

Teachers Dig In**Dig In to the Bible**

- Read: 1 Samuel 3
- In This Passage: 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.
- Bible Point: God speaks...
- Application: ...so we listen for him.
- Summary Verse: "So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows" (Matthew 10:31).

Dig Deeper

- You'll Be Teaching: *God speaks.* 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?

Dig In to Prayer

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

Quick Tip

- Dig In has built in discussion that gives kids a chance to speak *and* listen! You'll often use "pair shares," where kids discuss with a partner. Having kids form pairs makes it easier for kids to share their thoughts and feelings. To help kids get started, designate who in each pair will begin. For example, you might say, "The person wearing the most blue can go first." Also, telling kids that each person will have a short, designated amount of time to talk will help take the pressure off and will keep your class on track. It's also helpful to announce a halfway point so everyone gets a chance to share.

This Lesson at a Glance



OPENING

Kids share about a topic related to the lesson.

Supplies

- Bible



OBJECT LESSON

Kids make and listen to simple stringed instruments.

Supplies

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



CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Kids listen carefully for a voice and practice delivering good or bad news.

Supplies

- Bible
- slips of paper
- “Good News, Bad News” handout (1 for every 10 kids) (download [here](#))

Easy Prep

- Write a number on a slip of paper for each child, starting with 1 and continuing for the number of kids you have.
- Cut apart the sections of the “Good News, Bad News” handout.



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Kids listen to changing directions despite distractions.

Supplies

- sheets of construction paper in 4 different colors (1-2 sheets per color per child)
- masking tape
- upbeat music
- music player

Easy Prep

- Ball up the sheets of paper so they can be thrown during the game.
- Use tape lines to split your room into four equal quadrants.
- Mix up all the colors of paper wads, and place an equal amount in a pile on the floor in each quadrant.



LOW-ENERGY GAME

Kids play a version of Marco Polo.

Supplies

- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Kids listen for God to speak to them about various areas of their lives.

Supplies

- instrumental music
- music player



CRAFT

Kids make communication devices that require careful listening.

Supplies

- card stock
- rulers
- scissors
- Glue Dots
- buttons (4 per child)
- markers
- pencils
- “Morse Code Key” handouts (1 per child)
(download [here](#))
- “Morse Code Messages” handouts (1 for every
10 kids) (download [here](#))

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.
- Cut apart the “Morse Code Messages” handout.

**Marked supplies are also used in Core Bible Discovery*

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



Supplies

- Bible

Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, have kids double high-five four friends.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by having kids say, “Three cheers for our birthday friends! Hip, hip, hooray! Hip, hip, hooray! Hip, hip, hooray! It’s your birthday!”
- Collect the offering.

Introduce the Lesson

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.**

Share

- Tell kids what sound *you’d* want to play on a sound machine to help you sleep.
- Have kids form pairs. Ask kids to share what sound *they’d* want to play on a sound machine to help them sleep.
- After partners have discussed, ask two or three kids to share with the whole group what they talked about with their partners.

Summarize

Open a Bible to 1 Samuel 3, and 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! One way God speaks to us today is through the Bible. He’s ready to talk to you right now. Let’s pray and listen.**

Pray, praising God for speaking to us.



OBJECT LESSON

String Sounds

[10 min]

Supplies

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

Wrap a Rubber Band Around the Box

Say: **It's 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.
- 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.**



Supplies

- Bible
- slips of paper
- “Good News, Bad News” handout (1 for every 10 kids) (download [here](#))

Easy Prep

- Write a number on a slip of paper for each child, starting with 1 and continuing for the number of kids you have.
- Cut apart the sections of the “Good News, Bad News” handout.

Tip

- If you have fewer than 8 kids, play some background music during the “Listen Carefully” section to make it more challenging.

Listen Carefully

Say: **Today’s Bible story shows us how God speaks, so we listen for him. Let’s see how he spoke to a boy named Samuel who lived and served in the Tabernacle. That’s like what we know as church today. Let’s see what happened to Samuel.**

Read 1 Samuel 3:1-5.

Ask: • **Why do you think Samuel didn’t recognize God’s voice?**

• **If you were lying in bed and heard a voice, who would you think it was?**
• **Tell about a time you felt confused about what you heard.** Share your own example first. It might be a time you misheard what someone said or you misunderstood song lyrics. Then have kids share in pairs.

Say: **Let’s see how well you can identify who’s making a noise.**

Give each child a slip of paper with a number. Have kids memorize their numbers and not reveal them to anyone else. Then have kids scatter around the room, sit down, and close their eyes.

Say: **When I call out a number, the person with that number will make a noise. You might cough, let out a squeak, clap your hands, or anything else you can think of. Everyone else will try to identify who made the sound.**

Call out a number, and after that child makes a sound, tell kids they can open their eyes and point to the person they think made the sound. Then have the child who really did make the sound raise his or her hand.

Repeat several times.

