

Rotation 3, 2007 - 2008
God Calls Samuel for a New Day
3 weeks – October 28, November 4, 11, 2007

Yearly Theme: Faith in Christ for a New Day

Transitioning into a new day can be confusing – people question which leaders and which direction they should follow. As the people of Israel settled into the Promised Land, they often chose to adopt the attractive pagan practices of their new neighbors. When that happened God allowed them to be conquered by the Canaanites. Periodically, political and military leaders, called judges led the people back to Yahweh. But the situation ended in chaos. The book of Judges concludes with these words, “In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.” In the Lord’s own sanctuary, the high priest’s sons acted with greed, spurned justice, and practiced the sexual rituals of the Canaanite fertility religion. But God’s grace was in motion providing a new leader who had a heart for God. This person was a child – Samuel – who grew up to lead God’s people in justice and obedience. Samuel led God’s people into a new day - a 500 year era of monarchy. Samuel served the Lord, listened to God’s voice, and obeyed God’s word.

Scripture References: I Samuel 1-10

Memory Verse: “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.” I Samuel 3:9
Hannah prayed: “No one is holy like the Lord!
There is no one besides you;
There is no Rock like our God.” I Samuel 2:2

Learning Goals: The children will learn:

1. Samuel’s mother, Hannah, was childless and prayed from the depth of her soul for a child. God answered her prayer with the child Samuel, who Hannah dedicated to God’s service.
2. Hannah prayed a song of thanksgiving to God for giving her a son. Mary, Jesus’ mother, prayed the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) which is very similar to Hannah’s song.
3. Samuel was a boy who God literally called to be a prophet to God’s people, bring justice and lead the people to follow God.
4. Samuel heard God calling his name, listened and obeyed.
5. The high priest, Eli, failed to teach or correct his sons, so they cared nothing for God, acted unjustly, and brought worship of other gods into God’s tabernacle.
6. Eli’s sons thought God was a kind of magic that protected them and gave them what they wanted. They thought they could use God for their own purposes.
7. When God’s Ark of the Covenant was captured by Israel’s enemies and placed into a pagan temple, God showed his power so that everyone knew that Yahweh was God of all!
8. Samuel was the prophet who anointed Israel’s first and second kings – Saul and David.

Life Application:

1. God listens to the cries of our hearts and answers our prayers.
2. It is good to praise and give thanks to God for who God is and what God does for us.
3. God calls even children to be his messengers and servants!
4. God gives his followers words of encouragement and reprimand, and we must listen and obey both the pleasant and difficult words.
5. God speaks to us today through the words of the Bible, which the Holy Spirit makes alive in our hearts.
6. God wants both children and adults to listen for his voice and obey his word.
7. God gives parents the important responsibility to teach and correct their children so that they know and love and follow God. God commands children to respect and obey their parents.
8. Jesus is the great anointed King of all people, who loves us and died to bring us into his kingdom. Jesus is my King!

Rotation Overview:

Music/Art (Room 7): Musical Instruments - children play hand bells as musical accompaniment to the story

Movie (Youth Room): NEST Video: Samuel – an animated portrayal of Samuel's life

Games (Gym): Games; Relay Races

Craft (Room 4 & Patio Room): Prayer Pillow – children study Hannah's prayer and Samuel listening for God's voice and tie a polar fleece prayer pillow

Drama (Room 6 & 5): Dramatization of Hannah and Samuel – children dramatize the stories of Hannah, Eli, Samuel, and the Ark of the Covenant

Background:

Joshua (from our last rotation) lived to be 110 years old, and during his lifetime the people of Israel moved into the Promised Land of Canaan. The people of Israel served God as long as Joshua lived and they remembered what God had done for them. But after Joshua's death, they abandoned God and worshiped the gods of the people of Canaan. God was angry and allowed the Israelites to be conquered by their enemies. When the people suffered, they prayed to God, who heard their distress and raised a judge, or political leader to fight for them. Judges like Deborah, Gideon, and Samson delivered them from their enemies. This happened time and again over 150 years. Finally the people cried out for a king (about 1050 BC), so that they might be like the other nations. At this time God raised the final judge and great prophet, Samuel, to lead God's people into a new era of monarchy.

