

Quarter 3

# two or more™

Small Church Curriculum for Kids™

LEADER GUIDE



**All Kids Together** Ages 3-12



Small Church Curriculum for Kids™

**Leader Guide**  
All Kids Together



Group resources really work!

This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's:

Relational	Experiential	Applicable	Lifelong
Person-to-person interaction enhances spiritual growth and builds Christian friendships.	What we experience through action and discussion sticks with us up to 9 times longer than what we simply hear or read.	The aim of ministry is to equip people to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.	Experiences transform the heart, moving faith beyond the walls of church and into everyday life for years to come.

Two or More™

Small Church Curriculum for Kids™

All Kids Together

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1                      28 27 26 25

# Contents

## Quarter 3

### WELCOME

Intro	<b>Welcome to Two or More.....</b>	<b>4</b>
-------	------------------------------------	----------

### THEME: God's Calling

Lesson 1	<b>God Speaks to Samuel .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Lesson 2	<b>An Idol Bows to God's Ark .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Lesson 3	<b>David Values Saul's Life .....</b>	<b>31</b>
Lesson 4	<b>David Celebrates.....</b>	<b>43</b>

### THEME: Who Is This Man?

Lesson 5	<b>Jesus Eases John's Doubt .....</b>	<b>55</b>
Lesson 6	<b>Parable of the Farmer and the Seed .....</b>	<b>67</b>
Lesson 7	<b>Jesus Describes His True Family .....</b>	<b>79</b>
Lesson 8	<b>Jesus Calms the Storm.....</b>	<b>91</b>

### THEME: Building the Church

Lesson 9	<b>Jesus Instructs His Followers.....</b>	<b>103</b>
Lesson 10	<b>The Church Is Born .....</b>	<b>115</b>
Lesson 11	<b>The Church Builds Community.....</b>	<b>127</b>
Lesson 12	<b>The Church Reaches Out.....</b>	<b>139</b>
Lesson 13	<b>The Church Meets Opposition.....</b>	<b>151</b>



We're Spot and Dot, and we're going to help you as you lead kids through these Bible lessons.



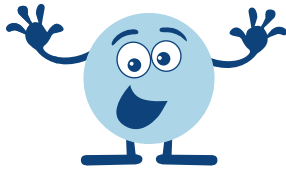
Is Christmas or Easter coming up? You can access your free digital holiday lessons in the Digital Download Center. If you want a printed copy, order one online at [group.com](http://group.com)



# Welcome

## WELCOME TO TWO OR MORE

The children's curriculum specially designed for small churches!



### Small Churches Rock!

We see you, small churches. And we love you!

For too long, you've had to adapt curriculums that are geared for big groups of kids or that felt like big productions—when you have totally different needs and strengths.

And that's why we created Two or More—to help you shine!

With Two or More, you can rest assured that every lesson is designed just for you. Every lesson will...

- be simply laid out and easy to follow—easy to glance at quickly to maintain eye contact with kids
- be geared for smaller, mixed-age groups of kids
- help you capitalize on your greatest strength: your ability to foster relationships

...all while helping kids know Jesus and build lifelong faith!

Here's a fact: One of the greatest emotional needs kids have is to feel *seen*, *known*, and *loved*. To have that sense of “I belong here” and “people would notice if I weren't here.”

Those needs can be hard for big churches to fill. It takes a lot of intentionality for big churches to create small groups and make every child feel like he or she has a place.

But for you? That's your greatest strength! When you have only a few kids, you can't help but connect with them! Every child who comes into your church is seen, known, and loved.

Maybe you've thought that unless you grow in number, your efforts are of limited value—like teaching only a few kids isn't really making a big impact. But consider this: Jesus loved small. Sure, he taught big crowds. But he really invested his time in a relationship with 12 followers. And even among them, he had three he mentored even more closely.

When a boy brought Jesus a small offering of fish and bread, Jesus made it work. When Jesus saw a mustard seed, he said *that's* what faith should be like. When one sheep went missing, he noticed—and cared a lot.

Jesus can do a lot with small.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

You may be wondering...can I really teach effectively when I have 3-year-olds and 12-year-olds in the same class?

Yes!

Two or More ensures that every lesson will be impactful to a child of any age.

