

QUARTER 3

two or more™

Small Church Curriculum for Kids™

LEADER GUIDE

Only Preschoolers

Ages 3-5



Small Church Curriculum for Kids™

Leader Guide
Only Preschoolers



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

Person-to-person interaction enhances spiritual growth and builds Christian friendships.

Experiential

What we experience through action and discussion sticks with us up to 9 times longer than what we simply hear or read.

Applicable

The aim of ministry is to equip people to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

Lifelong

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™

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ISBN 978-1-4707-8181-1

Printed in the U.S.A.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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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.

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 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...will this really be age-appropriate for my preschoolers?

Yes!

Two or More ensures that every lesson is simple and applicable for preschoolers.

Here are the ingredients of our secret sauce to make lessons meaningful for preschoolers:

- **Simplicity.** Kids learn one easy-to-remember Bible point each week.
- **Discussion.** We help preschoolers process discoveries and share their own stories through simple, preschool-friendly questions.
- **Application.** We make sure preschoolers know *why* the Bible story matters to them with application that makes sense in a 3-year-old's world.
- **Movement.** Because kids are moving, they're engaged, and you'll keep their short attention spans.
- **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 have only 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.

Color and Create

Coloring sheets provide a visual preschoolers can enjoy and take home. These coloring sheets also include the Bible passage and a summary of what they learned, so parents can get a quick glance at what their kids are learning. Plus, some coloring sheets involve adding extra fun elements!

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, has all the same great songs you'll find online! If you do use media, this is a great opportunity to involve teenagers as leaders—most teens know a lot about technology!

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



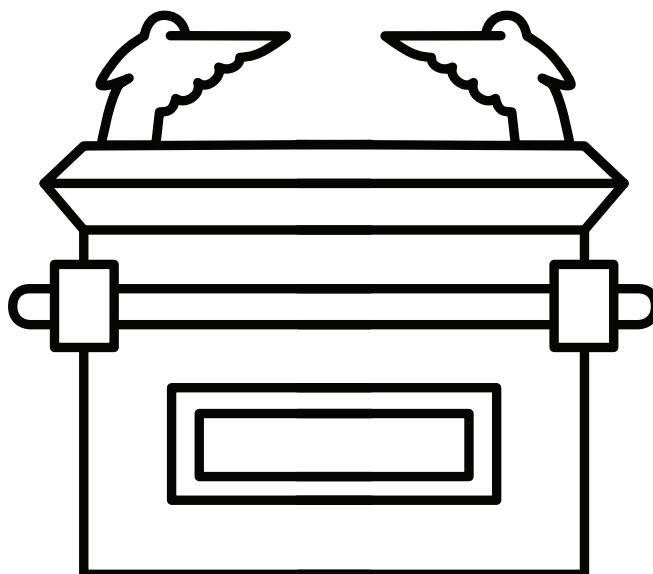
Teacher Background

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: As attention spans get shorter than ever, even preschoolers tend to keep busy and hustle from one activity to the next. 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

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
CHECK IN Connect about the week.	The importance of friendships at church.
SET THE STAGE Share about a topic related to the lesson.	The connection between their world and the Bible.
EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE Act out the Bible story and listen to God.	That God can speak to us.
HANDS-ON DISCOVERY Make ear trumpets.	How to listen better.
PLAY A GAME Play a listening game.	That God can speak in different ways.
COLOR AND CREATE Color a picture of the Bible story.	What happened in the Bible story.
PRAY TOGETHER Hear things God says to them and respond in prayer.	How God speaks to us through the Bible.

BONUS OPTIONS	EXPLORE MORE Explore ways to listen for God.	Three ways God speaks to us.
	SING TOGETHER Sing worship songs together.	How to celebrate God.

	MINUTES	EASY SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
	5		
	5		
	10	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible	
	10	<input type="checkbox"/> paper plates (1 per child) <input type="checkbox"/> markers <input type="checkbox"/> tape <input type="checkbox"/> decorating supplies such as stickers or foam shapes	<input type="checkbox"/> Make a sample craft to show kids.
	10	<input type="checkbox"/> paper <input type="checkbox"/> marker	
	10	<input type="checkbox"/> “God Speaks to Samuel” Coloring Page (page 15) <input type="checkbox"/> crayons	
	5	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible	
	10	<input type="checkbox"/> picture Bibles	
	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 show their goofiest faces to everyone around them.
- Make announcements and collect offering.
- Celebrate any birthdays by having preschoolers give the birthday child a fist bump with fireworks. (Make a fist, and when you bump your fist to another person's fist, open your hand and wiggle your fingers.)

