



# Here I Am, Lord

Goal: To recognize God's call to faith by listening.

## RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

### . . . In 1 Samuel 3:1–4:1a

God's call to the boy Samuel began his life as an important prophet in Israel.

Samuel's birth was unexpected. His mother Hannah prayed in the temple to God for a son whom she would dedicate to the Lord. Eli had thought she had drunk too much wine. But Hannah gave birth to a son (1:12–18). As part of his dedication, Samuel lived in the temple with the old priest, Eli.

When Samuel heard God call him in the night, he twice went to Eli who—again—misunderstood what was happening. With Samuel's third trip to Eli, the priest got the message. God had called the boy Samuel, in the still and quiet of the night, to tell Eli that the wickedness of his household would be judged by God. Samuel had said to the Lord: "I'm listening," Samuel answered. "What do you want me to do?" (3:10). Samuel conveyed the message to Eli and "everyone in the country knew that Samuel was truly the Lord's prophet" (v. 20) and Samuel spoke to the whole nation (4:1).

Samuel recognized God's speaking to him. He received God's grace in his call by God and, in gratitude, became the Lord's prophet to Israel.

### . . . In Your Children's Experiences

Beginning the conversation with the story, "Have you ever been surprised in the middle of the night?" would be a good introduction to this vivid story of God calling Samuel, a young boy who had been given back to God by his grateful mother, Hannah. Children of all ages can share their own reactions to what it must have been like for Samuel and for Eli to know that God was very close. Another connection with the lives of children is that just like Samuel, we never know when God will show up, when we will be called to respond with God's love and grace.

### . . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Children will enjoy hearing this story about God's call to Samuel during the night. As you tell the story, pause to invite them to wonder about the story. Ask open-ended questions like, "What do you think it would have been like to leave your family and go and live with an elderly priest when you were a young child?" or "What do you think Samuel was thinking when he heard the voice calling him?" Inviting their responses is a great way to help them be attentive to the many ways God calls people to work for justice and peace in the world, even them!

*God, open my ears to your call as I seek  
to help the children do the same. Amen.*



## Supplies

basic supplies  
(see p. vii)

audio recording  
(see p. ix)

**Music & Melodies (MM)**  
**2017-2018**

**Stories, Colors & More (SCM)** 4, 4a, 27, 28, 32, 35-38

## Guided Play

choice 1: items that makes noise when shaken, such as a baby rattle, dog chew toy, metal Christmas bells, tin of breath mints, small tambourine, small rain stick, handful of gravel or pebbles, and so forth

## Exploring

choice 2: envelopes, flannel fabric, large craft sticks

choice 3: pastor or church leader

choice 4: copies of **Grace Notes (GN) 1**

## GATHERING IN GOD'S GRACE

### Before the Children Arrive

Select the activities that will work best for you and your children. You do not need to do everything suggested.

Designate a story corner and lay out a blanket or individual mats for the children so their backs will be to the door.

Post **SCM 35-36**. Use the visual schedule to provide clear expectations and a visual cue.

See **SCM 37-38** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children with special needs or disabilities.

Exploring options 2 and 3 require more prep.

### Welcoming and Guided Play



Greet children as they arrive and say, "Grace and peace be with you." Prompt them to respond, "And also with you." Be sensitive to any children who might be coming for the first time. Introduce yourself to parents/caregivers that you do not know personally. Tell the parents today's story is about the call of Samuel, a young boy who became a prophet—a messenger for God. Invite the children to choose a guided play activity to start:

- 1. What's that Sound?**—Invite them to gently shake or manipulate each bag and say what they think is in each bag. Open the bags to find out what was in each bag. Listen again to the sound each item makes.
- 2. Housekeeping Corner**—Invite the children to play in a housekeeping corner. Engage them in conversation about what they are doing. Tell them that they will hear a story about a young boy who helped an older man who could not see well. The young boy would help prepare food, sweep the house, and light the lamps.
- 3. Listening**—Instruct the children to find a place against a wall. Tell them that you will give them instructions to join you, and they need to listen carefully. Use directions, such as take one giant step, turn in a circle, take two tiny steps, take a hop, or those of your own choosing.

**T** *Transitions can be difficult for children. Do not force reluctant children to join a group activity. Instead, allow them to observe quietly from their own play area or to listen to a story read to them by an adult helper until they are ready to join the group.*



## Transitioning to Story Time



When you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, singing “You Call Us, God”—**MM 4**; **SCM 28**. Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate.

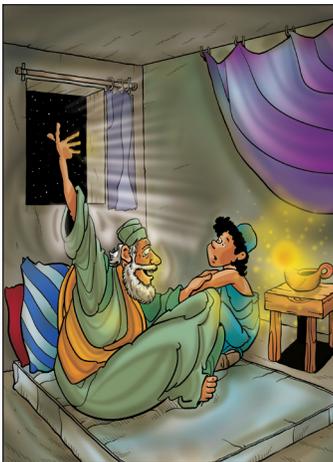
### Call and Response

Write the children’s names on a sheet of paper in a column. Tell the children that you will call their name, and when they hear their name to respond, “I’m here!” Then invite the child to come put a sticker by their name and say “I’m here!” again.

