



**cell outlines**  
**JUNE 2018**

These Cell Outlines are written by Youth and Children's Ministries. They are available every month from our web site. For more information and other Cell resources, visit [salvationarmy.org.uk/children-and-youth-resources](http://salvationarmy.org.uk/children-and-youth-resources)

OVERVIEW

## A CALL WITH A PURPOSE

### Remind app

As well as providing material for gathered group times, this year we will also be facilitating day-by-day discipleship journeys through the 'Remind' app. By signing up to this, young people (and anyone else) will receive daily discipleship questions, thoughts and challenges directly to their phones. Please encourage your young people to sign up to this by going to [www.remind.com/join/followsa](http://www.remind.com/join/followsa) and downloading the 'Remind' app to their mobiles. Alternatively you can search for YCMUSA on the app.

# SENDING OUT THE 72

## WELCOME

**Say:** In the Gospel of Luke Jesus sent out his disciples, the first ever missionaries to share the good news to all the nations. Was it 70 disciples, or 72 (Luke 10:1)? Scholars and translators can't agree on this small and somewhat unimportant detail. What is important about the passage in Luke 10 is the power that Jesus gave to his followers. When something is repeated in the Bible, especially by Jesus, it's an indicator that it's a pretty important point or theme. In verses 9 and 11 we hear Jesus talking about the Kingdom of God coming near. When we think about the Kingdom of God, a common misconception is to think of fluffy clouds and baby angels with harps; when we think of its whereabouts it is usually some distant invisible place in the sky.

So when Jesus says, 'the kingdom of God has come near to you' (Luke 10:9), it is clear that our call to evangelism (sharing the good news) is not to warn people of the coming time when a chosen few will enter the distant Kingdom; but instead to proclaim the good news of God's plan to reconcile Heaven and Earth – that the Kingdom of God is in fact near!

### Game: Stuck in the Mud (with a twist)

Split the group down the middle, with one half of the group labelled Heaven, the other half earth. Ensure it is a clean split down the middle of the room to signify the separation of Heaven and earth. Commence the game of 'Stuck in the Mud' and when there is a winner (or the game comes to a natural end) ask everyone to freeze.

Put your hands up if you were labelled 'Heaven', then hands up labelled 'earth'. All being well, everyone should be mixed up.

Explanation: Heaven and earth will one day be reconciled. In Luke 17:21 Jesus says: '...nor will people say, "Here it is," or "There it is," because the kingdom of God is in your midst.' Our job is to be witnesses to this good news.

## WORD

**Watch:** *Heaven and Earth* video by The Bible Project

 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zy2AQIK6C5k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zy2AQIK6C5k)

Discuss if anyone has initial questions.

 Read a verse each from Luke 10: 1-23:

<sup>1</sup> After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. <sup>2</sup> He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. <sup>3</sup> Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. <sup>4</sup> Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

<sup>5</sup> "When you enter a house, first say, "Peace to this house." <sup>6</sup> If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. <sup>7</sup> Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

<sup>8</sup> "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. <sup>9</sup> Heal the sick who are there and tell them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you." <sup>10</sup> But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, <sup>11</sup> "Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near." <sup>12</sup> I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

<sup>13</sup> "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and

ashes. <sup>14</sup> But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. <sup>15</sup> And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades.

<sup>16</sup> 'Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me.'

<sup>17</sup> The seventy-two returned with joy and said, 'Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.'

<sup>18</sup> He replied, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. <sup>19</sup> I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. <sup>20</sup> However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.'

<sup>21</sup> At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, 'I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

<sup>22</sup> 'All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.'

<sup>23</sup> Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, 'Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. <sup>24</sup> For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.'

### Discussion questions:

1. What does Jesus mean when he says: 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few' (v2)?
2. What are the implications of this on our lives?
3. What does it mean to be a lamb among wolves (v3)?
4. Who/what might the wolves be for us in 2018?
5. (v16) 'Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me.' What is Jesus saying about our relationship with him?
6. (v20) 'No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.' Who are the three persons in the Trinity? From this passage how do we come to know the Father?
7. How did Jesus make a way for us to know the Father?

### Application questions:

1. Jesus makes it clear that he is giving his followers immense power (v19). How can rejoicing in our own works be dangerous?
2. How could this power change the way we talk to our friends about Jesus?
3. Who is qualified to share the good news? (See also Matthew 28:16-20)
4. How does Jesus' death and resurrection compel us to share the good news?
5. In what ways have you found it uncomfortable to share the good news with your friends? What does the Bible say about how we should approach sharing the gospel? (See v17; see also Isaiah 6:8)

## WORSHIP

**Listen to:** Hillsong Worship - 'With All I Am'

 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=FMraafe7Mns](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FMraafe7Mns)

Are there any people you meet regularly throughout your week that you could pray for an opportunity to share the good news with? Take a few moments alone listening to this song, praying for those people and for God's power and strength to be with you when you speak to them about Jesus.