Here are the ingredients of our secret sauce to ensure kids across age ranges are impacted:

- **Mentoring.** Older kids help younger kids, giving older kids a leadership role and responsibility.
- **Adaptability.** We've provided tips if you need to skew for a mostly younger or mostly older group.
- **Movement.** Because kids are moving, they're engaged—and kids of all ages need to move.
- **Authenticity.** You'll find thought-provoking, personal questions that don't ask kids to recite facts or knowledge.
- **Simplicity.** Kids learn *one* easy-to-remember Bible point each week.
- **YOU.** Because you're there, loving every one of them, kids will walk away feeling seen, known, and loved.

Plus, you'll find that while each quarter of Two or More includes bite-size themes, you'll work through the Bible, both Old and New Testament, every year! This approach helps you give a strategic, thoughtful faith foundation to kids in your ministry.

We've curated the most small-church-friendly parts of Dig In curriculum, adapted it just for you, and designed it in a glanceable layout that you're sure to love.

## TWO OR MORE LESSONS

So, what can you expect as you dive into Two or More?

### Check In

This section was designed to really hone in on the small church's ability to see and know kids. Each week, there's a general question about how kids are doing—a chance for them to share openly. And because you only have a few kids, there's time for *everyone* to share.



## Set the Stage

To set the stage, you'll ask a more fun, imaginative question that helps kids gear up for the day's Bible point or story.

## Experience the Bible

Kids won't sit passively and listen to you tell a Bible story. The Bible comes to life in an experiential way! With simple, effective experiences, kids get to unpack what happened in the Bible...and why that matters today.

## Hands-On Discovery

We surveyed small churches and found that most of you *love* to do crafts or science experiments. In Hands-On Discovery, kids get their hands busy and make exciting crafts or see how science can point us to God. But these crafts and object lessons aren't merely busy work—they're intentional experiences geared toward discovery and life application.

## Play a Game

Yes, you can play games! Even with mixed ages. Even with only two kids. You'll never see a game in Two or More that requires you to break into teams...because we know your small group may *be* a team! But we also know that kids love to play *with you*. So, no matter how many kids you have, join in the fun to help build relationships! Plus, every game wraps up with questions that help kids make a connection to the Bible point.

## Activity Pages With a Purpose

Coloring sheets and puzzles are nothing new in children's ministry. But *these* puzzles are! That's because these aren't time-fillers to set out and keep kids quiet. Each puzzle is an experience that...you guessed it...leads to discovery. And because you have mixed ages, you'll find a puzzle option and a coloring option that appeals to whatever skill level kids have.

## Pray Together

Of course, prayer is important! And this section models that by helping kids get involved in praying, rather than simply hearing their teacher pray. With your smaller group, it's a great chance to give *every child* a turn to pray.

## BONUS: Explore More

We know that some churches are pressed for time, and may not even be able to use all the experiences above! But we also know that sometimes, you have more than an hour to teach, and we want to make sure every moment counts. Your time with kids is limited and precious, so don't rely on disconnected games and activities to "fill time." Instead, use this intentional experience that furthers kids' exploration of the Bible point.

## BONUS: Sing Together

We know that some small churches have kids in "big church" for worship, and others don't. So if you need to incorporate worship music in your lesson, we've got you covered with all-included downloadable music videos and audio tracks in the Digital Download Center. Need a DVD? The Best of Dig In DVD, available at [group.com](http://group.com), has all the same great songs you'll find online!

Don't feel like you have to do *all* the options. With Two or More's one-point learning, you're guaranteed to cover the point of the lesson, no matter how far you get!



