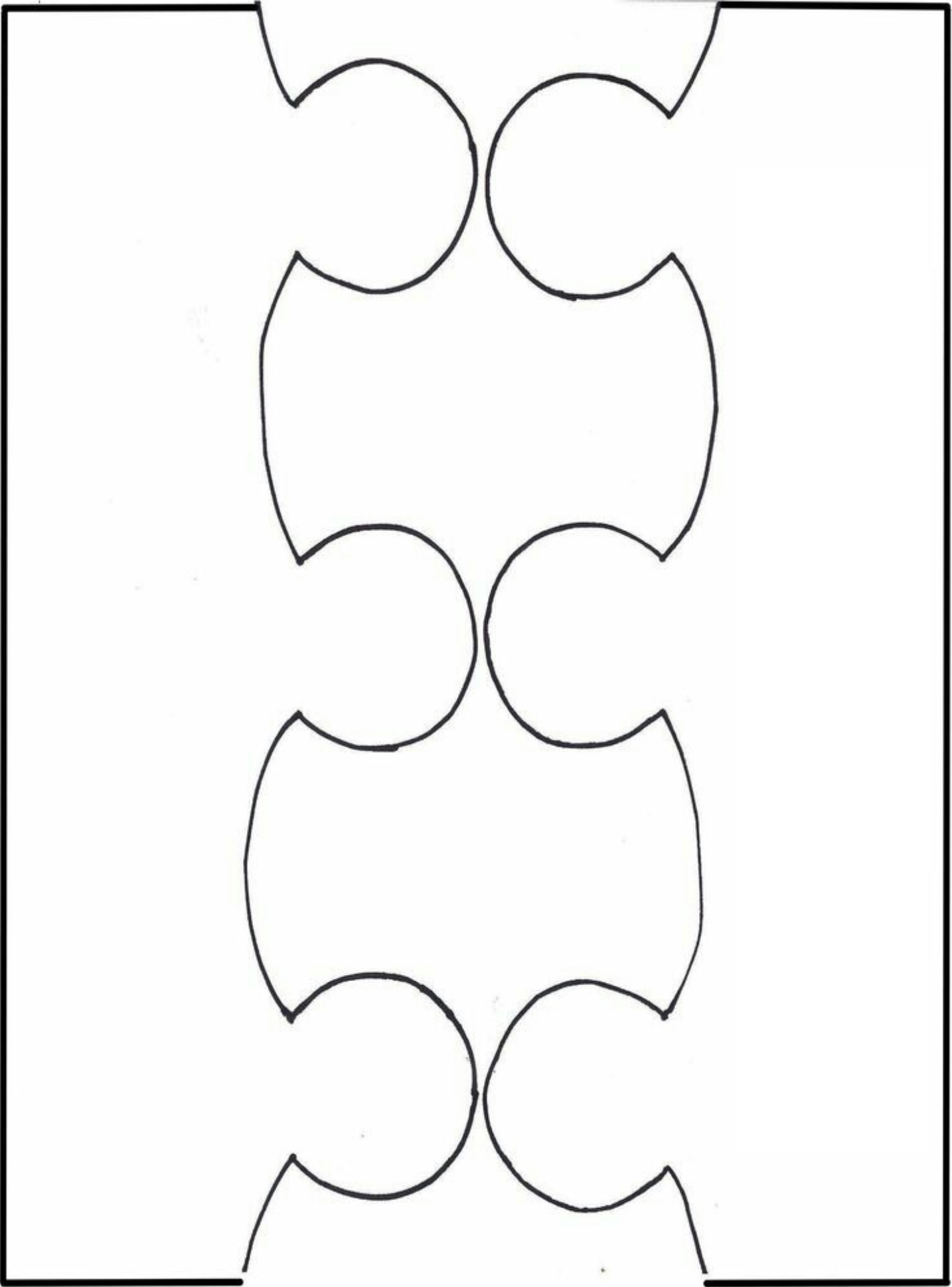
1. I wonder how this story makes you feel.
2. I wonder what you would change in this story.
3. I wonder if you also battle to listen sometimes.



Working and Playing

- Younger children: pattern of a crown to decorate. Join the two halves together with a stapler or double-sided tape. Add an extra section if it is too small.
- “The people ask for a king” cartoon: a copy for each child to complete and to take home

Closing prayer to end the session



The people ask for a king

<p>Samuel, you are old and your sons are crooks, we want a king!</p>	<p>Samuel said: A king will take all your belongings for himself.</p>
<p>Samuel prays: Please Lord, show me what to do.</p>	<p>I think Samuel can help us to find the donkeys, says Saul.</p>
<p>Meanwhile Saul and his helpers are searching for their donkeys...</p>	<p>We don't mind, the people replied.</p>
<p>Saul, God chooses you to be king, Samuel said.</p>	<p>Because you didn't want God as your leader anymore. He gave you a king. Here is King Saul!</p>