

RUN. WITH A PURPOSE

ADVENTURE KIDS MJC 2026 Bible Study

Camp Verse: 1 Corinthians 9:26 (NLT) — “So I run with purpose in every step.”

Running Verse: Hebrews 12:1-2 (NIV) — “*Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus.*”

Sunday Bible Study – Start the Race: Know Jesus

Scripture Reference: 1 Samuel 3:1–21

Memory Verses: 1 Samuel 3:10 (NIV) — “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.”

Psalms 119:105 (NIV) — “Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.”

Learning Outcome

Campers will learn that God knows them by name and invites them into a personal relationship with Him through Jesus Christ. Through the story of Samuel, they will discover that God calls people to listen, trust, and obey Him. Campers will understand that they are never too young to follow Jesus, listen to God, and be used by Him.

Background Information for Leaders

1 Samuel 3 takes place during a time when Israel was struggling spiritually. Many people were not faithfully following God, and messages from the Lord were rare.

Samuel was a young boy serving in the tabernacle under Eli the priest. His mother, Hannah, had dedicated him to God after praying for a son. Samuel lived at the house of the Lord in Shiloh, helping with worship and caring for the tabernacle.

Eli was the priest of Israel, but his sons were disobedient and dishonored God. Eli failed to correct them properly, and the nation was suffering because of poor spiritual leadership.

One night, while Samuel was lying down near the lamp of God in the tabernacle, God called his name. Samuel thought Eli was calling him and ran to Eli several times. Finally, Eli realized that the Lord was speaking to Samuel and told him to answer, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.”

This moment was important because God was calling Samuel to become His prophet and servant. Samuel learned that even as a child, he could hear God’s voice and obey Him. The story teaches us the importance of listening to God, being willing to obey, and serving Him faithfully no matter our age.

Preparation

This lesson is designed to be flexible so leaders can adapt it to the needs, ages, and attention spans of their group. Some activities may take more or less time depending on discussion, participation, and class size. Leaders are encouraged to adjust pacing as needed and may shorten, simplify, or omit activities if necessary. The goal is not to complete every activity perfectly, but to help campers understand that God knows them, calls them to follow Him, and wants them to know Jesus personally.

Items Needed

- Bibles
- Samuel Listens Activity Sheet #1 (1 per camper)
- ABCs of Becoming a Christian Booklet (activity sheets #2 & #3) (1 per camper)
- Pencils
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Purchased blank name tags (1 per camper)
- Pens or markers
- Blindfold (optional)
- Scissors (if booklet is not pre-cut)

Lesson Introductory Activity — Samuel Listens and Names Matter

Choose one child to be Samuel. Samuel sits in the middle of the room with eyes closed or wearing a blindfold while the teacher quietly points to another child in the circle. That child calls out, “Samuel!” using a different voice if possible.

Samuel then gets three chances to guess who called their name. If Samuel guesses correctly, they stand and say:

“Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening.”

Then choose a new Samuel and play again.

After the game, explain that in today’s Bible story, Samuel heard someone calling his name during the night. At first, he thought it was Eli, but it was really God speaking to him. Samuel learned to listen carefully and respond to God.

In Samuel’s time, God spoke directly to him in a special way. Today, God primarily speaks to us through the Bible, and the Holy Spirit helps us understand and obey God’s Word.

Ask:

- Was it easy or hard to recognize who was calling?
- How did it feel to hear someone say your name?

Explain that names are important because they help us know people personally and help us feel noticed and valued.

Did you know that your name matters to God too? God knows every person by name and cares about them. In today’s Bible story, God called Samuel by name because He knew him and had a special purpose for his life.

Give each child a blank name tag and markers or crayons. Instruct campers to write their name on the tag and decorate it. When everyone is finished, have campers put on their name tags and show them to the group.

Ask:

- Do people like to hear their own names?
- Does it make you feel good when someone remembers your name and calls you by name?
- Do you know why your parents chose your name?
- Does your name have a special meaning?

Explain that many times in the Bible, God called people by name. God called Moses from within the burning bush. Jesus called Zacchaeus by name and told him to come down from the tree. God called Saul by name before he became a believer, and later Saul became known as Paul. When Samuel was still a child, God called him by name.

Give each camper a Samuel Listens Activity Sheet. Have them write “Samuel” on the name tag and leave space to add a few drawings during the lesson that remind them of Samuel hearing God’s call.

Explain that today's lesson is about a young boy named Samuel, whom God called to serve Him in an important way. Even before Samuel was born, God had a purpose for his life and called him by name. In the same way, God invites us to follow Jesus and learn about Him through the Bible.

Bible Study Activity

This passage teaches important truths about God's call and purpose for our lives. Even children can listen to God, follow Him, and be used by Him. This story works well as an interactive reading or to act out. Have older students help read parts aloud or read the story to younger students.

Provide students with a little background for the story.

Samuel's mother, Hannah, wanted a son more than anything, so she prayed and asked God to give her one. Hannah promised God that if He would give her a son, she would give him back to the Lord to serve Him all the days of his life. God gave Hannah the son she asked for, and she kept her promise to God. She named him Samuel, which means "God hears," because God had heard her prayers.

When the boy was old enough, she took him to the temple and presented him to Eli the priest. Samuel served in the temple.

On the "Samuel" name tags, have kids draw:

- a stick figure kneeling to represent Hannah praying
- a small temple to show Samuel serving God

Read 1 Samuel 3:1–5 aloud together (have kids open their Bibles)

1 The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions.

2 One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place.

3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the Lord, where the ark of God was.