I Samuel begins with the birth story of Samuel. It is the story of a pious man named Elkanah and his family. Elkanah had two wives, Peninnah with many children and Hannah with none. Elkanah loved Hannah but the second wife taunted Hannah about her childlessness, so that she lost her appetite and cried in misery. Not only was Hannah lonely without children, but at that time childlessness was looked upon as a punishment for an unworthy life and took away any social standing. The family made their yearly journey to Shiloh, the home of the Lord's tabernacle; Hannah went to the Lord's house and cried to God from the bottom of her heart. She cried in anguish, silently mouthing the words of her heart to God. She made a vow that if God would give her a son, she would give the boy back to the Lord for a lifetime of service. Eli, the high priest, saw the woman who swayed with emotion but said no words, and jumped to the conclusion that she was drunk. Hannah courteously told Eli that she was not drunk but praying out of great sorrow. Eli then blessed Hannah saying "May the God of Israel grant the request you have asked of him." Hannah was filled with peace, her sadness disappeared, and she was confident that the Lord would fulfill her prayer.

The Lord remembered Hannah and gave her a son, who she named Samuel. And Hannah also remembered her vow. She raised Samuel until he was weaned, usually about 3 years of age, and then brought the child to Eli the high priest, to be a lifelong servant of God. Hannah then prayed a beautiful song, sometimes called the "Magnificat of the Old Testament." Hannah does not dote on the lovely child she had received, but rather lifts up God as the Rock who rescues his people, brings down the proud and arrogant, and raises up the poor and needy. Hannah speaks of the "anointed one" who is the messiah, a prophecy which Jesus fulfilled. Hannah's song of praise is very similar to Mary's Magnificat, which Mary sang after visiting Elisabeth (Luke 1:46-55). It is possible that Mary knew the Scripture of Hannah's song and patterned her own words of praise after Hannah's words. Both were humble women who experienced the miracle of God in their lives, and witnessed to his mighty arm that brings down the proud and lifts up the humble.

In contrast to the pious family of Elkanah and Hannah, I Samuel portrays the family of Eli, the high priest. Eli's sons were scoundrels who took what they wanted from the sacrifices made to God. They also brought the pagan practices of temple prostitutes to the Lord's tabernacle. Eli was aware of the disgrace happening in the Lord's tent, but only reprimanded his sons and did not stop them. God sent a man to warn Eli of his failure as a parent; Eli held his own sons up higher than God. God's judgment was coming; Eli's family would not remain priests and both his sons would die on the same day.

Meanwhile, Samuel was serving Eli in the tabernacle. Scripture says at that time messages and visions from God were uncommon. But this was about to change. The young boy Samuel was sleeping when he heard a voice call out, "Samuel." Thinking it was the blind Eli who needed help, he ran to Eli's side. Eli replied it was not him who called. Three times this happened, and by the third time, Eli realized it was God calling Samuel. Eli instructed Samuel to respond "Speak Lord, for your servant is listening." Samuel answered God, who gave him the first message to deliver – a painful rejection of Eli. Samuel was afraid to deliver God's message, but did as God commanded. It was the beginning of a lifetime of Samuel's faithful service to God. I Samuel says that everyone in the length and breadth of Israel knew that God was with Samuel, that he was God's prophet, and that God gave messages to Samuel for all the people.

At this point I Samuel shifts its focus to the war between Israel and the Philistines. The Philistines were mighty and defeated the Israelites. The elders of the people then had what they thought a great idea – they would bring the Ark of the Covenant with them in battle to guarantee their victory. Eli's sons brought the Ark to the battlefield, but the Philistines defeated the Israelites again and captured the Ark. Eli's two sons were also killed in battle. When Eli was given the news that his sons were dead and the Ark was captured, Eli fell backwards, broke his neck, and died.

