

Message Received: Hearing God's Call

# EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADER GUIDE



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# INTRODUCTION

## God has a message for you! Can you hear it?

Samuel heard it during the middle of the night. Mary heard it through an angel. The disciples were hard at work when they heard it. They all heard God's special message just for them! *Message Received: Hearing God's Call* lets children know that God continues to call all kinds of people—including them! People are called to love God and follow Jesus every day. Those who hear God's message and respond are forever changed.

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### Young children:

- Enjoy repetition and routine,
- Are energetic and need change in activities,
- Have short attention spans,
- Thrive on positive reinforcement, and
- Like to attempt things they know they can do successfully.

The five sessions in the curriculum match the interests and developmental levels of children ages 4–5. You will worship together, learn about God, play games, and sing songs. You will eat snacks, move around, and hear stories about God's remarkable messages.

Allow for flexibility as you set up the area and organize the time. While some children can engage in stories and activities for longer periods of time, others have shorter attention spans and will need to move their active bodies. Wherever possible, provide opportunities for the children to move around between activities. Organize the space to accommodate the different needs and interests of children.

## SCHEDULE

This curriculum has plenty of ideas for a 2-hour-and-15-minute program, but you may do fewer ideas if your program is shorter than two hours. Choose activities best suited for your schedule, space, and the children in your Bible school.

## PLAN AHEAD

Read through this guide and the sessions, including the Bible backgrounds, stories, and activities. Plan what you will do and gather the materials. Open yourself to God's Spirit as you prepare to teach the children. The children will learn and develop through your interactions with them.

## ROOM ARRANGEMENT

Prepare different spaces for activities to allow for movement. If the meeting area is small, however, the same space may be used for all of the activities.

- Include a table so that there is an area for activities, crafts, and snacks.
- Create a story area large enough to accommodate children. Be sure to include a chair for the storyteller and others participating in the stories.
- Have a space devoted to quiet items such as books, puzzles, and coloring sheets. Children may pursue these activities as they finish group activities.
- Have a large space designated to play games and do movements together. Some active ideas are appropriate for the outdoors if there is a suitable area.

# STORYTELLING

Practice the Bible stories before presenting them to the children. Some of the stories require additional adults to help, so be sure to practice with everyone prior to the storytelling time. Gather the storytelling objects and props, which will help you tell the stories as well as keep the children's attention.

Each story has a different format for presentation. Adjust according to your students' attention spans, interests, and abilities to sit still.

Questions are offered to help children think about the story. Choose questions and comments according to your group's interests; you are not expected to ask all of them.

## WORSHIP OPTIONS

While *Message Received* group worship music and dramas are intended for older children, they are also appropriate for this age group. If you choose to attend, you may want to shorten other parts of the session. Talk about the worship experiences and dramas to be sure the children understand them.

## ACTIVITIES

Children are invited to respond to the Bible story through *Message Received* activities that include snacks, crafts, games, and *My Book of Stories* student book activities. Choose activities according to the time and space available. Adapt activities to meet the needs of the leaders, children, and space. Do activities as one large group or in smaller groups. Be sure to have several adults on hand to help. If you choose crafts, create a sample ahead of time so that children can see what they will make.

A storybook list is included with each session so that you may read to the children if there is time. Books have been chosen because they go along with the theme of the day. Choose from the list or find other books that go along with the theme.

## MUSIC

The *Message Received* CD includes music that goes along with each theme. Some songs are especially appropriate for young children and they are mentioned in the session. Play music as children gather in the room, and also for children to sing along with while working on projects or playing.

Along with the songs on the CD, you will want to choose songs that are familiar and easy for the group to learn and sing together. The following are suggestions for leading preschoolers in music:

- **Sing songs from the CD.**
- **Sing other familiar songs.**
- **Listen quietly** to the CD.
- **Incorporate movement** along with music.
- **Have children use rhythm** or other instruments.
- **Chant song lyrics** rather than singing them.

Each session uses original words to the tune of “I Will Make You Fishers of Men.” If you are not familiar with the tune, find a video on the Internet that features the song and play it several times. The lyrics for VBS early childhood are as follows:

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God is calling, listen to God! Listen to God! Listen to God!  
God is calling! Listen to God, calling you and me!