# God Speaks to Samuel

1 Samuel 3

Lesson

1



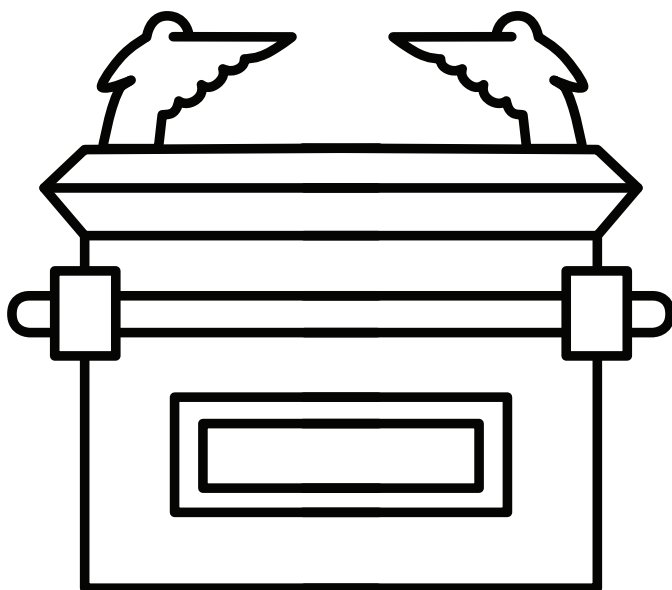
## Teacher Background

**What Happens:** Samuel is a young boy who lives in the Tabernacle. One night, he wakes up to someone calling his name. He thinks it's Eli, the priest, but it's not. The third time Samuel hears his name, Eli realizes it's God. Samuel listens to God's message and passes it along. God speaks, so we listen for him.

**Why It Matters:** Kids have busier schedules than ever. Without a break in their activities, it can be hard for kids to have room to listen for God. Use this lesson to encourage kids to pause for at least a few minutes each day, allowing space for God to speak.

**Think About:** Have you ever felt like God was speaking to you? How did you respond?

**Pray** that your kids will hear God speaking to them.



### Point

God speaks.



### Key Verse

"So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows."

Matthew 10:31

### QUICK TIP

Two or More has built-in discussion that gives kids a chance to speak *and* listen! With a smaller group, there should be time for *everyone* to share. What a great chance to build community! Listen well and without judgment, and don't pressure kids to share if they don't feel comfortable.

# This Lesson at a Glance



WHAT HAPPENS	KIDS DISCOVER
<b>CHECK IN</b> Connect about the week.	The importance of friendships at church.
<b>SET THE STAGE</b> Share about a topic related to the lesson.	The connection between their world and the Bible.
<b>EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE</b> Play a listening game to learn how Samuel listened.	That Samuel heard from God.
<b>HANDS-ON DISCOVERY</b> Make and listen to simple stringed instruments.	How God speaks in different ways.
<b>PLAY A GAME</b> Listen to changing directions despite distractions.	How to tune out distractions and listen to God.
<b>ACTIVITY PAGES WITH A PURPOSE</b> Do a word search.	How God speaks through the Bible.
<b>PRAY TOGETHER</b> Think with and listen for God.	That God wants to think with us.

<b>BONUS OPTIONS</b>	<b>EXPLORE MORE</b> Listen for the leader's voice.	How to listen more carefully.
	<b>SING TOGETHER</b> Sing worship songs together.	How to celebrate God.

	MINUTES	EASY SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
	5		
	5		
	10	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible	
	10	<input type="checkbox"/> cereal or tissue boxes (1 per child) <input type="checkbox"/> rubber bands (1 per child) <input type="checkbox"/> markers (2 per child)	
	10	<input type="checkbox"/> sheets of construction paper in 4 different colors (10 of each, plus 1-2 sheets per color per child) <input type="checkbox"/> painter's tape <input type="checkbox"/> upbeat music <input type="checkbox"/> music player	<input type="checkbox"/> Ball up the sheets of paper. <input type="checkbox"/> Use tape lines to split your room in half.
	10	<input type="checkbox"/> "God Speaks to Samuel" Activity Page (page 15) <input type="checkbox"/> pencils	
	5		

	10	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible	
	10	<input type="checkbox"/> worship music <input type="checkbox"/> media player	<input type="checkbox"/> Download songs from the Digital Download Center.



## CHECK IN (5 MINUTES)

- Thank kids for coming and have kids double high-five a friend.
- Make announcements and collect offering.
- Celebrate any birthdays by having kids say, “Three cheers for our birthday friends! Hip, hip, hooray! Hip, hip, hooray! Hip, hip, hooray! It’s your birthday!”

**ASK:** What do you want to tell everyone today? Share your own quick story first, and then let everyone share! For groups of more than six, have kids share in pairs so everyone has a turn to talk.



## SET THE STAGE (5 MINUTES)

**SAY:** Today we’re going to learn that ➡ **God speaks**, so we listen for him! We hear noises all the time without even thinking about it. Let’s think about sounds we’d enjoy hearing.

**ASK:** Tell about a sound you’d want to play on a sound machine to help you sleep. Share your own quick story first, and then let everyone share!