The Philistines thought they had captured Israel's god, so they brought the Ark of the Covenant into the temple of Dagon, their god, and set it before an idol of Dagon. The next morning the idol of Dagon had fallen face forward on the ground before the Ark. They put the idol back in place. But the next morning the same thing happened, and the idol's head and hands had broken off and were lying in the floor. Then a plague broke out in the city, which the people attributed to the Ark. The Ark was moved to another city, where the plague followed. After 7 months, the Philistines decided to send the Ark back where it came from. They loaded the Ark on a cart pulled by cows that had just given birth to calves. The cows left their calves behind and marched to Israel. The people of Israel were overjoyed to have the Ark returned! Then Samuel spoke to the people saying that they must put away all their foreign gods and worship only God. The people did so, and then Samuel gathered them at Mizpah to ask for God's forgiveness. The Philistines thought the Israelites were mobilizing for war, so went out to meet them. But when they heard the thunderous voice of God, they ran in terror and Israel defeated them. Then Samuel raised a large stone and called it "Ebenezer" which means, "up to this point the Lord has helped us." (The familiar hymn "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" includes this verse, "Here I raise my Ebenezer, hither by thy help I've come.")

Samuel continued as God's faithful leader for the rest of his life. But great changes were coming. As Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons to take his place. But, just like Eli, Samuel's sons were also greedy and unjust. So the people of Israel demanded that God give

them a king. The request angered Samuel and also God, who was Israel's true King. But God agreed, and Samuel was sent to anoint Saul the first king of Israel. Saul ruled Israel for about 40 years, but after the 25th year, Samuel anointed David the next king of Israel. Samuel died before David took the throne. Throughout Saul's reign, Samuel reminded him that Israel was a covenant people and even a monarch was subject to God. A king was only the instrument of God's rule, and God's people must always recognize God as their ultimate King. Throughout Samuel's life, God spoke and Samuel listened; Samuel faithfully delivered God's words of hope and judgment to people living in a new time.

The stories of Samuel give us much to meditate on. Samuel's life was surrounded by prayer, even before he was born. Samuel needed to recognize and listen to God's voice. Listening also required that Samuel obey God's message. In contrast to Samuel's family, we learn from Eli's family that we dare not take the most important things for granted - a believer's children do not necessarily grow up to know and love the Lord. Parents have a God-given responsibility to teach and correct their children. We also watch the Israelites treat God as their magic luck trinket, and realize that God is bigger and more powerful than we dare imagine. God is the God of the universe, and we are blessed to be called his children through the love of our King and dear Savior, Jesus. Earthly kings are sinful, using and abusing people. But we have a King who is loving and gracious and willing to die for his people. Our king is a King of peace. We live for a King that brings light and life to all who follow him!

Multiple Intelligence Check List

	Verbal/ Ling	Logic/ Math	Spatial/ Visual	Bodily/kin	Musical	Interpersl	Intrapersl	Natur- alist
Craft	x	x	x	x		x	x	
Video	x				x		x	
Games	x	x	x	x		x		
Musical Instr.		x		x	x		x	
Drama	x	x	x	x		x		

Rotation 3, 2007-8: God calls Samuel for a New Day

Workshop	Oct. 28	Nov. 4	Nov. 11
Room 7 – Craft	5	4	3
Youth Room - Video	2	3	5
Gym – Games/Worship Class/Nov. 11-Rooms 3 & 4 -Craft	4	1	2 (Room 3 & 4)
Patio Room – Musical Instruments	3	5	1
Room 6 & 5 – Drama	1	2	4

NOTE: Worship Class in Gym on Nov. 4

Sounds Like Love in Gym on Nov. 11

Nov. 11 Gym lesson becomes Craft in Rooms 3 and 4