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#### Motions

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God (*sign language for God: Right hand fingers point upward with thumb nearest to your body; raise hand above head and bring down in a line from face to chest. Find an Internet video if you are not familiar with this sign.*)

calling (*cup both hands around your mouth*)

listen (*move both hands around your ears*)

you (*point to others*)

self (*point to self*)

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Each day has new lyrics:

- **Day 1:** Hear the word of God and obey! Hear and obey! Hear and obey!  
Hear the word of God and obey! And may God bless you!
- **Day 2:** Work together, do what is right! Do what is right! Do what is right!  
Work together, do what is right! Pray for courage, too!
- **Day 3:** God loves you so trust in God’s plan! Trust in God’s plan! Trust in God’s plan!  
God loves you so trust in God’s plan! It’s the best for you!
- **Day 4:** I will make you fishers of friends, fishers of friends, fishers of friends!  
I will make you fishers of friends! If you follow me!
- **Day 5:** Open your heart, let Jesus come in! Jesus come in! Jesus come in!  
Open your heart, let Jesus come in! And his love flows out!

## BIBLE MEMORY

The same memory verse will be used each day so that by the end of the week, the children will know the verse.

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Blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it! —Luke 11:28b

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#### Motions

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Blessed are those (*cross arms over chest, giving yourself a hug*)  
who hear (*cup hand behind ear*)

the word of God (*sign language for God: Right hand fingers point upward with thumb nearest to your body, raise hand above head and bring down in a line from face to chest. Find an Internet video if you are not familiar with this sign.*)

and obey it (*step forward and nod head*)!

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# SNACK AND REST TIME

Snack suggestions are included with each session plan and you may use the suggestions or plan your own snack. Be sure to have small plates, napkins, and drinking cups on hand. Provide juice or water for each day. Have several adults help with snack preparation, serving, and clean up.

- **Day 1:** Make snacking sounds! Serve finger foods that are noisy (such as pretzels, crackers, apple slices, baby carrots) and quiet (such as banana slices, finger gelatin, cheese, grapes).
- **Day 2:** Serve opposite foods: salty pretzels and sweet raisins.
- **Day 3:** Serve foods starting with the letter *m*, just as Mary's name does (e.g. muffins, melon, mozzarella cheese, mandarin oranges).
- **Day 4:** Go fishing! Prepare a small snack plate of goldfish crackers for each child (a blue plate will remind children of a lake). Include a small amount of dip (such as peanut butter, cream cheese, cheddar cheese spread, or hazelnut spread) and a few pretzel sticks.
- **Day 5:** Feast on purple foods (such as grapes, crackers with grape jelly, grape Fruit Roll-Ups™, blueberries).

Include a quiet time after the snack for children to rest. Be sure to provide blankets, pillows, or towels for resting on the floor.

## OFFERING PROJECT

We have teamed up with Catholic Relief Services, the international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States, to include an offering project suggestion. You may alternately or in addition choose to promote a project serving your local community, through your parish or local Catholic Charities.

To collect a monetary offering, place a large metal bowl on a table at the door of the worship space. Encourage children to put their offering in the bowl as they enter the space, listening carefully to the sound the money makes as it is dropped in the bowl. Have an adult monitor this area.

### A Message from Catholic Relief Services

As conflict worsens in the Middle East, millions of displaced families need our support. Together with our Caritas partners, Catholic Relief Services is supporting hundreds of thousands of families who have been displaced or forced to flee their homes because of conflicts, civil strife, and economic conditions in the Middle East and other regions.

The war in Syria has entered its sixth year. In Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt, more than 4 million Syrian refugees—mostly women and children—are struggling to get by. At the same time, the economies, social services, and basic infrastructure in these countries are strained to the breaking point. In addition to providing basic services, CRS focuses on education, care, and trauma counseling for Syrian children, many of whom have been out of school for most of their childhoods.

Please pray for the families and children affected by the violence in Syria and Iraq. And please give generously to strengthen our response to the refugee crisis and conflicts in the Middle East.

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Be aware of children with gluten intolerance and nut or other allergies. Have alternative foods on hand if necessary.



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**Good Resources on the Syrian Refugee Crisis:**  
Read and Act

**What We Are Doing:** CRS' Support of Syrian Refugees  
• [CRS.org/media-center/current-issues/syrian-refugee-crisis](https://www.crs.org/media-center/current-issues/syrian-refugee-crisis)

**Syrian Refugees:** Meet the People Everyone's Talking About • [CRS.org/media-center/syrian-refugees-meet-the-people-everyones-talking-about](https://www.crs.org/media-center/syrian-refugees-meet-the-people-everyones-talking-about)

**What Would You Do?**  
**Syrian Refugees:** Starting Up and Starting Over • [CRS.org/stories/syrian-refugees-starting-up-starting-over](https://www.crs.org/stories/syrian-refugees-starting-up-starting-over)

**Helping Syrian Refugees:** By the Numbers • [CRS.org/stories/helping-syrian-refugees-numbers](https://www.crs.org/stories/helping-syrian-refugees-numbers)

## What Can Our Vacation Bible School Do?

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Send donations for the Catholic Relief Services project to:  
Catholic Relief Services  
P.O. Box 17090,  
Baltimore, MD 21297-0303.