## **WITNESS**

Write those people's names on a piece of paper, then exchange the paper with someone else in the room and pray for that person.

# MOSES: BEING BOLD IN FAITH

## WELCOME

**Say:** Moses is one of the most influential biblical figures. When we think of him we might instantly think of stories such as the burning bush, the plagues of Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea and the Passover. In the New Testament, we are reminded that Moses was a man who was bold in his faith. He was faithful even when he couldn't see God. For God said: 'You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live' (Exodus 33:20).

**Watch:** The Book of Genesis Overview – Part 2 of 2 a video by The Bible Project

 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=VpbWbyx1008](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VpbWbyx1008)

**Say:** A covenant is a two-way promise; the Old Testament is full of them. God promises something with an expectation that we do something in return. The word 'testament' is another word for covenant. This can change the way we view the Old Testament and the New Testament. Last session we discussed how if something is repeated in the Bible it's important. The word 'covenant' is mentioned 285 times in the Old Testament alone.

The Mosaic Covenant is God's promise to the Israelites, that they will be his chosen people; in turn, they must obey his Law. When Jesus came he made a New Covenant by dying on the cross and rising again. But this is a different type of Covenant – we don't have to do anything in return to be in a relationship with God. Before Jesus, the way in which God's people enjoyed his presence was through the tabernacle – the tent in which God's presence dwelt.

Last week we saw in the video that 'tabernacle' means to dwell.

 Read Exodus 40:34-38:

<sup>34</sup> Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. <sup>35</sup>

Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

<sup>36</sup> In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out; <sup>37</sup> but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out – until the day it lifted. <sup>38</sup> So the cloud of the Lord was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the Israelites during all their travels.

### Game: Pictionary

Split the group into two teams. Each team selects a person to receive a word/phrase they must draw for their teammates to guess. The person who identifies the word runs to the leader to receive a new word/phrase which they have to draw, and so on. The winning team is the first team to correctly guess all the words/phrases. (You can vary the Pictionary rules depending on how you play the game.)

**Explanation:** Just as your teammates had to run and receive messages from the leader, Moses had to convey the messages from God that he received inside the tabernacle. Moses, along with other prophets, had privileged access to God. However, Jesus came to make a way for us all to be in relationship with the Father.

## WORD

 Read John 14: 1-14:

'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. <sup>4</sup> You know the way to the place where I am going.'

<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?'

<sup>6</sup> Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except

through me. <sup>7</sup> If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.'

<sup>8</sup> Philip said, 'Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.'

<sup>9</sup> Jesus answered: 'Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? <sup>10</sup> Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. <sup>11</sup> Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup> Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup> And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.'

### Discussion Questions:

1. 'I am the way and the truth and the life' (v6). There is no longer a separation between God and his people. We have complete unlimited access to the Father through Jesus. Philip doesn't understand this, and he asks Jesus to show him the Father. Philip doesn't understand that he is seeing the Father through Jesus. In the 21st century many will say they do not believe in Jesus because they have not seen him. How can we know Jesus is real without directly seeing him?
2. God dwells (or 'tabernacles') inside Jesus. The physical Old Testament Temple has been transformed into a living, breathing person who we can have a personal relationship with: 'No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father.' Through Jesus we now have a direct relationship with God; no longer does anyone have to go into the Temple. How does Jesus' dying on the cross make it easier for us to have a relationship with God?

 Read Hebrews 11:

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. <sup>2</sup> This is what the ancients were commended for.

<sup>3</sup> By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

<sup>4</sup> By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

<sup>5</sup> By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: 'He could not be found, because God had taken him away.' For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. <sup>6</sup> And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

<sup>7</sup> By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.

<sup>8</sup> By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. <sup>9</sup> By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. <sup>10</sup> For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. <sup>11</sup> And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. <sup>12</sup> And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

<sup>13</sup> All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things

promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. <sup>14</sup> People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. <sup>15</sup> If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup> Instead, they were longing for a better country – a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

<sup>17</sup> By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, <sup>18</sup> even though God had said to him, 'It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.' <sup>19</sup> Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.

<sup>20</sup> By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.

<sup>21</sup> By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshipped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

<sup>22</sup> By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones.