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: **The Bible says that God speaks.** Today we'll hear a story about how God talked to a boy named Samuel. Samuel was sleeping and heard a sound. It was God! Let's start our lesson by talking about sounds we hear.

ASK: **Share about a sound you like.** Share your own quick answer first, and then let everyone share!

SAY: **The boy we'll read about in the Bible today heard a surprising sound in the night. He heard God's voice. God talked to him, and God speaks to us, too. Let's listen to God as we read from the Bible today.**



EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE (10 MINUTES)



SUPPLIES

- Bible

ACT IT OUT



Show the Bible.

SAY: Let's find out what happened with Samuel.

Eli was one of God's friends, and Samuel was Eli's helper. One night Eli went to bed, and Samuel was sleeping nearby in a place called the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was a special place for God. Something happened when they were asleep.

Have kids lie down and close their eyes. Pause for a few seconds.

SAY: **God called Samuel's name! Samuel!** Have kids sit up and open their eyes, if they haven't already.

SAY: **Samuel got right up, and he went to his teacher, Eli. Pretend you're Samuel and I'm Eli. In a minute, I'll have you close your eyes, and when you do, listen for me to say "Samuel." As soon as you hear me say "Samuel," wake up, run to me, and say, "What is it, Eli?"**

If you have young preschoolers in your class, have the children practice repeating the line with you a few times before they close their eyes.

SAY: **The Bible says Samuel went to sleep.**

Have the children close their eyes and pretend to sleep. Move away from kids so they'll be able to travel to you when they wake up. Pretend to be



asleep, but call out Samuel's name. Remind children to wake up, run to you, and say, "What is it, Eli?" Then sit up.

SAY: I didn't call you. In the Bible, Eli was fast asleep. He told Samuel to go back to bed.

Have a helper lead children back to their resting area to lie down and close their eyes.

After a few seconds, pretend to sleep again and repeat sleeping and calling Samuel's name two more times.

SAY: This time when Samuel woke Eli up, Eli realized that it was God who was saying Samuel's name. So Eli told Samuel to go lie down again. Eli said that if someone called Samuel's name again, he should say, "Speak, God, I'm listening."

Have an adult or teen helper lead children back to their resting area to lie down.

SAY: When you close your eyes, listen for me to say "Samuel." As soon as you hear me say "Samuel," say what Eli told Samuel to say: "Speak, God, I'm listening."

Have kids close their eyes, and wait about five seconds.

SHOUT: Samuel!

Lead children to say, "Speak, God, I'm listening" Repeat this a few times, each time leaving a different amount of time before you shout Samuel's name.

SAY: Samuel did what Eli told him to do, and God spoke to Samuel. God told Samuel that something very big was coming because the people weren't obeying God.

The next morning, Eli wanted to know what God said to Samuel. Samuel shared what God said, and Eli listened to God's important message, and he obeyed God. God spoke, and both Eli and Samuel listened to God.

LISTEN

SAY: This was the first time God gave Samuel an important message, and Samuel grew up to share many important messages with God's friends. Samuel was called a *prophet*, and God spoke to Samuel many times.

► **God speaks** to us, too. We might not hear his voice out loud, but we can hear God's message in other ways.

Let's listen to God now. Close your eyes. I'll pray, and then let's all be quiet and listen. Maybe you'll get a feeling, hear something in your heart, or see a picture in your mind.

PRAY: God, speak to us. We are listening.

Allow time for kids to listen.

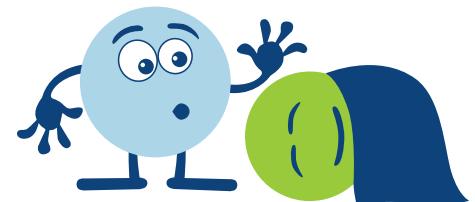
PRAY: God, thank you that you speak to us. Help us listen better.

Allow time for kids to share if they heard anything.



Celebrate Small

What a blessing to have a small group! You can have an intimate conversation about how God spoke to your preschoolers. Don't rush through this time—demonstrate listening well!