Once collected, mail your check or money order with this code in the Memo section: YFYIYFLOWR.

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### Advocacy References for Syrian Refugee Crisis

How Can U.S. Leaders Help  
• [ConfrontGlobalPoverty.org/issues/syrian-migrant-refugees/](http://ConfrontGlobalPoverty.org/issues/syrian-migrant-refugees/)

Write a Letter • [Click here](#) or find link on VBS download page

**1. Pray.** Pray for protection for refugees—particularly those fleeing Northern Africa for Europe—as well as for personal transformation as we face the needs of refugees everywhere. You may choose to use the Prayer for Refugees found here: [CRS.org/resource-center/moment-grace-prayer-refugees](http://CRS.org/resource-center/moment-grace-prayer-refugees).

**2. Provide the Teachers AND Parents with information about the Syrian refugee crisis.** The more you learn about this crisis, the more you'll understand its underlying causes and can spread the word. Continued warfare in Syria, and violence in places like Iraq and Afghanistan, has contributed to the surge of refugees from those countries. Meanwhile, deteriorating economic conditions in places like Sub-Saharan Africa has led people to Europe in search of a better life. (Find links to more information in the sidebar.)

**3. Donate.** One of the best ways to help is through donating to accredited nonprofit organizations that are responding to the crisis. More than 90 percent of money donated to CRS goes directly to people in need. Consider having a “Change for Children” change drive. The change collection will support CRS’ work worldwide to end hunger and poverty. (See donation information in the sidebar.)

**4. Advocate.** For years, countries in the Middle East have been sheltering the largest number of Syrians and Iraqis. CRS is calling on the United States to continue and expand humanitarian assistance to Syrian refugees in these countries, as well as those burdened by this new migration. Most importantly, the United States should lead concerted diplomatic efforts to end the fighting in Syria. But you have a part, too. Read more about how our nation’s leaders can respond to the crisis, and write a letter urging them to take up the cause (see sidebar for details).

**5. Use Social Media.** Follow and retweet @CatholicRelief and @CRSNews on Twitter for the latest updates on the #RefugeeCrisis that’s reached Europe.

### Offering visuals

Plan a visual way to recognize the amount of money contributed for the project. Review the amount each day so children are aware of how much they’re giving.

- **Attach letters of the word CALL to the wall**, each letter representing a specific amount of money. See how many times CALL can be spelled around the room.
- **Invite children to trace their hands** onto various colors of paper, and then cut out their handprint. Attach each hand to a poster board to represent a specific amount of money.
- **Invite children to write the name of a friend or relative** they love that they are grateful is safe on a large piece of paper as they donate.
- **Create a paper chain** with each link representing a certain amount of money.
- **Fill a glass jar** with the offering money.
- **Complete a chart or graph** as money is contributed.

## Day 1

# SAMUEL

### Biblical background

Samuel is a familiar and popular figure in the Old Testament. As a child he serves God in the temple with his mentor, Eli, the priest. As an adult, he serves as a prophet of God to the people of Israel.

Samuel begins his ministry at a young age after experiencing something highly unusual—he actually hears God’s voice calling him. Not surprisingly, Samuel thinks it is Eli who is calling, and goes to see what he wants. Eli, however, realizes that it is God who is calling Samuel’s name.

According to 1 Samuel 3:1, the beginning of this story, “the word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.” Yet God calls and Samuel responds, “Speak, for your servant is listening.” He is willing to take on whatever God has for him, even though it means that he has to tell Eli some difficult news.

God has warned Samuel about the coming downfall of the house of Eli. Samuel is afraid to share the message, but Eli invites him to do so anyway. Eli hears the news with resignation, saying that the Lord should “do what seems good to him.”

Listening and responding to God’s call transforms Samuel’s life. He grows from a young boy who does not fully know God, to a man who becomes known as a trustworthy prophet of the Lord at Shiloh.

