

We Choose to Listen to God

Theme for Unit 25:
Choosing and Losing

Bible Basis

The boy Samuel listens to God (1 Sam. 3:1-19).

Bible Truth

God wants children to listen carefully to His directions.

Memory Verse:

I will listen to what God the LORD will say.
Psalm 85:8.

Lesson Aim

That your students will choose to listen to God's directions.

Lesson Overview

1

Life Need (5 minutes)

Use listening skills to decode a secret message.

n **Materials:** *My Bible Book* p. 3

2

Bible Learning (15–20 minutes)

Bible Words: Learn about God's house, Eli, and Samuel.

n **Materials:** *My Bible Book*, p. 4

Bible Story: Hear how Samuel learned to listen to God.

Bible Review: Identify things Samuel did as he was learning to listen to God.

n **Materials:** *My Bible Book*, p. 5

Optional: Pantomime chores Samuel may have done at God's house.

3

Bible Application (5 minutes)

Discover why being a good listener is important for obeying God.

n **Materials:** *My Bible Book*, p. 6

4

Life Response (5–15 minutes)

Memory Work: Use a special calendar to practice listening to God.

n **Materials:** *Elementary Kid Crafts* project for Lesson 1



Understanding Your Students

Young children are just beginning to develop the logical skills needed to understand a series of statements. This means they are still learning how to listen to directions. In a group, they are more likely to talk to their friends than to concentrate on your instructions. To help your students learn to follow instructions, get their attention, establish control, and encourage them to listen carefully. Elementary-age children will develop better self-discipline as they learn to focus their attention and listen carefully. This will also aid them in their Christian growth as they learn to focus on and listen to God.

Classroom Tips

The following tips will help make giving directions easier and more effective.

- n Before you begin, be sure all your students are seated, looking at you, and not talking.
- n Check to see that they have nothing in their hands to “play” with.
- n It’s best to give just one direction at a time. Try not to give more than two at once.
- n Use as few words as possible in each direction.
- n Watch for blank or puzzled looks. The children might not ask for clarification.
- n Give examples whenever you can. Show the stages of a craft as you explain it, and have a finished product to show.
- n Watch for left/right reversals—you may have to turn so that your right corresponds with your children’s right.

Understanding the Bible

This week’s Bible Story looks at the period of Israel’s history usually referred to as the time of the judges. Israel was a loose confederation of tribes. Israel did not yet have a king, so the primary authorities were those people recognized as God’s spokesmen, usually the priests and prophets. At special times, God raised up other leaders called judges. Samuel was one of the last of the judges.

Hannah was Samuel’s mother. For many years she had been unable to have children. One year when she and her husband were visiting the tabernacle to offer their yearly sacrifices, she asked God for a son and pledged to give the child to the Lord’s service. When the

high priest Eli understood her grief and her heartfelt prayer, he added his blessing to her request. Samuel was the child born in answer to Hannah’s prayer (1 Sam. 1).

When Samuel was about three years old, his parents brought him to the tabernacle. Hannah presented Samuel to Eli and dedicated him to the Lord’s service, as she had promised. So Samuel stayed with Eli and grew up serving God.

Samuel was obedient and devoted to God unlike Eli’s sons. They were disobedient and wicked. Even though Eli rebuked them, they would not repent. Eli did not remove his sons from their priestly office. Because of the wickedness of Eli’s sons and Eli’s failure to

properly discipline them, God’s judgment fell on Eli and his sons.

God raised up an obedient and faithful man named Samuel to replace Eli as the Lord’s spokesman. In spite of the wickedness around him, Samuel had learned to love God and to listen to His voice. So God continued to speak to Samuel, and all of Israel knew that Samuel was God’s spokesman (1 Sam. 3:19-21).

Although there is still much evil in the world, God continues to speak. We may not hear an audible voice, as Samuel did. But we can learn to love God and to listen to His Word. As we listen to Scripture, God will accomplish His purposes in our lives too.

Pre-session Activities

Distribute the new copies of *My Bible Book* and help students read the rebus letter on the inside front cover. Take a moment to leaf through the book, identifying Bible people. Point out that they were people like us, but they wore different kinds of clothes and lived a long time ago.

If you wish, you might have the pages for this week's lesson pulled out ahead of time. (We recommend sending these pages home each week.)

To simplify the distribution of materials, place each student's workbook pages and Kid Crafts project in a manila folder with the child's name on it. You or the students may remove each item from the folders when it is needed.