4 Then the Lord called Samuel. Samuel answered, "Here I am."

5 And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

Ask:

- What would you do if God called to you?
- Do you think God still calls people today?

Read 1 Samuel 3:6–9 aloud together.

6 Again the Lord called, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli. He said, "Here I am. You called out to me."

"My son," Eli said, "I didn't call you. Go back and lie down."

7 Samuel didn't know the Lord yet. That's because the Lord still hadn't given him a message.

8 The Lord called out for the third time. He said, “Samuel!” Samuel got up and went to Eli. He said, “Here I am. You called out to me.”

Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy.

9 So Eli told Samuel, “Go and lie down. If someone calls out to you again, say, ‘Speak, Lord. I’m listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Ask:

- What would you think if this happened to you in the middle of the night?
- Why do you think Samuel kept obeying and going to Eli?

God called Samuel two more times, and each time Samuel got up to ask Eli what was happening. On the third time, the priest realized that it was God who was calling. He instructed the boy to answer the Lord if he heard the voice again.

Read 1 Samuel 3:10 aloud together.

10 The Lord came and stood there. He called out, just as he had done the other times. He said, “Samuel! Samuel!”

Then Samuel replied, “Speak, Lord for Your servant is listening.”

God gave Samuel an important message for Eli and his family. Eli’s sons had been disobeying God for a long time, and Eli had not stopped them. God was telling Samuel that there would be consequences for their sin. The message was difficult and probably scary for Samuel to hear, but Samuel learned that listening to God sometimes means hearing hard things and obeying anyway.

Have kids draw a big ear on the name tag to represent Samuel’s hearing God and his response:

“Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening.”

“We can listen to God too by reading the Bible and trusting Jesus.”

Tell the rest of the story — 1 Samuel 3:11–21

(Read the Scriptures or tell the story.)

Samuel answered the Lord’s call and was given some rather tough information. God did not announce that Samuel would be a great king or that he would become rich or have wonderful things happen. God actually told Samuel that some bad things were coming for Eli’s family.

Sometimes God has things for us that are not easy to hear, but they are still very real messages from Him. This was the first challenging message Samuel received from God, but it would not be the last.

Samuel was a little reluctant to tell Eli what he had heard from God, and with good reason. The words were not positive for Eli and his family. But Samuel was truthful about the Lord’s message, and Eli accepted it, knowing that it was genuinely from God. Even at a young age, Samuel was honoring God’s words and receiving important knowledge from Him.

Ask:

- Do you ever feel like you can’t have much impact because you’re a kid?
- Does this story encourage you to know that God can use people of any age?

Read 1 Samuel 3:19

19 The Lord was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of Samuel's words fall to the ground.

Samuel grew to be an important prophet, priest and judge and announced Israel's first two kings, Saul and David, and he had a close walk with God. The Lord used him in amazing ways for His people.

Ask:

- What do you want to do when you get older?
- How do you hope God will use you?

Have kids draw a heart on the name tag to represent Samuel's love for God and willingness to obey Him.

This story reminds us that God knows us, loves us, and has a purpose for our lives. We can listen to Him as we read the Bible and follow Jesus. God can use our lives for His glory and help us serve others. Just like He did with Samuel, the Lord calls us at every age to know and follow Jesus.

Bible Learning Application Activity — ABCs of Becoming a Christian

Just like God knew Samuel by name, God knows each of us personally. God loved Samuel and had a purpose for his life. God loves you too and invites you into a relationship with Jesus.

God loves you and wants to have a relationship with you. He made everything, including you and me, and He is in charge of all things. We have all sinned. Sin is choosing our own way instead of God's way. Our sin separates us from God. But God loves us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue us. Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because of what Jesus did, we can be forgiven and become part of God's family.

The ABC's of Salvation Mini Booklet

The ABCs of Becoming a Christian is a simple tool that helps us remember how to respond when prompted by the Holy Spirit to receive the gift Jesus offers. Romans 10:9-10, 13

- **A — Admit** you are a sinner, turn away from sin, and need Jesus.
- **B — Believe** Jesus died and rose again for your sins.
- **C — Confess** Jesus as Savior and choose to follow Him.

Lead campers to complete an ABCs of Becoming a Christian booklet following the instructions.

Remind campers that the choosing to follow Jesus is a special decision between you and God. If you have questions or want to know more, talk with your parents, grandparents, teacher, pastor, or one of your leaders. We would love to help you learn more about Jesus and His love for you.

Bible Verse Activity — “Samuel Listens” Telephone Game

Instructions: Whisper the message quietly and encourage campers to listen carefully, but do not reveal that the message is a Bible verse until the activity is complete.

Have campers sit in a circle. Whisper this verse into the first camper's ear:

“Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening.” — 1 Samuel 3:10

Campers quietly pass the message around the circle one person at a time. When the final camper says the verse aloud, compare it to the original verse.

Ask:

- Was it easy or hard to listen carefully?
- What happened when someone did not hear clearly?
- Why is listening important when God speaks?

Say the memory verse together as a group.

God spoke to Samuel with a voice he could hear. Today, God speaks to us through the Bible, prayer, the Holy Spirit, and people who follow Him. We can listen to God by reading His Word, praying, and obeying Him.

Prayer Activity — Listening to God

Have campers spread out quietly and sit silently for a moment. Explain that Samuel stopped and listened when God called him, and we can listen to God through prayer and the Bible too.

Ask campers to quietly thank God for loving them. Encourage them to ask God to help them follow Jesus.

After a few quiet moments, say together:

“Jesus, help me trust You and follow You every day.”

Close the group with prayer.