Children will be fascinated that someone their own age was given such an important task from God. This can encourage them to think about God’s call in their own lives and to listen for the voice of God as they make decisions.

### Advance preparation

- Supplies
  - Bible
  - Name tags (copy from p. 45)
  - *Message Received* CD and songbook
  - *My Book of Stories* student book (one per child)
  - Objects to go with the Bible story: pillow and blanket
  - Snack (p. 12)
  - Materials for chosen *Message Received* activities (pp. 12–13)
  - Sheets of plain paper, one per child, and crayons
1. Prepare items for snack.
  2. Choose activities from pages 12–13 and gather necessary materials and supplies. Some of the activities require advance preparation.
  3. Practice telling the Bible story on page 9. Find an adult to be Eli (nonspeaking role) and make sure the adult is familiar with the story and knows what to do as it is read. Place the pillow and blanket on the floor to create a bed for Eli on the side of the room opposite the story area.
  4. Practice songs for the session.
  5. Create name tags that can be pinned or taped to children’s shirts, or punch a hole through the name tag and string with yarn to create a necklace.

MESSAGE  
RECEIVED

HEARING GOD'S CALL

### Today’s Bible experience

1 Samuel 3:1-21

### Summary

Samuel, a young person, is called by God and gives a message to Eli. Samuel listens to God and Eli accepts the message.

### Bible memory

Blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it! —Luke 11:28b

### Faith focus

God calls us to listen and respond.

## Group experience

### Gathering

1. **Play the *Message Received* CD** as background music as children arrive. “We Are Children of God,” “Open My Eyes,” and “Send Me” are appropriate songs for this session.
2. **Greet children and welcome them to Bible school.** Give them name tags to wear. Pin or tape name tags to their shirts, or place them around their necks if name tags are strung with yarn.
3. **Invite children to sit at the activity table,** providing a paper and crayons. Children will decorate their paper to look like a pillow, either a favorite pillow at home or one they would like to have. Those who finish may go to a quiet area and look at books or work on puzzles and other activities.
4. **Transition to the Bible story area.** Whisper: *If you can hear me, clap your hands one time.* Pause, then whisper a bit louder: *If you can hear me, clap your hands two times.* You may need to increase the claps until all of the children join in. Point out that children needed to listen so that they can hear you giving them directions to clap.
5. **Pray an opening prayer.** Begin with the sign of the cross, encouraging them to follow your hand motions: *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.* The children respond: “Amen.” Pray: *Dear God, thank you for bringing us all together today to learn about you and how we can love you better. We pray this in Jesus’ name.* Prompt the children to respond: “Amen.”

Then say: *At Bible school, we will talk about how God calls us to listen, follow, and obey what God says. Now, you need to listen to me and follow what I say. Take your paper pillows and go to the Bible story area. Sit on the floor and hold the pillows on your lap.*

6. **Sing together** these words to the tune of “I Will Make You Fishers of Men.” See page 4 for motions.

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God is calling, listen to God! Listen to God! Listen to God!  
God is calling! Listen to God, Calling you and me!

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Sing again, this time using children’s names. Point to children as you sing their names.

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God is calling \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_! \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_! \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_!  
God is calling \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_!  
Calling \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_!

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## Bible story

### 1. Introduce the Bible story.

Say: *Today's story is about a little boy, Samuel, who heard God calling him. He listened to God for a special message.*

### 2. Explain that the children will help act out the part of Samuel. When Samuel is lying in bed, children will hold their paper pillows on their hands and rest their heads on it. In other parts of the story, Samuel gets up and moves. The children will follow quietly wherever you lead. Remind children that they are to be listening, not talking, when acting out the story.

### 3. Bible story: 1 Samuel 3:1-21

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Samuel was a little boy who lived in God's temple (*all the children, as Samuel, wave hello*). He was a special helper to the priest named Eli (*point to Eli*). A priest helped people hear from God. But people had not heard God speak for a long time (*Eli shakes head and shrugs sadly*), and Eli was now a very old man (*Eli walks slowly to his bed to lie down*).

One night, while Samuel was in bed (*children hold pillows in their hands and rest their heads on them*), God called his name: "Samuel! Samuel!" (*everyone look up*). Samuel went to Eli's room (*stand up and walk across room to Eli, children quietly following*). Samuel said, "Here I am, you called me." Eli was confused (*shakes head*). "I did not call you, go back to bed."

Samuel went back to bed (*lead children back to story area, sit, and rest heads on pillows*). As soon as he lay back down, God called again, "Samuel!" Again Samuel got up and went to Eli's room a second time (*lead children back to Eli*). "Here I am Eli, you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call you, Samuel, go back to sleep."