### Helper Song

Using the tune “If You’re Happy and You Know It,” teach the children the following song:

If you’re a helper and you know it,  
nod your head (*nod, nod.*)  
If you’re a helper and you know it,  
nod your head (*nod, nod.*)  
If you’re a helper and you know it,  
what you do will surely show it.  
If you’re a helper and you know it,  
nod your head (*nod, nod.*)



### Hearing the Story

Open the Bible to 1 Samuel 16 so the children will know the story comes from the Bible. Tell the children that they are going to hear a story about a young boy named Samuel who was called by God to be a prophet—a messenger for God.

Read **SCM 4** or **4a**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.” After you have read the story, form two groups and have them move to opposite sides of the story corner. Tell one group that they are Samuel and tell the other group that they are Eli. Call out, “Samuel! Samuel!” Tell the Samuel group to get up and run to the Eli group and say, “Here I am. What do you need?” Instruct the Eli group to sit up and say, “I didn’t call you. Go back to bed.” Tell the Samuel group to go back and lay down. Repeat these actions two more times. At the third time, tell the Eli group to respond, “God is calling you. Say, ‘Here I am. What do you want me to do?’” Tell the Samuel group to go back and lie down. Call “Samuel! Samuel!” one more time and have the Samuel group sit up and say, “Here I am. What do you want me to do?”



## EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE

### 1. Listening Game



Tell the children that they are going to play a listening game where they have a turn to see if they can tell whose voice is calling their name. Use the following directions to explain how the game will be played:

- One child will sit on a chair facing away from the rest of the children.
- Tap one child in the group to be the “speaker” and call out the child’s name who is sitting in the chair. Everyone else must be quiet.
- The child in the chair tries to guess who called out his or her name. Depending on the size of your group, the child in the chair may have up to three guesses, with the “speaker” calling out the child’s name again after each incorrect guess.

Let every child who wants a turn at being the child in the chair have one. Have the “speaker” be different children, but you will want to repeat some children so that the child listening person doesn’t guess by process of elimination.



### 2. Samuel! Samuel!

Seal envelopes and cut off the narrow ends of the envelopes. Cut rectangles of flannel the size of the envelopes. Remind the children that Samuel was sleeping each time he heard his name called and he jumped up to see who called him. Tell them they are going to make Samuel in his bed. Give each child an envelope and rectangle of flannel. Instruct them to glue the flannel to one side of the envelope. Give them each a large craft stick and tell them to draw a face on one end of the craft stick. Have them put the craft stick in the open end of the envelope. Call out “Samuel! Samuel!” and encourage the children to pull out their craft sticks and say, “Here I am. What do you need?” Repeat several times. Then tell the children to turn the craft stick over and draw their face on the other side. Have them put the craft stick with their face in the envelope. Call out each person’s name and invite each child to respond, “Here I am. What do you want me to do?”

If flannel is not available, cloth scraps or napkins will work.

Wooden girl and boy shaped craft sticks may be available at craft stores and online.



### 3. Samuel Was a Special Boy

Invite your pastor or another leader in your church to share how God called them to serve in a particular task in the church. Remind the visitor that they are talking to a group of 3 to 5 year olds and to keep their narrative simple: What did God call them to do? How did you know that God was the one that called you? Encourage the children to ask questions. Invite the visitor to share in the snack time.

To end, sing a song based on the tune of “God Loves You, and God Loves Me”—**MM 27**; **SCM 32**—as a reminder of Samuel’s call:

God called Samuel and God calls us,  
and that’s the way our God is,  
God calls us, listen for God’s voice,  
and that’s the way our God is.

### 4. Coloring Page

Hand out **GN 1** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture of Samuel. Engage the children in conversation as they color using the following wondering questions:

- ▼ I wonder, “What did Samuel do to help Eli?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How did Samuel help God?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How did Samuel feel being God’s messenger?”

**T** *Transitions can be difficult. This may be a good time for some quick physical activities, such as squatting down, jumping up, and circling arms, and so forth.*

## LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Call the children together, singing “God Is So Good”—**MM 3**; **SCM 27**. Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate. Remind the children that Samuel was a helper to Eli, and then God called Samuel to be God’s helper. Ask the children how they can be a helper for someone this week.

Call the children to snack time. Invite the children to repeat each line of the following prayer:

Thank you, God, for the food before us. /  
Thank you, God, for the friends beside us. /  
Thank you, God, for the love between us. /  
Amen. /

As the children leave, bless them: “(Name), listen! God is calling you to help others. Look for ways to be a helper. The grace of God is with you.”

Ask parents and caregivers for their e-mail addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit [gracesightings.org](http://gracesightings.org).



# Here I Am, Lord



God told Samuel that he would be a prophet, a messenger for God.

