

**To Study:** 1 Samuel chapters 1, 2, 3:1-21.

**To Read in class:** 1 Samuel 3:1-10.

**Memory Texts:**

**Younger:** Isaiah 55:3 “Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live.”

**Older:** Isaiah 55:3 “Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live;  
And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.”

**OBJECTIVES: To teach that:**

1. Even a very small child is capable of learning truth and serving the Lord.
2. The suffering in Hannah’s life made her become a more spiritual person.
3. Hannah gave back to the Lord that which was most important to her.
4. The Lord is looking for people to use in His service, and He starts preparing them in advance for the work they will do.
5. God blesses the child who obeys and submits to those who are older.

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**SCENE No. 1. VISUAL AIDS: Figures of various families consisting of parents and children, traveling towards Shiloh with Hannah and Elkanah among them, without children.**

**DEVELOPMENT:**

- From the times of Joshua (Joshua 18:1), the tabernacle had been located in Shiloh.
- Among those who lived in Shiloh were Eli, the High Priest, and his sons, Hophni and Phinehas. The sons were evil men, “they knew not the Lord” (1 Samuel 2:129).
- Elkanah, Hannah’s husband, was a Levite, but it seems he had no responsibility directly related to the house of God.
- Elkanah and his family were faithful to God’s law. They were a contrast to many who were leaving God out of their lives.
- Cns.** The spiritual level in the nation was at low ebb, and there was little encouragement for people to follow the Lord.
- There were three annual feasts at the tabernacle in Shiloh that the Israelites were required to attend. Despite the spiritual condition of the nation at this time, Elkanah and family attended.
- People traveled in groups for mutual protection and for company.
- Hannah would feel very alone, for other family groups traveled with children, and she had none.
- Peninnah, Elkanah’s other wife, mocked Hannah because she had no children. This caused Hannah much distress, especially at festival times.
- Sug.** Since Peninnah is mentioned as part of the reason for Hannah’s suffering, the teacher could comment briefly on the practice of former times when some men had more than one wife.
- Every Israelite woman wanted to become a mother, and when Hannah saw other families coming to the feast, she would feel inadequate.
- No doubt, this was why Hannah wept and did not enjoy the feast.
- Cns.** Suffering made Hannah a more spiritual woman, for she took refuge in prayer, while Peninnah, who had much reason to be grateful to the Lord, did not show any outstanding spiritual qualities.
- Elkanah comforted Hannah, for he loved her very much. However, her desire to have children continued to weigh on her.

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# SAMUEL IS CALLED

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**SCENE No. 2. VISUAL AIDS: Before the tabernacle in Shiloh, figures of Hannah praying and Eli sitting nearby observing.**

**DEVELOPMENT:**

- Eli was not only the high priest but also a judge in Israel.
- Seated near a pillar of the tabernacle, or temple (for so it was called, since it was set up in Shiloh in a permanent form), Eli could give counsel or attend to those who sought him out.

**Cns.** In the O.T. the priests were not seated but always standing, carrying out the activities of their office.

**Cns.** Is it significant that Eli was seated?

- As well as lacking energy, Eli lacked discernment.
- Hannah had gone away from the rest of the group and was alone, praying and taking her problem to the Lord, the only One Who could help her.
- Hannah discerned the great spiritual need among God’s people and asked the Lord for a man-child to dedicate to the Lord as a Nazarite. (See the terms of the Nazarite in Numbers 6:1-21).

**Cns.** While others enjoyed the feast, Hannah’s suffering made her more conscious of the needs of the people and of the great power of God.

**Cmt.** Hannah is outstanding, for in her keen desire to have a child she put the things of God and His people in first place.

- Hannah’s petition for a child was in order to dedicate him to the service of God. She was unselfish, for she was willing to give the child back to God for His use, and not retain him for herself.
- Hannah suffered from Eli’s lack of understanding, but she answered him with humility and respect. She did not feel sorry for herself.

**Lsn.** It is well to stress that older people should be shown respect, including those who are occupied in the things of God. The children should also respect you, the teacher.

- Upon realizing he was mistaken about Hannah, Eli united his prayers to those of Hannah and sent her away in peace.

- In turning her problem over to the Lord, Hannah’s faith is seen for “... the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad” (1 Samuel 1:18).

**Cns.** When we understand that the Lord permits suffering, it produces a spiritual exercise in the heart of those who are humble. They are exercised to seek blessing for others also.