<sup>23</sup> By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

<sup>24</sup> By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. <sup>25</sup> He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. <sup>26</sup> He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. <sup>27</sup> By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. <sup>28</sup> By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

<sup>29</sup> By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

<sup>30</sup> By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days.

<sup>31</sup> By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

<sup>32</sup> And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, <sup>33</sup> who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup> quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. <sup>35</sup> Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. <sup>36</sup> Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. <sup>37</sup> They were put to death by stoning; they were sawn in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated – <sup>38</sup> the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.

<sup>39</sup> These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, <sup>40</sup> since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

### Application Questions:

1. Name some people in your life who live by faith. How can you tell that they are living by faith? What attributes do they show?
2. Why did Moses choose to be mistreated (v25)?
3. What are some examples of how we can choose a life of faith over the 'fleeting pleasures of sin'?
4. What reward did Moses envisage?

## WORSHIP

**Listen to:** Elevation Worship – ‘Give Me Faith’

▶ [www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNwt7LQiYck](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNwt7LQiYck)

I need you to soften my heart  
And break me apart  
I need you to open my eyes  
To see that you’re shaping my life  
All I am, I surrender

Give me faith to trust what you say  
That you’re good and your love is great  
I’m broken inside, I give you my life

I need you to soften my heart  
And break me apart  
I need you to pierce through the dark  
And cleanse every part of me  
All I am, I surrender

Give me faith to trust what you say  
That you’re good and your love is great  
I’m broken inside, I give you my life

’Cause I may be weak  
But your Spirit strong in me  
My flesh may fail  
My God you never will

I may be weak  
But your Spirit strong in me  
My flesh may fail  
My God you never will

Give me faith to trust what you say  
That you’re good and your love is great  
I’m broken inside, I give you my life

Give me faith to trust what you say  
That you’re good and your love is great  
I’m broken inside, I give you my life

’Cause I may be weak  
But your Spirit strong in me  
My flesh may fail  
My God you never will

I may be weak  
But your Spirit strong in me  
My flesh may fail  
My God you never will

## WITNESS

**Say:** The list of faithful people in Hebrews 11 all faced trials and persecution that we are unlikely ever to experience. In a world full of sinful temptations disguised as fashionable trends, what do we learn from these examples and why does the author choose to include such a list?

As the music plays, pray for strength to resist the temptations that come at us from all sides. Lord, give us faith this week to trust in you.

# ESTHER: WHAT IS OUR PURPOSE?

## WELCOME

**Say:** The story of Esther is more compelling than many movie plots. Esther is the queen who courageously risks her life to save her people. Her bravery is remembered throughout the rest of the Bible's narrative. It is also notably the only book in the Bible that does not once mention God by name. It is a story of great faith in the face of great enemies, even when God seems out of reach. Esther was placed in that exact moment for a specific reason to fulfil God's purpose. This beautiful story reveals God's sovereignty at the heart of the Bible, showing us how God is constantly using us to achieve his greater plan.

 Read Esther 4:14 (NLT):

**'If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?'**

**Watch:** *Esther* a video by The Bible Project

 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=JydNSlufRIs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JydNSlufRIs)

### Game: Two Truths and One Lie

Go around the room and get everyone to share two truths and one lie. The challenge is to try and guess what the lie is.

**Explanation:** Esther had to strategically hide her true identity from the king in order to save her people.

## WORD

 Read Esther 4 (NLT):

<sup>1</sup> When Mordecai learned about all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on burlap and ashes, and went out into the city, crying with a loud and bitter wail. <sup>2</sup> He went as far as the gate of the palace, for no one was allowed to enter the palace gate while wearing clothes of mourning. <sup>3</sup> And as news of the king's decree reached all the provinces, there was great mourning among the Jews. They fasted, wept, and wailed, and many people lay in burlap and ashes.

<sup>4</sup> When Queen Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her about Mordecai, she was deeply distressed. She sent clothing to him to replace the burlap, but he refused it. <sup>5</sup> Then Esther sent for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs who had been appointed as her attendant. She ordered him to go to Mordecai and find out what was troubling him and why he was in mourning. <sup>6</sup> So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the square in front of the palace gate.

<sup>7</sup> Mordecai told him the whole story, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. <sup>8</sup> Mordecai gave Hathach a copy of the decree issued in Susa that called for the death of all Jews. He asked Hathach to show it to Esther and explain the situation to her. He also asked Hathach to direct her to go to the king to beg for mercy and plead for her people. <sup>9</sup> So Hathach returned to Esther with Mordecai's message.