SUPPLIES

- paper plates (1 per child)
- markers
- tape
- decorating supplies such as stickers or foam shapes

EASY PREP

- Make a sample craft to show kids.

Quick Tip

Have adult or teen helpers monitor children closely and teach them appropriate use of the ear trumpets to avoid them sticking the sharp ends into their ears.

MAKE EAR TRUMPETS

ASK: What do you do if you're trying to listen better?

SAY: Let's make something that will help us listen better.

Show preschoolers the sample craft by holding the tapered end of the paper plate up to your ear.

SAY: This is called an ear trumpet. A long time ago, some people used these to hear better when someone talked to them. Let's each make one, and then we can try them out!

- Give each preschooler a paper plate, and let kids color on both sides with crayons or markers.
- As preschoolers finish coloring, roll their plates tightly on one end to make a cone shape, and let preschoolers help add tape to the overlapped sides of the plate to keep them in place.
- If time allows, have preschoolers add stickers, foam shapes, or other decorations to their ear trumpets.

TRY THEM OUT

SAY: Let's practice listening with our ear trumpets.

Help preschoolers get into pairs.

Have children take turns whispering "God loves you" to their partners without using the ear trumpets. Then have the listening partner put the small end of the cone close to his or her ear, and have the other partner whisper "God loves you" again to compare the difference.

SAY: Just like we listened for our partner's voice, we can listen for God because God speaks to us. We can practice listening by quieting down and being still as we listen for God to speak.





PLAY A GAME (10 MINUTES)



PLAY A GAME LIKE SIMON SAYS

SAY: In our Bible story, Samuel listened to his teacher, Eli, and did what he said. Let's play a game where you'll listen and do what your leader wants you to do!

- Have kids stand in front of you.
- Give kids instructions, but communicate the tasks in different ways. Ideas include the following:
 - ◊ *Tell* them to jump up and down.
 - ◊ *Whisper* to sit on the ground.
 - ◊ *Sing* the first line of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" and pretend to paddle.
 - ◊ Put your hands on your head, and *motion* for them to do the same.
 - ◊ *Whisper* "Tell your friends to bark like a dog" to one child, and then have the child tell the instructions to the whole group.
 - ◊ *Draw* a smiley face to tell kids to smile.
 - ◊ *Sing* "If You're Happy and You Know It," and have kids clap.
 - ◊ *Tell* kids to give a friend a high-five.
 - ◊ Pat your knees, and *motion* for kids to join you.
 - ◊ *Whisper* "Tell your friends to quack like a duck" to one child, and have the child share the instructions with the whole group.
 - ◊ *Draw* a sad face to tell kids to frown.
- Play for several minutes, mixing up different instructions and communication methods. The faster and sillier, the better! End by using your voice to tell everyone to sit in a knee-to-knee circle.

SUPPLIES

- paper
- marker



TALK ABOUT IT

SAY: In our game, I spoke in different ways. Sometimes I talked with my voice, and other times I showed you what to do or gave you a message through someone else. ➔ God speaks like that, too.

Let's think of some ways we can hear important messages from God.

Share about two ways you've heard God talking to you. Maybe you've heard God tell you something when you were listening to or singing a song. Maybe you read something in the Bible and it helped you make a choice in your life. Or maybe you heard a sermon that you felt was specifically for you.

ASK: What are some ways you think God can give you an important message?

SAY: We might not always hear God's voice like Samuel did, but God talks to us through songs, through words in our Bibles, and through other people, too! No matter how ➔ God speaks, we can listen for him and do what he says.





COLOR AND CREATE (10 MINUTES)



SUPPLIES

- “God Speaks to Samuel” Coloring Page (page 15)
- crayons

Distribute the coloring pages and crayons.