Have students find *My Bible Book*, page 3. Read the title aloud and let students answer. **In order to unlock the secret for solving this mystery message, you will have to use the answer key. If you listen carefully and do what I say, you will be able to solve the mystery and find the secret message.**

Ask a volunteer to read the alphabet aloud. When he reads one of the code letters, have him stop. Ask the class to repeat the letter. Then tell them which letter to write in the area under that letter. Have another volunteer continue reading the alphabet.

Students should use the completed answer key to find the missing letters in the secret message. Read the message

together. (I am a good listener!)
Lesson 1

Someone in today's Bible



1

Life Need

(5 minutes)

n Objective: That your students will listen carefully to directions.

fully to directions.





2

Bible Learning (15–20 minutes)

n Objective: That your students will learn how God spoke to Samuel and how He speaks to us.

Have your students turn to page 4 of *My Bible Book* (referred to again in Lesson 11). **Each week we will have a page like this that says “My Bible Words” at the top. This page will have the Bible memory verse on it (point to upper right corner) and some of the new words from the Bible Story for you to learn (point to rest of page). It will help us get ready for our Bible Story each week.**

Let’s find out what new words we have this week. Have students look at the top picture as you read the definition of “God’s house.” Then talk about how the tent in this picture is different from your church building. (It could be taken down, moved, and set up again; it was made of poles and cloth instead of bricks or wood.) Explain that God’s people had been traveling for a long time to get to a new land. That’s why God’s house was a tent that could be moved instead of a building.

Have your students pronounce the name “Eli” or “Samuel” with you before you read the definition. After reading each definition, have students point to that person in the bottom picture. Then ask for two volunteers to read the speech balloons.

Now let’s listen to the Bible Story and find out more about Eli, Samuel, and God’s house.

Bible Story

When Samuel was just a little boy, his parents took him to live at God’s house. Samuel lived with Eli and his sons. Eli was the high priest at the temple. As Samuel grew up, he learned to help with many of the chores that needed to be

done at the temple. Samuel learned to love God. Eli’s sons also helped at the temple. But Eli’s sons did not love God or obey Him.

As Eli got older, he began to have trouble seeing. Eli was glad Samuel was there to help him. Whenever Eli needed help, he knew he could call for Samuel, and Samuel would come running to help him.

One night after Samuel had finished all his work, he went in and lay down on his sleeping mat. Samuel had worked hard that day and was very tired. Soon he was sound asleep. Samuel had not been asleep very long when he heard someone calling, “Samuel!”

Eli is calling me, thought Samuel.

He got up and ran to see what Eli wanted. “Here I am, Eli,” he said.

“I didn’t call you,” Eli said. “Go back to bed.” So Samuel went back to bed. But soon the voice called again. “Samuel!”

Eli must need me, thought Samuel, and he ran to Eli again. “Here I am,” said Samuel.

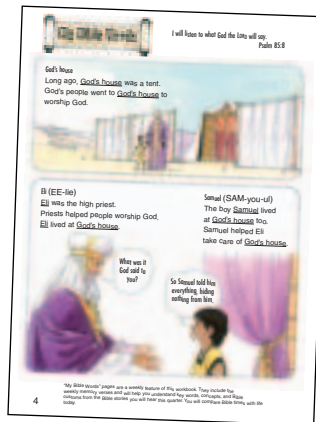
“I did not call you, Samuel,” said Eli. “Go back and lie down.”

Samuel was confused because he was sure someone had called him. But he did not argue with Eli. Samuel went back to bed.

A little later, Samuel again heard a voice calling, “Samuel!”

And once again, Samuel jumped out of bed and ran to Eli. “Here I am,” he said.

“I didn’t call you, Samuel,” said Eli. Then Eli realized that God was calling Samuel. So Eli said, “Go back to bed, Samuel, and if you hear someone call you again, say, ‘Speak, Lord, for I am listening.’ ”



My Bible Book, p. 4

So once more Samuel went back to bed. Soon Samuel heard the voice again calling, "Samuel! Samuel!" But this time Samuel did not run to Eli. Instead he answered just as Eli had told him: "Speak, Lord, for I am listening."

Then God told Samuel about some things that were going to happen. God said that because Eli's sons were so wicked, He was going to punish them. And because Eli had not made his sons obey God's rules, God was going to choose someone else to be in charge of the temple. Samuel listened to what God told him.

In the morning Eli called Samuel. "What did God say to you, Samuel?" he asked.

Samuel was afraid. He did not want to tell Eli what God had said.