**SAY:** We talked about sounds that would help us sleep. In the Bible, a boy named Samuel heard a sound while he was already sleeping. It was God!



## EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE (10 MINUTES)



### SUPPLIES

- Bible

### DISCUSS

**ASK:** Since our story is about Samuel sleeping, I’d like you to tell about what color your bedroom is. Share your own quick answer first, and then let everyone share!

**SAY:** We don’t know what color Samuel’s bedroom was in the Bible. We do know he was 12 years old and he lived in the Tabernacle—a special tent that was God’s house. It was kind of like a church today! Samuel helped the church leader there, named Eli. And we know what happened one night when Samuel was sleeping!

### WHISPER AND LISTEN



Open your Bible to 1 Samuel 3, and show kids the words. Read 1 Samuel 3:3-4.

**SAY:** Samuel thought Eli was calling him. But Eli told Samuel to go back to bed.

Two more times, Samuel heard his name. Samuel! Samuel! Finally, Eli realized God was trying to speak to Samuel. ➡ **God speaks**. And Samuel listened to God’s message. Let’s pause our story for a minute. I want to see how well *you* listen to a message.



Have kids sit in a small circle with you.

**SAY:** We're going to play a game that requires careful listening! First, you'll have to listen for your name. If you hear your name, go stand across the room from me.

- Whisper a child's name. If you have just one or two kids, you might whisper the name of a child who's not there just to keep kids listening.
- When a child has been called and is standing across the room, whisper to the child a command, such as "Touch your nose while spinning in a circle."
- The kids who are sitting closest to you should be able to hear the message, but the child across the room may struggle.
- Everyone will act out what they heard at the same time. Kids may be doing different things if it was difficult for the child across the room to hear you.
- Repeat several times with new commands.
- End with this command, "Say, 'Eli, your sons are in big trouble!'" Make sure kids hear the correct message in the end.

**SAY:** That last one was God's message to Samuel. Eli's sons had been doing bad things, and God wanted Samuel to tell Eli that they were in trouble. That's not a very fun message to share!

**ASK:** How would you feel if you had to tell Eli that God said his sons were in trouble? Let kids call out their answers.

**SAY:** It wasn't a happy message, but Samuel listened and obeyed. And do you know what? God kept on speaking to Samuel when he was an adult! Samuel became a prophet—someone who hears from God and passes on his messages.

Our messages got a little confused, but Samuel had no trouble hearing God's messages. ➡ **God speaks**, and Samuel learned to listen to God and pass on his messages just as God said them. And God didn't speak only to Samuel. ➡ **God speaks** to us today, too! So we can listen for him.

### QUICK TIP

If you were surprised by a bigger group today, tweak this game and play it like Telephone so kids pass on the message and it gets distorted.





## SUPPLIES

- cereal or tissue boxes (1 per child)
- rubber bands (1 per child)
- markers (2 per child)



## WRAP A RUBBER BAND AROUND A BOX

**SAY:** It's fun to listen to God, and it's also fun to listen to music! Let's make instruments to play.

- Give each child a box, a rubber band, and two markers.
- Show kids how to wrap the rubber band around the perimeter of the box. It should stretch tightly around the box. Older kids can guide younger kids in setting up their boxes and rubber bands.
- Turn the box on its side so a long side is facing up.

## PLACE MARKERS UNDER THE RUBBER BAND

- Place one marker under the rubber band at the far left side of the box.
- Place the other marker under the rubber band, too.
- Slide the second marker along the side of the box as you pluck the rubber band with your finger between the two markers.
- Have kids listen carefully to the sound the rubber band makes as it's plucked when the marker is at different places.

## TALK ABOUT IT

**SAY:** The rubber band acts like a guitar string, and the moving marker causes the rubber band to make different pitches along the box. It sounded different each time we moved the marker. ➡ **God speaks**, but he doesn't always sound the same.

**ASK:** How does God's voice change like the pitches changed on the box?

**SAY:** Sometimes God speaks quietly. In 1 Kings 19, God spoke to Elijah in a gentle whisper. And in Psalm 68, David says God's mighty voice thunders from the sky. The prophet Zephaniah told God's people that God will rejoice over them with singing.

**ASK:** What do his different "voices" tell us about God?

**SAY:** ➡ **God speaks**, so we listen for him. And his voice reveals his closeness, his power, and his love for us.



## CELEBRATE SMALL

One of the best parts of mixed-age groups is giving older kids the chance to take leadership roles and help young kids. You're raising leaders!





