# THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY

**CHILDREN’S MEETING LESSON**

**DATE:** June 11, 2017

**SUBJECT: GOD’S CALLING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: God Called Samuel**

**SCRIPTURE:** 1 Samuel 1:1-28; 2:11, 12-36; 3:1-21; 7:3-17; 1 Chronicles 6:33-38

**AIM:** God wants all of His called ones to receive His word, know Him and speak for Him.

**MEMORY VERSES TO CHOOSE FROM:** 1 Samuel 3:10b (…And Samuel said, Speak, for Your servant is listening.); 1 Timothy 4:12 (Let no one despise your youth, but be a pattern to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.); Ephesians 6:1 (Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.); 2 Timothy 3:15 (And that from a babe you have known the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus.)

**SONG SUGGESTIONS:** 7 (I Am a Very Special Child); 177 (Samuel); 9202 *BSS David*, Song 2 (Hannah No Children Had); 9204 *BSS David*, Song 4 (Honor, Honor); 9535 *BSS Vessels Unto Honor*, Song 15 (The Lord Called Unto Samuel); 9219 *BSS David*, Song 19 (I'd Like to Honor You)

**CRAFT IDEAS:** (1) Make a pair of “listening ears” with paper ears attached to paper headband. (2) Connect cups with string to make “phones” for listening. **Activity idea:** Play a listening game like “Telephone” or “Simon says.”

**CONTENT:** There was a man named Elkanah in the land of Ephraim. He had two wives; one was named Hannah and the other was Peninnah. Peninnah had children but Hannah did not, for Jehovah had closed her womb.

Elkanah and his family traveled every year to worship and sacrifice to Jehovah in Shiloh. There Peninnah always would provoke Hannah to irritate her because she had no children. Year by year she provoked Hannah this way. Hannah would weep and she would not eat. One year, after the eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah rose up. She was bitter in soul and prayed to Jehovah and wept much. She made a vow and told Jehovah that if He would give her a son, she would give him to Jehovah all the days of his life to serve Him. No razor would come upon his head; he would be a Nazarite to Jehovah. (A Nazarite is someone who was voluntarily consecrated and set apart to Jehovah.) Hannah prayed a long time before Jehovah. She spoke in her heart, moving only her lips but making no sound. Eli the priest, watching her, thought she was drunk and rebuked her. Hannah explained to him that she had been praying. Eli said, “…May the God of Israel grant your request…”

In due time, Jehovah answered Hannah’s prayer and she bore a son and named him Samuel (meaning “heard of God” or “asked for of God”), because she had asked Jehovah for him. Hannah kept Samuel at home until she had weaned him. Then, keeping her promise to Jehovah, she brought him to Jehovah’s house to Eli. She said to him, “…I am the woman who stood here by you, praying to Jehovah. It was for this child that I prayed, and Jehovah has granted me my request that I requested from Him. Therefore I, for my part, have lent him to Jehovah; all the days that he lives, he is lent to Jehovah.” So Samuel stayed in the house of Jehovah in Shiloh under the care and training of the priest Eli.

Eli’s two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of Jehovah but were worthless men; they did not know Jehovah. They abused the rights of the priesthood by forcefully taking the meat from the people’s offerings for themselves. They despised the offering of Jehovah and committed great sins against the Lord. They had no respect for the Lord and did many other evil things. At this time Eli was very old. He heard of all that his sons did and asked them why they were doing such things. He told them that it was a serious thing to sin against Jehovah. But Eli’s sons would not listen to their father. Meanwhile, in contrast to these evil men, the boy Samuel ministered before Jehovah. Samuel grew up in the house of Jehovah; he was in favor with both Jehovah and men.

One day a man of God came to Eli to warn him of Jehovah’s upcoming judgment on his house. As descendants of Aaron, Eli and his house had the privilege to serve as priests to God. Now because of terrible sins of Eli’s sons, they had degraded the priesthood to such an extent that Jehovah wanted to kill them. The man of God told Eli that in one day, both of his sons would die. He also told him that Jehovah would raise up for Himself a faithful priest who would do according to what was in His heart and His mind.

