

## Unit 10, Session 1: Hannah and Samuel

Dear Parents,

The time of the judges was turbulent for God's people. The Israelites had conquered the promised land of Canaan, but after Joshua's death, they fell into a cycle of sin. This was the culture in which Hannah and her husband Elkanah lived. They were ordinary Israelites—Elkanah, a devoted worshiper of the Lord; and Hannah, a woman who wanted nothing more than to be a mother. But the Lord had closed her womb. (1 Sam. 1:5)

One year, when Elimelech went to make sacrifices and worship God, Hannah went too. She could no longer hide her grief over being childless. She prayed so fervently to the Lord—asking for a child and vowing to dedicate him to God—that Eli the priest rebuked her because he thought she was drunk.

God answered Hannah's prayers, and she named her son Samuel, which means "requested from God." When Samuel was old enough to wean, Hannah presented him to Eli. First Samuel 2 records Hannah's triumphant prayer. Hannah glorified God for His sovereignty; then she went home with her husband, leaving Samuel to serve God under the leadership of Eli.

Hannah visited Samuel each year and brought him a robe. Samuel faithfully served God. On the other hand, Eli's sons—though they were priests—had no regard for God. They did not listen to Eli, so God rejected Eli's family. This hard news came to Eli through the boy Samuel.

Review 1 Samuel 3. Note how Samuel responded to God's call: "Speak, for your servant is listening." This week, help your kids identify Samuel's role as God's messenger. God called Hannah's son to share God's plan. Lead them to them connect Samuel to Jesus. **Samuel used God's words to tell the people what God is like. John 1:1 says that Jesus is the Word. Jesus—the Son of God—told the world about God's plan and showed what God is like.**

Check this session's Activity Page and Big Picture Card as well as the Gospel Project for Kids Family App for ways to interact with the Bible content this week.

### FAMILY STARTING POINTS

- **Babies and Toddlers**
  - God is greater than anything.
  - God heard Hannah's prayer.
  - God used Samuel to tell His words to the people.
  - Jesus told people God's words.
- **Preschool**
  - Is anything greater than God? No, God is greater than everything.
  - God spoke to Hannah's son Samuel.
- **Kids**
  - Is anything or anyone greater than God? No, God is greater than everything and everyone.
  - God called Hannah's son to share God's plan.

### UNIT KEY PASSAGE

- **Jeremiah 10:6**

### NEXT WEEK

- **"The Ark Was Captured"** (1 Samuel 4–6)

## Unit 10, Session 2: The Ark Was Captured

Dear Parents,

The ark of God (also called “the ark of the covenant”) was an important symbol in the lives of God’s people. Not only was the ark the original container for the Ten Commandments, it symbolized God’s presence with His people.

In Exodus 25, God gave Moses instructions for creating the ark. It was made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. God forbade anyone from touching the ark, so it was carried by two poles. God would speak to Moses from between two golden cherubim on top of the ark, which was called the mercy seat. (See Num. 7:89.)

During the time of the judges, the Philistines were a near-constant threat to Israel. Under Samuel’s leadership, the Israelites went out to fight the Philistines. But Israel was defeated because of their sin.

The elders of Israel realized that God had allowed their defeat. He hadn’t fought for them against the Philistines. So they did what seemed logical to them; they took the ark—the symbol of God’s presence—and carried it to the battlefield. But the ark was not a good luck charm. Not only was Israel defeated, the Philistines captured the ark and killed Eli’s sons. When Eli heard the news, he fell over and died.

Having won the victory, the Philistines concluded that their god, Dagon, was better than the God of Israel. They moved the ark to Dagon’s temple, where God showed His power over Dagon. (See 1 Sam. 5:1-5.) As the ark moved between Philistine cities, God afflicted the people and made them sick. The message was clear: No one is like the LORD. God is greater than everything and everyone.

The Philistines returned the ark, which was a great encouragement to God’s people. **The ark of God reminded the Israelites that God was with them. Years later, God gave His people something greater than a sign that He was with them; God gave them His Son Jesus—God in the flesh. One of Jesus’ names is Immanuel, which means “God with us.”**

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### FAMILY STARTING POINTS

- **Babies and Toddlers**
  - God is greater than anything.
  - The Israelites took the ark of God to battle.
  - The Philistines took away the ark of God.
  - God is more powerful than anything or anyone.
- **Preschool**
  - Is anything greater than God? No, God is greater than everything.
  - God showed the Philistines that He is the one true God.
- **Kids**
  - Is anything or anyone greater than God? No, God is greater than everything and everyone.
  - God showed the Philistines that He is the one true God.

### UNIT KEY PASSAGE

- **Jeremiah 10:6**

### NEXT WEEK

- **“Israel’s First King” (1 Samuel 8–15)**

## Unit 10, Session 3: Israel's First King

Dear Parents,

This week's Bible story picks up more than 20 years after the Philistines returned the ark of God to the Israelites. During that time, Israel began to seek God again, and Samuel led them to remove their foreign gods and worship God only.

Samuel had judged Israel throughout his lifetime, but he was getting old. So Samuel made his sons, Joel and Abijah, judges over Israel. But like many sons before them, Joel and Abijah did not follow the example of their father. They disobeyed God and caused problems for Israel. The elders of Israel spoke to Samuel about his sons and demanded a king. All the other nations around them had kings, they pointed out. Samuel knew their desire to imitate the nations around them was sinful, and he prayed to God.

"Give them what they want," God said. "They have not rejected you; they have rejected Me as their King." Samuel explained to the Israelites what rights a king would have over them; he warned them that when they regretted asking for a king—and they would regret it—God would not help them.

The people insisted on having a king, so God chose a man named Saul to be the king. By all appearances, Saul was a good king. He was handsome, taller than most people, and God had blessed him. But Saul failed to obey God. First, Saul sinned by burning offerings in Samuel's absence. Later, when the Israelites defeated the Amalekites, Saul did not follow God's instructions for destroying everything. The Lord regretted making Saul king.

Help your kids understand that Saul was not the king the people needed. **God intended for a heavenly king to rule over Israel, but the Israelites did not trust God's plan and wanted a king like the nations around them. God gave them a king, but Saul did not obey God. God had a plan to send His Son, Jesus. King Jesus trusted and obeyed God perfectly and died so sinners could be forgiven and accepted.**

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### FAMILY STARTING POINTS

- **Babies and Toddlers**
  - God is greater than anything.
  - God's people wanted a king to lead them.
  - Saul was the first king of Israel.
  - God sent Jesus to be our Savior and King.
- **Preschool**
  - Is anything greater than God? No, God is greater than everything.
  - God's people wanted a king.
- **Kids**
  - Is anything or anyone greater than God? No, God is greater than everything and everyone.
  - God's people wanted a king like the nations around them.

### UNIT KEY PASSAGE

- **Jeremiah 10:6**

### NEXT WEEK

- **"David Was Anointed"** (1 Samuel 16–17)