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# SAMUEL IS CALLED

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**SCENE No. 3. VISUAL AIDS: In Shiloh, figures of Hannah, her child and Eli, and on another area of the board, figures to show various stages of growth of the child.**

**DEVELOPMENT:**

- The Lord remembered Hannah, and within a short time, she had a child.

**Sug.** The teacher should go over the different stages of the child's growth, beginning with Samuel's birth, his infancy and his childhood. Hannah, as well as Samuel, would always have in mind that some day he would go away to serve the Lord.

- Samuel's name means "Asked of God," or as some prefer, "Heard by God."

**Cmt.** Each time Hannah spoke his name, she would be reminded of how good is God who hears the prayers of His own.

**Cns.** Some names in the Old Testament were given on the basis of some special experience. For example, there is the case of Moses, as well as Eli's grandson Ichabod. For similar reasons Daniel and his friends didn't want to have their names changed.

- During the few years that Hannah had Samuel at home she would be very careful to teach him many things, especially those which had to do with spiritual matters.

**Exm.** Samuel would have had to learn, for example, that he could not cut his hair due to the commitment made by his mother that he would be a Nazarite to the Lord.

**Sug.** This point can be used to explain why Christians do not involve themselves in things such as the world's entertainment. Those who do not understand why, call them "prohibitions". Those who have the Lord's interests at heart understand it to "being sanctified" (or being set apart) to God.

- In appreciation of the answer to prayer, Elkanah and all the family traveled to Shiloh at the time of another feast to present a thanksgiving sacrifice that was specifically related to the law of the Nazarite (1 Samuel 1:21; Numbers 30:3a, 6-7).

**Cns.** It is important to show that as Christians we ought to be thankful to the Lord, and to be generous. Gratitude ought to motivate us to yield our possessions and ourselves to Him.

- Elkanah and his family lived in Ramathaim-zophim, some 15 kilometers from Shiloh.

- Hannah preferred to stay home with Samuel and not go to the feast until the child was weaned.

**Cmt.** Elkanah is seen as a considerate husband, for he sympathized with Hannah when she longed for a child. Now he understood how she felt and did not demand that she make the journey at that time (1 Samuel 1:22-23).

- When the time arrived to give the child to the service of God, Hannah had joy in doing so and sang a very beautiful song as praise to God (1 Samuel 2:1-10).

**Cmt.** Hannah's Song shows she had a deep knowledge of God.

**Cns.** Elkanah and Hannah might have been reluctant to leave Samuel among such godless persons as were Eli's sons, but their faith in God allowed them to keep their promise.

**Sug.** It would be well to draw attention to the fact that Hannah made a promise to God and kept it to the letter.

- Each year Hannah visited her son and took him clothing.

- Samuel willingly served Eli, and the Lord took that as a service to Himself.

**Lsn.** We serve God when we serve others.

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**SCENE No. 4. VISUAL AIDS: A room in the temple with Eli in one bed and Samuel in another.**

**DEVELOPMENT:**

- The child Samuel was totally unlike Eli's sons.
- The Lord knew Samuel, even though he was just a child, and He called him by his name.
- He knew that Samuel was faithful and obedient, someone to whom He could communicate His word.
- Samuel's willingness to serve another was very evident since the child ran to Eli, thinking it was his voice he had heard.

- Samuel did not yet know the Lord personally, except for what had been taught him by others.

**Cmt.** Samuel allowed himself to be guided by Eli, who had the privilege of telling him how to respond to God.

- In vs. 10 God calls twice, saying "Samuel, Samuel." The double use of his name gives us to understand that what He had to say to him was important.

**Cmt.** Seven times in the Bible God addresses persons by repeating their name twice.

- The words used by Samuel as he responded to the Lord are what God wants to hear from every child.

**Sug.** Three important points explain how Samuel responded:

1. With respect, "Speak Lord."
2. With humility, "Thy servant."
3. With commitment, "Thy servant **HEARS.**"

**Apl.** Are the students willing to respond in the same way?

- The Lord gave Samuel a message of judgment upon Eli, for the word of the Lord was little known in those days, and others did not live in touch with God.

**Cmt.** The teacher should be encouraged to realize that in spite of conditions in the world today, a child who is saved can be used in a special way for the Lord.

- Samuel became a messenger for Jehovah and was recognized as a faithful prophet of the Lord.

**Apl.** God has a purpose for the life of each child, but this is only found when the child first of all responds to God's voice and then yields himself to Him.

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