## THROW PAPER WADS AND LISTEN FOR A CHANGE IN DIRECTIONS

**SAY:** Earlier we got to hear about Samuel's experience with hearing from God. Poor Samuel was confused at first when a voice kept waking him up, but he finally discovered it was *God's* voice!

Like it was for Samuel, it can be hard for us to know if we're hearing God, even if we're trying to listen for him. This game will show you what I mean.

- Split kids between the two sides of the room. Have only one child? No problem! Leaders play too!
- Mix up all the colors of paper wads, and place an equal amount in a pile on the floor on each side.
- You'll call out a color, and each side's goal will be to get rid of the paper wads of that color from their side. Kids will quickly throw the paper wads to the other side—even the new paper wads that are thrown onto their side.
- After you've called out the first color and kids are throwing paper wads, play the music in the background for added noise.
- Allow a minute or so, and then say a different color in a normal voice.
- Continue to switch the color, altering how loud you say it. Sometimes kids may miss the change, and that's OK.
- When time's up, turn off the music to signal the end of the game.

## TALK ABOUT IT

**ASK:** What made it hard to hear me in the game?

**ASK:** What are busy, noisy things in your life that might make it hard to hear what God is saying to you? Share an example of your own, such as staying busy with your job, housework, and paying bills. Then have kids share in pairs.

**SAY:** There's a lot going on in our lives, and that can keep us distracted when ➡ **God speaks.**

Sometimes God will get our attention through other people who have heard him—kind of like in our game when someone might have heard me say a new color and you didn't. You might've seen them throwing the new color, so you switched, too.

God can get our attention in a lot of ways, but we can also choose to take a timeout each day from all the noise and listen for God. Let's do that by looking for words from the Bible.

## SUPPLIES

- sheets of construction paper in 4 different colors (10 of each, plus 1-2 sheets per color per child)
- painter's tape
- upbeat music
- music player

## EASY PREP

- Ball up the sheets of paper.
- Use tape lines to split your room in half.



## ACTIVITY PAGES WITH A PURPOSE (10 MINUTES)



### SUPPLIES

- “God Speaks to Samuel” Activity Page (1 per child) (page 15)
- “God Speaks to Samuel” Coloring Page (1 per younger child) (page 16)
- pencils
- crayons

### QUICK TIP

For younger kids, provide the Coloring Page and crayons as an alternative.

**SAY:** ➡ **God speaks**, and Samuel had to listen carefully! Let’s see if you can **look carefully** for some of the words God speaks to us in the Bible.

Distribute the activity pages and pencils. Allow time for kids to find all the words.

**ASK:** Which words were hardest to find? Why?

**ASK:** How is searching carefully for those hard words like listening carefully for God?

**SAY:** Sometimes when we do a word search, we have to look carefully or we’ll miss some words. And when it comes to hearing God, it helps to quiet ourselves and listen carefully. ➡ **God speaks**, but we can miss him in the noise of our own busyness and distractions!

ANSWER KEY CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 163.



## PRAY TOGETHER (5 MINUTES)



### QUICK TIP

Age this prayer time up or down by challenging a group of mostly preteens to sit in silence for longer, or keeping it brief for a mostly younger group.



**SAY:** Sometimes it’s hard to keep our minds and hearts focused on talking with and listening to God. We try to pray and listen, but we start to think about what we want for supper, we spot a fly buzzing around, or we notice an itch on our nose. We start to think about friends or homework or our favorite TV show. Then we remember that we’re supposed to be listening for God! Oops!

Here’s the good news: Prayer isn’t just about talking to God. Prayer happens when we simply spend time with God and remember God is there with us. So don’t feel bad when your thoughts wander when you pray—our loving God will wander right along with you! Let’s practice spending quiet time with God right now.

Have everyone move so they can have some space around them and sit comfortably.

Now let’s spend time thinking about God and welcoming God into our thoughts. And if your thoughts start to wander? Simply talk with God about whatever you’re thinking. Ask him if there’s something he wants to tell you about that. We’ll have two minutes of quiet, then I’ll pray aloud.

Estimate two minutes by counting silently in your head. When time is up, close with this prayer.