Ask: • **What helped you identify who made the sound?**

• **When were you most confident you were right about where the sound came from?**

• **How did this experience help you understand Samuel’s confusion?**

Say: **The closer you were to the person who made the noise, the easier it was to be sure it was that person. And if you know the person well, you’d have a better idea of his or her voice.**

Ask: • **Do you see any connections between this experience and how we respond when God speaks? Tell me about that.**

Say: **The more we know God, the more we can know it’s him speaking to us. God speaks, but he didn’t speak very much in those days. Samuel had probably never heard God speak before! No wonder he was confused. Listen to what happened next.**

Read 1 Samuel 3:6-8.

Say: **Finally, Eli realized what was happening. Let’s see what he said to do.**

Read 1 Samuel 3:9-10.

Say: **Samuel was ready to listen to God.**

Ask: • **If God were to speak aloud to you, what would you want him to talk about? Why?** Have kids share in pairs. Then ask a few kids to report to the whole group.

Say: **God speaks, so we listen for him like Samuel did.**

Share News

Say: **We'd like to hear good news from God. But the message God gave Samuel wasn't so great. God told Samuel that Eli's sons were doing bad things and God was going to punish them. And Samuel had to share that bad news with Eli! Yikes!**

Let's see what it's like to share good and bad news.

Give each child a section of the "Good News, Bad News" handout. Have kids form pairs and tell the news to their partners as if it were true.

Ask: • **If you shared good news, tell what that felt like.**

• **If you shared bad news, tell what that felt like.**

Say: **If God had told Samuel he was going to give Eli's family tons of money, that would've been much easier to share. But when God speaks, sometimes it's good news, and sometimes it's bad news. We need to listen to God either way.**

Ask: • **Tell about a time your family got bad news.** Share your own example first, and then have kids share in pairs. After kids share, have several kids report to the whole group. If kids share about any current situations, pray together.

• **How do you normally respond to bad news?**

Say: **Let's see how Eli responded when he heard what God told Samuel.**

Read 1 Samuel 3:17-18.

Ask: • **Choose one word to describe Eli's attitude.**

Say: **When God speaks good news to us, it's easy to listen. When God speaks bad news, we can still listen humbly and accept what he says. Let's try that now. I'm going to invite God to speak to us about something we're doing that he's not happy about. Then you'll sit quietly and listen for God to show you something he wants to change in your life.**

Pray: **God, we want to listen to you, even if you have bad news. We invite you now to show us if there are things you want to change about our lives. Show us what we're doing wrong, and show us what you want us to do instead.**

Allow about one minute for silence. Then pray: **Amen.**

Say: **There's one more thing you should know about Samuel. God kept speaking to him!**

Read 1 Samuel 3:19-20.

Say: **A prophet is someone who God speaks to often. A prophet's job is to tell others what God says. Samuel started when he was just a boy by sharing the news about Eli's sons. Sometimes God speaks to other people through us! And sometimes God speaks to us through other people.**

Ask: • **Who are people who speak God's wisdom in your life?**

Say: **God speaks to us in a lot of ways, but it might not always be an audible voice like Samuel heard. Sometimes it's in our hearts, through the Bible, or through other people. God speaks, so we listen for him. Like Samuel, we can say, "Speak, your servant is listening."**



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

[10 min]

Listen Through the Noise

Supplies

- sheets of construction paper in 4 different colors (1-2 sheets per color per child)
- masking tape
- upbeat music
- music player

Easy Prep

- Ball up the sheets of paper so they can be thrown during the game.
- Use tape lines to split your room into four equal quadrants.
- Mix up all the colors of paper wads, and place an equal amount in a pile on the floor in each quadrant.

Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the album [here](#).

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.

- Form four roughly equal teams, and have each team select a quadrant in the play space you taped on the floor.
- You'll call out a color, and each team's goal will be to get rid of the paper wads of that color in their quadrant. Team members will all work quickly to throw the paper wads to other teams—even the new paper wads that are thrown into their quadrant.
- After you've called out the first color and teams 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 okay.
- 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?**

• **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.**



“I’m Listening”

Supplies

- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today’s lesson during the game. You can find the album [here](#).

Play a Version of Marco Polo

Say: **When God spoke to Samuel, Samuel said, “I’m listening.” Samuel discovered that God speaks, so he continued to listen for God’s voice.**

Let’s play a great game that can help us understand a little bit of what it might have been like for Samuel when he was learning to listen for God’s voice.

- Invite a willing person to be the first “Samuel.”
- Samuel will keep his or her eyes tightly closed—*no peeking*.
- Everyone else will slowly move around the room.
- When Samuel wants to hear where people are, he or she will call out, “I’m listening!”
- Everyone else must respond by calling out, “Samuel!”
- Samuel will keep calling out for the response from the other players in an effort to track down and tag one of the other players—as in Marco Polo.
- Whoever Samuel tags will become the new Samuel.
- If you’d like, play upbeat music while kids play to increase the challenge. Adjust the volume as needed so it doesn’t make the game too difficult.