Samuel went back to bed (*lead children back to story area, sit down, rest heads on pillows*).

Then God called Samuel a third time, "Samuel!" Samuel went back to Eli (*lead children back to Eli*).

This time Eli realized that it must be God who was calling Samuel. He told Samuel, "Go back to bed. When God calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'"

Samuel listened to Eli and went back to bed (*lead children back to story area, sit down, rest heads on pillows*). Then God called Samuel again, "Samuel! Samuel!" (*everyone look up*). Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." God gave Samuel an important message to tell Eli. Samuel told Eli God's message, and Eli listened.

As Samuel grew up (*everyone stand up and stretch tall*), he kept listening to God. People trusted what Samuel said because they knew he was a person who heard (*everyone cup hands behind ears*) the word of God and obeyed it (*everyone take a step forward and nod their heads*).

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**Pope Francis** called Samuel's simple words in this bible passage ("Speak Lord, I am listening") as a beautiful way to pray. He said they are especially good words to use when we have doubts, are confused, or have some resistance to the Holy Spirit. He said we shouldn't be afraid when the Holy Spirit surprises us or changes our plans: joy is part of the package! (4/14/2016)

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Children may be curious what it sounds like when God calls us. Share that God may speak to people through an audible voice, such as with Samuel, but that is rare. However, God also speaks to us through the Bible, through words of other people, by giving a sense of peace, by prompting our hearts, through prayer, and in other ways. You may want to share a personal example of how God has spoken to you.

### Respond to the Bible story

- 1. Talk about the Bible story.** Allow space for all children to share ideas and wonder out loud together.
  - How did God call Samuel?
  - God called Samuel by his name. Do you think God knows your name?
  - What do you think you would do if you heard God calling your name out loud?
- 2. Pray.** Explain to the children that it is time to talk with God by praying. Demonstrate that sometimes people pray with their hands folded in front of them, but today you will pray in a special way. Today, everyone will cup their hands around their ears to show that they are listening to God.

Pray: *Dear God, thank you that you know our names. Help us remember to listen carefully, so that we can hear your call and obey it! Amen.*
- 3. Stand in a circle to say the memory verse** (Luke 11:28b). Open the Bible to Luke to show children where the verse comes from. Explain that the Bible is one way that God speaks to us.

Say the verse and demonstrate the motions, then invite children to do them with you.

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Blessed are those (*cross arms over chest, giving yourself a hug*)  
who hear (*cup hand behind ear*)  
the word of God (*sign language for God: Right hand fingers point upward with thumb nearest to your body, raise hand above head and bring down in a line from face to chest*)  
and obey it (*step forward and nod head*)!

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### Message Received activities

- 1. Choose several activities**, including snack, that best suit your group, space, and schedule (pp. 12–13). Be sure to prepare for the activities in advance and gather the necessary supplies. If doing a craft, make a sample before the session so that children can see what it is they are creating.
- 2. When it is time to clean up, chant:**

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Clean up, clean up, one, two, three.  
Clean up, clean up, you and me!

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Demonstrate to children your expectations of putting away supplies and cleaning the work space. Put names on projects. Place all projects to be taken home in a safe place.

## Sending

1. **Gather in the story area and sit in circle.** Sing together the song from the beginning of the session:

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God is calling, listen to God! Listen to God! Listen to God!  
God is calling! Listen to God, Calling you and me!

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Sing again, this time using children's names. Point to children as you sing their names.

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God is calling \_\_\_ and \_\_\_! \_\_\_ and \_\_\_! \_\_\_ and \_\_\_!  
God is calling \_\_\_ and \_\_\_!  
Calling \_\_\_ and \_\_\_!

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2. **Collect name tags** and put them in a safe place so they can be used again for the next session.
3. **Thank children for their good listening** today, and tell them you are excited to see them back at Bible school the next day to learn more about God's call.
4. **Children may play** as they wait to be picked up.

# MESSAGE RECEIVED ACTIVITIES

## Snack

Make snacking sounds! Serve finger foods that are noisy (such as pretzels, crackers, apple slices, baby carrots) and quiet (such as banana slices, finger gelatin, cheese, grapes). Provide juice or water. Listen to the sounds the food makes as it is eaten. Which food is the loudest? Which is the most quiet? Explain that just as we can choose to eat a noisy or quiet snack, we can also choose to fill our lives with noise and distractions that make it hard to hear God, or we can take time to be quiet and listen to God.