<sup>10</sup> Then Esther told Hathach to go back and relay this message to Mordecai: <sup>11</sup> 'All the king's officials and even the people in the provinces know that anyone who appears before the king in his inner court without being invited is doomed to die unless the king holds out his gold sceptre. And the king has not called for me to come to him for thirty days.' <sup>12</sup> So Hathach gave Esther's message to Mordecai.

<sup>13</sup> Mordecai sent this reply to Esther: 'Don't think for a moment that because you're in the palace you will escape when all other Jews are killed. <sup>14</sup> If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows

if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?’

<sup>15</sup> Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: <sup>16</sup> ‘Go and gather together all the Jews of Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will do the same. And then, though it is against the law, I will go in to see the king. If I must die, I must die.’ <sup>17</sup> So Mordecai went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

 Read 1 Samuel 15:1-3 (NIV):

<sup>1</sup> Samuel said to Saul, ‘I am the one the Lord sent to anoint you king over his people Israel; so listen now to the message from the Lord. <sup>2</sup> This is what the Lord Almighty says: “I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. <sup>3</sup> Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy all that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.”’

### Historical Information

Haman was believed to descend from Agag, King of the Amalekites. As we can see from the passage we read in 1 Samuel, many years before, God had ordered King Saul to completely destroy the Amalekites. But Saul did not fully obey the Lord’s commands. If Saul had fully obeyed God, the Jews would have not had to deal with Haman centuries later. In Saul’s case the personal consequence of his rebellion was the loss of his throne. But his disobedience had consequences more far-reaching than that – Jews living in the Persian Empire in Esther’s day were threatened with annihilation because of Saul’s disobedience.

This historical context shows us how God’s hand is in every part of human history.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Do you ever doubt God’s sovereignty?
2. What was Esther risking by approaching the king?

 Read Hebrews 4:14-16 (NLT):

<sup>14</sup> So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. <sup>15</sup> This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. <sup>16</sup> So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

3. Contrast the likelihood of Esther gaining an audience with the king to the likelihood we have of gaining an audience with the King of kings.
4. How and why are the two situations different?
5. Do we have boldness in our actions like Esther?
6. Continue reading to Chapter 5. What are the possible reasons Esther may have chosen to delay revealing her request by an additional day?
7. Do you struggle with the concept of God’s timing? How can we be impatient and controlling when it comes to timing?
8. Mordecai’s act was recorded in the book of Chronicles, yet forgotten until God revealed it as the perfect time. Honestly, do we have faith and trust in God’s timing?
9. What are some practical ways we can overcome this?
10. Read the whole of the book of Esther, and ask yourself how the life and teaching of Jesus is in contrast to the attitudes in the story.

## WORSHIP

**Listen to:** Hillsong Worship – Who You Say I Am

 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKw6uqtGfFo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKw6uqtGfFo)

## WITNESS

This week, try and keep a list of the different things that happen (good and bad). At the end of the week have a look back at how God's sovereignty was in all of it. If you can't see it, come back to your diary at the end of month, or even the end of the year. God may seem silent now, but he is working for your good. Sometimes we can see God at work instantly; in other situations it takes time to see where God has been at work. Sometimes it's only when we look back that we can see where his guidance has been operating for our good.

# HEARING GOD

## WELCOME

**Say:** So far in June we have looked at how God wants to send out his disciples to share the good news. To do this we must be his faithful servants and obediently trust his purpose and plan for our lives. In the last session we looked at how God has a divine purpose for each of our lives. In this session we will learn how to become more in tune with his voice, and how to effectively communicate with our creator.

“ ‘Have you ever considered how many voices are speaking to you every day? Of course, we interact regularly with friends and family, classmates and co-workers, but this is barely the beginning. Every day, we are listening to the voices of television, books, podcasts, music or talk radio, movies, newspapers, Twitter feeds and Facebook streams, and on and on. As Christians, one of the most important questions we can ask is, “Am I hearing God’s voice? Are we hearing God’s voice in the Bible as just another sliver of noise in the echo chamber of our minds? Or do we give God’s word the undistracted audience it deserves?” Think through the habits of your life, the voices you listen to – does God’s voice shape and colour, amplify or silence the other voices you hear? What we hear and what we listen to every day is the material that will make up our faith (Romans 10:17). Are you letting God’s word feed your faith?’

*Habits of Grace, David Mathis*

## WORD

📖 Read 1 Samuel 3 (NIV):

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

<sup>2</sup> One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> Then the Lord called Samuel.