**PRAY:** Dear God, may we always remember that you are with us and that you speak to us. Thanks for thinking with us and spending time with us today. We love you. Amen.

**SAY:** ➡ **God speaks**. So let’s always remember to listen for him!

# God Speaks to Samuel

## Activity Page

Sometimes when God speaks, we have to listen very carefully.  
Look very carefully for words from the Bible—God’s message to us.

E	G	R	A	E	F	T	H	A	I
O	C	S	E	L	O	P	E	L	G
H	E	A	V	I	N	V	I	G	H
E	H	I	R	L	I	G	H	T	O
A	L	O	E	G	H	R	T	G	P
V	I	R	R	L	O	F	I	R	E
E	A	O	F	I	G	R	A	C	F
N	F	O	V	I	G	E	F	A	A
S	A	A	V	O	L	O	V	E	I
L	S	I	R	I	L	H	I	G	T

### Word List:

LOVE

HEAVEN

LIGHT

FORGIVE

GRACE

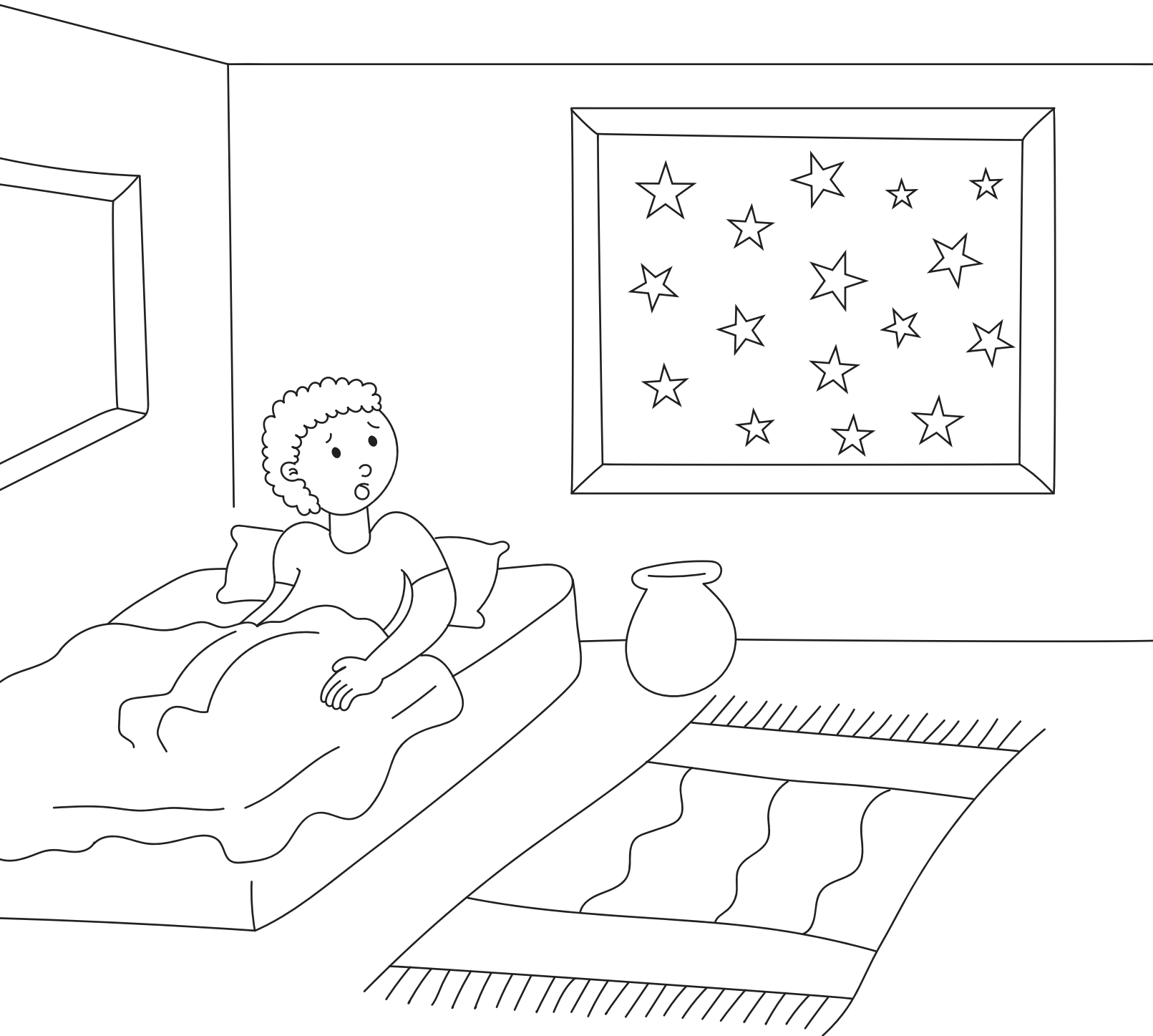
SAVIOR

FAITH

HOPE

# God Speaks to Samuel

## Coloring Page



1 Samuel 3: Samuel was about 12 years old, living in the Temple and helping work there, when he heard a voice calling his name at night. It turned out to be God's voice! God had a tough message for Samuel to deliver. But Samuel learned to hear God and share his messages. *God speaks to us, too. Are you listening?*



## LISTEN UP!

**SAY:** When God spoke to Samuel, Samuel listened. Samuel learned to recognize God's voice. Let's see how well you know the sound of *my* voice.

- Direct kids to spread out throughout the room and close their eyes.
- Quietly move to a new place in the room.

**SAY:** Listen to my voice. Where am I?

- Encourage kids to keep their eyes closed while they point to where they believe you are.
- Count down from three, and have kids open their eyes to see if they were correct.
- Direct kids to close their eyes again, but this time, encourage them to march in place until you direct them to open their eyes.
- As kids march, quietly move to a new place in the room.

**SAY:** Listen to my voice. Where am I?

- Count down from three again, and have kids open their eyes.
- Repeat the process, adding additional noises for kids to make with each round, such as clapping, humming, or singing a favorite song.
- Continue as time allows.

**SAY:** You were great listeners!

**ASK:** What did you do to try to hear my voice in our game?

**ASK:** How can we better listen for God's voice?

**SAY:** You had to figure out where my voice was coming from. How can we be sure it's really coming from God when we think we hear his voice?

## EXPLORE JOHN 10:27

**SAY:** You listened for my voice in our game. You had to try to tune out the other noises and focus on me. ➡ **God speaks**, so we listen for him, too. Sometimes we might need to tune out distractions! Let's see what the Bible says about listening for God's voice. Jesus said these words.



Read John 10:27.