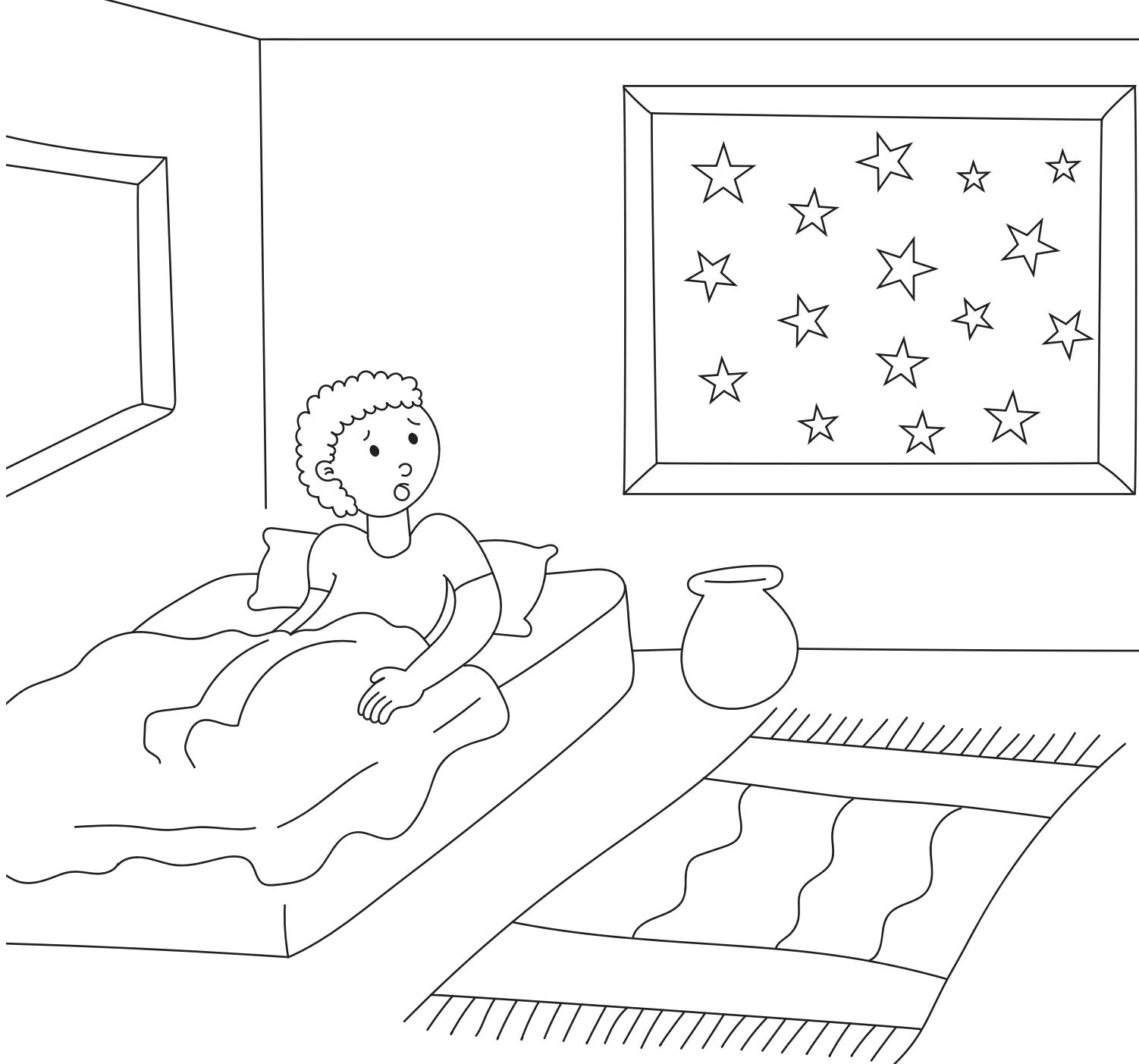
SAY: God speaks to us, just as he spoke to Samuel! Let's color Samuel as we listen for God.

Allow time for kids to color.



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?



SUPPLIES

- Bible

LISTEN TO LOVE

SAY: Today we heard how God talked to his friend Samuel, and we found out that God speaks to us, too. Let's listen to some things God says to us. God talks to our hearts when he speaks to us, so let's put our hands on our hearts as we listen to God.

Lead children to place their hands over their hearts.



Show the Bible.

SAY: The Bible is one way God speaks to us. It says in John 3:16, "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."

We listened to something God speaks to us: God says he loves us. And he showed us that by sending his Son, Jesus. Now let's talk to him. We can tell him we love him, too.

Lead kids to hold out their arms to welcome a hug from God and say to God, "I love you, too, God."



LISTEN AND THANK



Show the Bible.

SAY: The Bible says in Psalm 139:13, "You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb."

We listened to something God speaks to us: God says he made each of us perfectly. Now let's talk to him. We can thank him for making us.