Samuel answered, ‘Here I am.’ <sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> Again the Lord called, ‘Samuel!’ And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, ‘Here I am; you called me.’

‘My son,’ Eli said, ‘I did not call; go back and lie down.’

<sup>7</sup> Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

<sup>8</sup> A third time the Lord called, ‘Samuel!’ And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, ‘Here I am; you called me.’

Then Eli realised that the Lord was calling the boy. <sup>9</sup> So Eli told Samuel, ‘Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.”’ So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

<sup>10</sup> The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’

Then Samuel said, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’

<sup>11</sup> And the Lord said to Samuel: ‘See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle. <sup>12</sup> At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family – from beginning to end. <sup>13</sup> For I told him that I would judge his family for ever

SESSION  
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because of the sin he knew about; his sons blasphemed God, and he failed to restrain them. <sup>14</sup> Therefore I swore to the house of Eli, “The guilt of Eli’s house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering.”

<sup>15</sup> Samuel lay down until morning and then opened the doors of the house of the Lord. He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, <sup>16</sup> but Eli called him and said, ‘Samuel, my son.’

Samuel answered, ‘Here I am.’

<sup>17</sup> ‘What was it he said to you?’ Eli asked. ‘Do not hide it from me. May God deal with you, be it ever so severely, if you hide from me anything he told you.’ <sup>18</sup> So Samuel told him everything, hiding nothing from him. Then Eli said, ‘He is the Lord; let him do what is good in his eyes.’

<sup>19</sup> The Lord was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of Samuel’s words fall to the ground. <sup>20</sup> And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognised that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the Lord.

<sup>21</sup> The Lord continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word.

Maybe the most famous story in the Bible about listening to the voice of God is the story of Samuel as a child.

This story can be frustrating for someone who has never heard the voice of God out loud. As we are all different, we all hear God’s voice in different ways. Consider that this may be exactly what this story shows us.

**Game: Chinese Whispers**

**Explanation:** It is easy to become so distracted by the world around us and what other voices are saying, that we quickly drown out the voice of God.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. ‘In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions.’ Often we can become fooled into thinking that there were many more significant encounters with God in the Old Testament than there are today (this may be partly because we forget that there were 2,000 years between the birth of Abraham and the birth of Jesus). In this chapter we see that it was a time when God’s voice was rarely heard. Why does this make Samuel’s encounter even more special?
2. Where is Samuel sleeping when he hears the voice of God?
3. What might this show us about when God is most likely to speak to us?
4. Name some different ways that God can speak to us.
5. If we want to hear more of God, what are the most important habits we can include in our everyday lives?
6. What does Eli tell Samuel to say in response to the Lord?
7. Blind obedience is scary. Samuel was scared to share what God had told him with Eli. Why is it important to lean on older, wiser Christian mentors?
8. (Verse 19) God blessed Samuel for his obedience. He built him up to be one of the most respected prophets. Read Proverbs 16:20 and Matthew 5:3-12 and discuss how God calls us to a life of obedience.
9. God is persistent – he didn’t give up on Samuel despite the fact that Samuel did not understand. Instead God used Eli as an encourager and guide to Samuel. Is there anyone you can think of today that needs an encourager? Could you be Eli to them on their Christian journey, helping them better interpret the word of God? Maybe this could be meeting up with friends to study the word of God? Maybe it is using the Remind app with a group of friends, or simply praying for others and asking for prayers for yourself?

**Say:** We were created to be in relation with each other, just as our God is in relation with himself and us. If you need prayers, reach out and ask for them.

In David Mathis’s book *Habits of Grace* he puts it like this:

“Three seemingly unremarkable principles shape and strengthen the Christian life: listening to God’s voice, speaking to him in prayer, and joining together with his people as the church. Though seemingly normal and routine, the everyday “habits of grace” we cultivate give us

access to these God-designed channels through which his love and power flow – including the greatest joy of all: knowing and enjoying Jesus.’

## WORSHIP

Samuel was resting in God's presence when he heard the voice of God. It is very easy to get caught up in church activities, sometimes to the detriment of our own spiritual nourishment. Is God calling you to simply be still in his presence?

Lay or sit on the floor listening to this song and simply enjoy being in the presence of God.

**Listen to:** Dan Bate – *He Knows My Name*

[soundcloud.com/danbatemusic/he-knows-my-name-with-choir](https://soundcloud.com/danbatemusic/he-knows-my-name-with-choir)

## WITNESS

Stand in a close circle. Place your hand on the shoulder of the person to the left. Everyone speaks prayers out loud for the person on their left and then on their right.