## My Book of Stories student book

Open *My Book of Stories* to page 3. Listening for God's call takes practice! Children will circle the pictures that show ways to become better at listening to God, and put an X over pictures that show things that might make it harder to hear God. Children will color and decorate Samuel's pillow on page 2.

## Songs

- "All That God Wants You to Be" (theme song)
- "Calling Us by Name" (theme song)
- "We Are Children of God"
- "Open My Eyes"
- "Send Me"
- Stand and sing another verse to the tune of "I Will Make You Fishers of Men":

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Hear the word of God and obey! Hear and obey!  
Hear the word of God and obey! And may God bless you!

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## Motions

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hear (*cup hands around ears*)  
God (*make sign for God: Right hand fingers point upward with thumb nearest to your body; raise hand above head and bring down in a line from face to chest*)  
obey (*small step forward and nod*)  
bless you (*wrap arms around yourself like a hug*)

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## Books

You may want to read to the children if there is time.

- Blackaby, Tom, and Rick Osborne. *Sammy Experiences God*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2013.\*
- Lester, Helen. *Listen, Buddy: A Story about Learning to Listen*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013.
- Lindahl, Kay. *How Does God Listen?* Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2005.
- Lucado, Max. *God Listens When I Pray*. Max Lucado's Hermie & Friends. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2012.
- Stone, Lynn. *How Do Animals Use Their Ears?* Vero Beach, FL: Rourke Publishing, 2008.
- Zolotow, Charlotte. *If You Listen*. Philadelphia, PA: Running Press, 2002.

\* *Sammy Experiences God* is about a boy who realizes that he is always a part of God's adventure, even if God doesn't talk to him in the same ways as to characters in the Bible. It is a longer book and parts can be read each day of Bible school.

## Crafts

### 1. All Ears for God

In preparation, cut out a headband and two large ears for each child (see template on page 47). Show children pictures of animals with large ears. What do they notice about the ears? Why are the ears so large? Animals with large ears might seem like they are too big for their body. They look like they are all ears! But sometimes people use the expression “I’m all ears” to mean that they are ready to listen carefully.

Show the sample craft item of rabbit ears attached to a headband. Explain that the rabbit ears will remind us that we should always listen carefully for God’s call.

Give each child two ears and one headband.

Demonstrate how to use a glue stick to glue the ears to the headband. After ears are attached to the band, use the glue stick directly on the ears. Press cotton balls onto the glue on the ears. An adult will staple the ends together to make a headband.

**Materials:** pre-cut headband and ears, pictures of animals with large ears (rabbit, fox, donkey, and others), glue sticks, small cotton balls, stapler

### 2. Samuel Sketches

In preparation, find a suitable sidewalk or parking lot with space for each child to draw. Invite them to use sidewalk chalk and draw pictures of today’s story. You may want to talk about ideas such as: Samuel sitting up in bed, Samuel running to Eli, Eli looking surprised. Children may use the pictures to help retell the story.

**Materials:** sidewalk chalk

## Activities

### 1. Samuel Says (Simon Says)

Invite children to stand in a circle, or randomly throughout the room. As leader, tell the children to do different motions or activities, beginning the command with “Samuel says . . .” Or, simply tell the children a motion without preceding it with “Samuel says . . .” Alternate the two commands so that children have to listen carefully. The actions can be things such as: put your hand on your head, stand on one foot, take one baby step, sit on your hands, etc. Tell the children to follow the movement when they hear “Samuel says . . .” at the beginning, but to not follow when “Samuel says . . .” is not at the beginning. Children can continue playing the entire time, whether they follow the directions correctly or not.

### 2. Hear and Obey Game

All children begin on one side of the playing area, with an adult leader on the opposite side. The leader will call out one or several children’s names. The children will respond, “I’m listening!” The leader will then give a direction such as “Take one step” or “Hop two times like a bunny.” The children whose names were called will follow the directions. The leader needs to give equal opportunities for children to hear and obey. The goal is for each child to reach the leader.

### 3. Name Game

Demonstrate to the children how to squat. As children squat, an adult leader will call out a name or characteristic. When the name or characteristic of a child is called, the child(ren) will jump up. The children then return to a squatting position to wait and hear the next item called out. Options include: names (make sure that everyone’s name is called one time), those who like macaroni and cheese, those with curly hair, those wearing red, those who are four years old, those who are five years old, those who have a pet dog, those who have a pet fish, etc.