Talk About It

Ask: • **What was your strategy to listen well in this game?**

Say: **God spoke to Samuel in a voice that could be heard, like you can hear mine now. God can speak to us that way, but God also speaks to us in many other ways, such as through wise advice of other people who follow God or through reading the Bible—God’s Word. As we get to know God, we’ll get better and better at being able to listen to what he’s saying.**

Ask: • **What are some ways you’ll listen for God this week?** Share an example of your own, such as setting aside time in the morning to pray and listen to God.

Say: **God speaks to all of us, even if it’s not exactly the way he did to Samuel. If you tell God you’re listening, like Samuel did, God will speak to you in a special way, too.**



Supplies

- instrumental music
- music player

Listen to God

Say: **God speaks, so we listen for him. Let's pause and listen right now.**

- Play instrumental music.
- Tell kids to silently ask God to speak to them about their families. Then pause for about a minute for kids to listen.
- Tell kids to silently ask God to show them a picture about school. Then pause for about a minute for kids to listen.
- Tell kids to silently ask God to give them one word about how he views them. Then pause for about a minute for kids to listen.
- Turn off the music, and have kids form pairs and share what God revealed to them.

Wrap Up

Pray: **God, thank you that you speak to us! Remind us to pause and listen for you this week. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Thank kids for coming, and encourage them to come back next week.

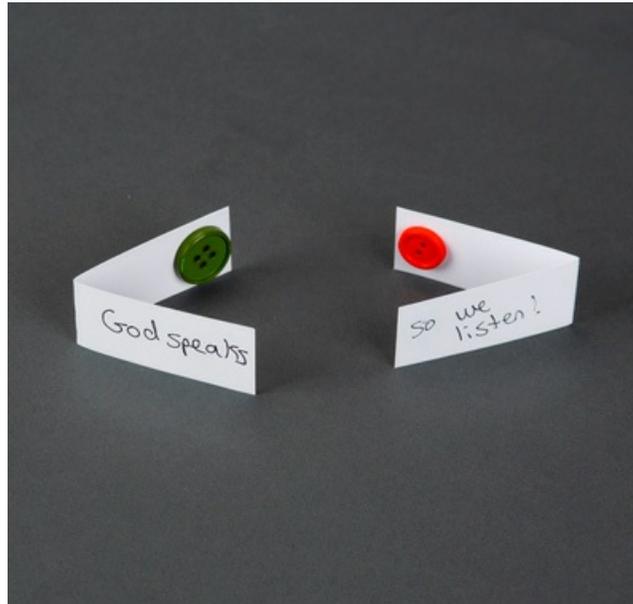


Supplies

- card stock
- rulers
- scissors
- Glue Dots
- buttons (4 per child)
- markers
- pencils
- “Morse Code Key” handouts (1 per child) (download [here](#))
- “Morse Code Messages” handouts (1 for every 10 kids) (download [here](#))

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.
- Cut apart the “Morse Code Messages” handout.



Make Morse Code Clickers

Say: **There are a lot of ways to send messages besides talking. One way people used to send messages, before telephones, was Morse code. Morse code uses a series of dots and dashes to spell words. The dots can be short sounds or flashes of light, and the dashes are longer sounds or flashes of light. We're going to make clickers you can use to send Morse code messages.**

Show kids the sample craft you made. Set out the supplies to share, and have kids follow these instructions to make clickers.

- Cut two pieces of card stock that are each $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide and 4 inches long.
- Fold the pieces of card stock in half.
- Use Glue Dots to glue a button on each end of the card stock strips, on the same side. The buttons should touch when the card stock is folded.
- Decorate the card stock. Include the point: God speaks.
- Place one clicker in each hand, between your thumb and forefinger. Practice clicking, using one hand for dots and the other for dashes.

Send Messages

Say: **Now let's practice sending Morse code messages!**

- Give each child a "Morse Code Key" handout, a pencil, and a strip from the "Morse Code Messages" handout. Make sure kids keep the messages on their strips a secret. Kids could also choose to make up their own (appropriate) messages to send.
- Have kids form pairs and sit away from other pairs.
- Have one partner use his or her clickers to transmit the message on the strip, one letter at a time. The second partner will use a pencil to record the letters indicated by the clicks.
- Reverse roles so both partners have a chance to transmit and receive Morse code messages.

Talk About It

Ask: • **What are other ways people communicate with each other?**

• **What do you think is better: Morse code or text messaging? Why?**

Say: **Morse code can be difficult to get used to! You might've struggled with understanding your message at first. But back when Morse code was common, there were people whose whole job was to send and receive Morse code messages. With a lot of practice, they could do it quickly! When we practice listening to God, we'll hear how God speaks to us.**

Have kids take their clickers home and practice Morse code with their friends and families, explaining how God speaks to us.

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