Lead kids to thank God for several of their body parts and touch those body parts as they thank God. For example, you might lead kids to thank God for making their legs as they place their hands on their legs and thank God for making their minds that they think with as kids touch their heads.

LISTEN AND ASK



Show the Bible.

SAY: God's Son, Jesus, said in John 14:15, "If you love me, keep my commandments."

We listened to something God's Son says to us: Jesus says to obey and follow him. Now let's talk to him. We can ask Jesus to help us follow him.

Lead kids to hold their arms up in the air to ask for Jesus' help and say, "Jesus, help me follow you."

SAY: Keep asking grown-ups to read to you from the Bible, because that's an important way God speaks to us.



LISTEN TO A MESSAGE

SAY: God speaks, so we listen for him. Let's explore some of the ways God speaks to us.

Have preschoolers sit with you in a circle.

Whisper to the child sitting on your right, "God loves you." Lead kids to pass the message around the circle by whispering to the kids next to them. Continue until the message gets back to you.

SAY: You had to be really quiet and listen closely to your friend's voice. That reminds me of one way we can hear from God. We might not hear God's loud, booming voice like Samuel did. But when we're quiet and listening for God, we might have thoughts pop into our heads from God. God might tell you, "I love you" or "I'm proud of you."

God can also use other people to speak to us. When someone shares kind words with you, like "God loves you," God is using that person to make sure you know how special you are!

LOOK FOR A MESSAGE FROM GOD

SAY: Let's try something else.

Have preschoolers lie down and close their eyes.

SAY: Let's use our imaginations. Keep your eyes closed and imagine eating your favorite ice cream in a big ice cream cone...with lots of sprinkles! Pause. Can you see a picture of that yummy ice cream in your mind? Pause.

SAY: Now I want you to imagine Jesus walking up to you and giving you a great big hug! Pause. Can you see it? OK, you can open your eyes now.

Have preschoolers sit up.

SAY: Another way God speaks to us is through pictures or things we see! You can ask God for a picture when you close your eyes, like seeing Jesus give you a hug or a dream when you go to sleep. And when we look around us, we can see lots of things God uses to remind us of his love.

LEARN FROM GOD'S WORD

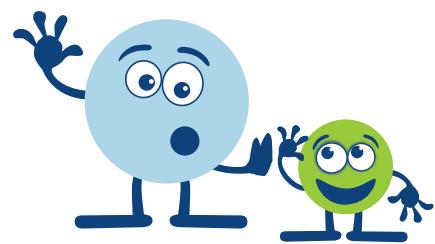
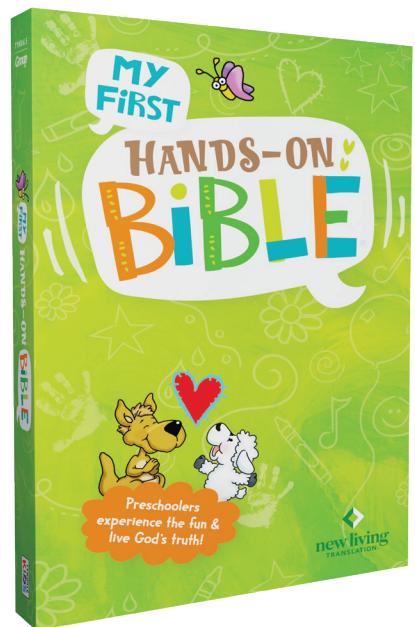
Set out the picture Bibles.

SAY: Another way God speaks to us is through his words in the Bible. The Bible is full of God's words that tell us how much he loves us. God's words in the Bible also tell us the best way to live.

Let preschoolers flip through the Bibles to look at the pictures. Have adult or teen helpers lead kids to look for pictures that show love. They might show people loving each other, or they might show Jesus loving people by talking to them and healing them.

SUPPLIES

- picture Bibles



SAY: When we know what God tells us in the Bible, those good things will stay in our minds and hearts and help us when we're feeling sad or lonely or scared.

God spoke to Samuel through a loud voice that woke up Samuel. But
God speaks to us in so many other ways, too.

BONUS OPTION

SING TOGETHER (10 MINUTES)



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 preschoolers!

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 preschoolers and engage in meaningful experiences whether you have two...or a few!



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ISBN 978-1-4707-8181-1



9 781470 781811
Printed in the U.S.A.



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