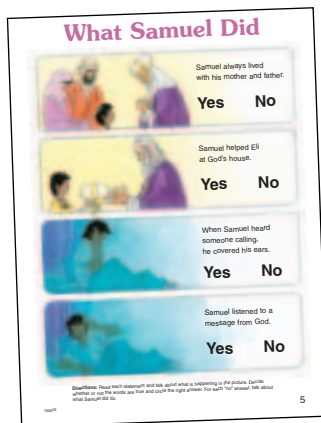
But Eli insisted. "Tell me everything God said. Do not try to hide anything from me."

So Samuel told Eli all that God had said. When Samuel was finished, Eli said, "He is God. He will do what is right."

As Samuel grew up, God was with him. God often talked with Samuel, and Samuel listened carefully. Samuel wanted to obey God, so he did what God told him to do. He became a good worker for God.

parents are bringing him to live with Eli.) Read the sentence and give students a moment to circle one of the answers. Then let a volunteer give the right answer and tell what Samuel did. (No; Samuel lived with his parents only until they took him to God's house to live with Eli.)

Repeat this procedure for the three remaining sentences. Sentence 2: Yes; Samuel is helping Eli with the chores. Sentence 3: No; Samuel did not cover his ears: he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Sentence 4: Yes; Samuel listened to God's message.



My Bible Book, p. 5

Optional Activity

If you have a long class period, let each student act out silently some task Samuel may have done in God's house. The other members of the class may guess what "Samuel" is doing. Here are some ideas: putting oil in the lamps, polishing the lampstands, pulling curtains shut at night, opening them in the morning, sweeping, dusting, etc.

Bible Review

Help students find *My Bible Book*, page 5. Read the title with them. **This page tells us four things about Samuel. We're going to read one sentence at a time. Listen carefully. If the sentence is true, circle "Yes." If it's not true, circle "No."**

Before reading the first sentence, ask your students what they think is happening in the picture. (Samuel's





3

Bible Application

(5 minutes)

n Objective: That your students will understand that in order

Samuel was a good listener, wasn't he? And he did what he was told, didn't he? Do you think being a good listener has anything to do with obeying? Have students turn to page 6 of *My Bible Book*. To discuss the top set of pictures, point to the first picture. Ask for a volunteer to read the speech balloon and to describe what is happening in this picture. (The teacher is reading one of God's rules to the Sunday school class. Some of the children are talking instead of listening.)



My Bible Book, p. 6

Other volunteers could read the speech balloons in the second picture and describe what is happening. Then talk about what directions from God were given, how the directions were given, and who listened to and obeyed the directions.

Have students draw a smiling face in the space by the girl who is obeying her father. Explain that we need to listen to God so that we'll know how to obey Him. To help students remember this, have them draw a line from the obedient girl in the second picture to the girl who is listening to the teacher in the first picture.

Repeat this procedure with the next two sets of pictures.

Now have your students look again at the first picture in each set. Then ask them to name three ways God helps children today hear the things He wants them to know. (Through Sunday school teachers, directly through the Bible, and through parents.)



4

Life Response

(5–15 minutes)

n Objective: That your students will listen to some of God's directions.

It's important to be a good listener, isn't it? But being a good listener takes a lot of practice. We are going to make a special project now that will help you as you listen to God's directions.

Memory Work

Distribute the *Elementary Kid Crafts* project for Lesson 1, Sheets 1 and 2. Help the children remove the border, open the die-cut lines, fold the flaps, and glue the two sheets together in the center according to the printed instructions. Help students tape or staple the flaps at the top and bottom. If you wish, punch holes in the top corners of the calendar and tie on a string hanger.



"Calendar"
Kid Crafts Lesson 1

Once the calendars are assembled, have your students turn to the side that has Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday. Ask a student to read Samuel's speech balloon. **Samuel listened to God. We can too. This week's memory verse will help us remember how important it is to listen. As we practice listening**

to God this week, we can also practice our memory verse.

Use the picture for Sunday to show students how to use their calendars. Let a student describe what is happening in the picture and read the speech balloon. Someone else should read the question on the flap. Before opening the flap to see what God says, have students repeat the memory verse with you. Then open the flap and read God's message.

Show this calendar to your parents and ask them to help you use it once every day. You could use it at mealtimes, at your family prayer time, or at bedtime. You can ask your parents to help you look up each day's verse in the Bible and think about ways you can obey God's directions.

Close with a time of prayer. Have students thank God silently or aloud for His Word, the Bible. Then have them ask God to help them listen carefully, as young Samuel did.

Check to be sure students have their copies of *My Bible Book*, pages 3, 5, and 6 and the *Kid Crafts Calendar* when they leave. Remind the children to leave page 4 of *My Bible Book* in class as it will be referred to again in Lesson 11.