The boy Samuel ministered to Jehovah before Eli. Now the word of Jehovah was rare in those days; not everyone was able to hear and understand Jehovah’s speaking. But one night, Samuel lay in the temple of Jehovah where the Ark of God was. Then Samuel heard someone calling him, and he obediently responded, “Here I am.” Samuel thought it was Eli so he ran to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But Eli told him that he had not called him and instructed him to go back to sleep. This happened three times, and finally Eli realized that it was Jehovah Himself who was speaking to Samuel! So he instructed Samuel, “Go and lie down, and if He calls you, you shall say, Speak, O Jehovah; for Your servant is listening” (1 Sam. 3:9). So Samuel went and lay down in his place. Jehovah came and stood by and called Samuel as the other times. This time Samuel did not run to Eli. He answered Jehovah as Eli had instructed him. Jehovah then told Samuel what was on His heart concerning the house of Eli.

After Jehovah had spoken to him, Samuel lay down until the morning when he opened the doors of the house of Jehovah. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli, because of the things that would happen. But when Eli pressed him, Samuel told him everything and did not hide anything from him. Eli said, “He is Jehovah; let Him do what is good in His sight.” (Later God fulfilled His word of judgment upon the house of Eli and they lost the priesthood.)

So Samuel grew and Jehovah was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. All Israel knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of Jehovah. Jehovah continued to appear in Shiloh, for He revealed Himself to Samuel there by speaking to Samuel. Samuel became a priest, a prophet and a judge: he prayed for God’s people, he spoke the word of God and he represented God by judging Israel all the days of his life (1 Sam. 7:3-17).

**SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM:** *Please pray and fellowship over which applications to cover for your group of children. Please do not try to cover all the applications; one or two applications is sufficient.*

* **Samuel was faithful.** As a young boy, under Eli, Samuel learned to take care of the Lord’s need. He had to be trained and take instructions in things big and small, and he took care of his responsibilities faithfully. For example, the Bible tells us he opened the doors of the house of Jehovah. While we are young, we all can learn to minister to the Lord. We can help tidy up the children’s meeting rooms, help set up chairs, help serve snack, etc. In contrast, Eli’s sons did not take care of their priestly duties properly and suffered judgment as a result.
* **Samuel was obedient.** He learned to obey both Eli and the Lord. Each time Eli called him, he came right away. When our parents or teachers call us, do we come right away? Or do we keep on playing with our toys?
* **Samuel was truthful.** Although he was afraid to tell the vision to Eli, the Bible tells us Samuel told Eli everything and did not hide anything from Eli.
* **Samuel was a good listener and learned to know God’s speaking.** Samuel listened carefully to Eli and to God. Because Samuel listened attentively to Eli, he learned (with Eli’s help) to recognize when God was speaking to him. In contrast, Eli’s sons would not listen to the voice of their father. They despised their privilege to serve God, did not take care of their duties properly, and eventually lost their lives.
* **Samuel became a priest, a prophet and a judge:**

1. Priests enjoy the privilege of praying. We can pray too and enjoy having our prayers heard and answered! We should never be loose or joke around when we pray. Whenever we or others pray, we should always pray with a sincere heart, and honor and respect the Lord. Ask the children: what are some ways they can show respect? Keeping our hands to ourselves, not talking to others while someone is praying, closing our eyes so we do not get distracted, listening to what others are praying, etc.

2. Prophets speak for the Lord. We also have the privilege of telling others about the Lord Jesus. For this, like Samuel, we need to know God’s Word. We should read the Bible every day and memorize our verses diligently week by week. We should not despise the Word of God in any way or handle the Word loosely. We should take care of our Bibles and be careful that the pages don’t get dirty and torn, and we should not misplace our Bibles and leave them lying around in a careless way.

3. As a judge, Samuel represented God. When people around us see us, they should see something of God. We can represent the Lord to those around us even through our regular habits—in our speaking, in our attitude, even in our dress. Especially in the children’s meeting, instead of dressing in a sloppy way (e.g. wrinkled or dirty clothing, messy hair, etc.), we should show our respect and reverence to the Lord by dressing neatly and properly, the way we would to meet an important person.

Adapted from the Church in New York City’s Children’s Meeting lessons: 6/ 26/94; 6/25/00; 7/2/06; 6/24/12