**SAY:** This verse says we're like sheep, listening and obeying our shepherd. And Jesus is our shepherd! ➡ **God speaks** to us through his Son, Jesus, so we listen for him.

Samuel didn't recognize God's voice the first time, but by the time he was an adult, he definitely knew God's voice! The more we listen, the more we learn to know God's voice and follow him.

## SUPPLIES

- Bible



## QUICK TIP

Have mostly older kids? Provide Bibles and help them look up John 10:27 themselves!

**SUPPLIES**

- worship music
- media player

**EASY PREP**

- Download songs from the Digital Download Center.

Sing worship songs with your kids.





**Spend 13 weeks diving into these exciting topics with your small group of kids!**

God's Calling			
1	God Speaks to Samuel	1 Samuel 3	God speaks.
2	An Idol Bows to God's Ark	1 Samuel 5:1-5	God is real.
3	David Values Saul's Life	1 Samuel 24; 26	God values people.
4	David Celebrates	2 Samuel 6	God is praiseworthy.
Who Is This Man?			
5	Jesus Eases John's Doubt	Matthew 11:1-6; Luke 7:18-23	Jesus is the Messiah.
6	Parable of the Farmer and the Seed	Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23; Luke 8:4-15	Jesus grows us.
7	Jesus Describes His True Family	Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21	Jesus wants us in his family.
8	Jesus Calms the Storm	Mark 4:35-41; Matthew 8:23-27; Luke 8:22-25	Jesus has power to calm storms.
Building the Church			
9	Jesus Instructs His Followers	Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:1-11	God's family has an important job to do.
10	The Church Is Born	Acts 1:8; 2:1-41	God's family needs the Holy Spirit.
11	The Church Builds Community	Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37	God's family takes care of each other.
12	The Church Reaches Out	Acts 3:1-11; 6:1-7	God's family serves others.
13	The Church Meets Opposition	Acts 4:1-31; 5:17-41	God's family grows in hard times.

**With Two or More™, you can build relationships with kids of all ages and engage in meaningful experiences whether you have two...or a few!**



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