



Date: _____

Series: A Miraculous Church
Spring Year 2, Lesson 53

God Calls and I Can Listen

Primary Scripture: 1 Samuel 3:1-21

Key Verse: Isaiah 43:1b, "Do not be afraid, because I have reclaimed you. I have called you by name; you are mine."

How does this address a need in our kids' lives?

Just beyond the basic needs to stay alive, today's kids crave attention. Children need to know that they matter. There's no more precious word to hear than one's own name. So it is fitting that God uses each child's name to call him or her personally. He knows them not only by name, but also by need. He calls believers into a friendship with him that affirms their special and unique status. Believers understand that they belong to God.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: Jesus, through his death and resurrection, gives us significance. Through his death, he makes us as his own and calls us by name.

Jesus in us: We are assured of Jesus' presence as he fills us and his name is placed on us in baptism.

Jesus through us: Through the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we can witness to God's calling. We, like Samuel, are servants whom he has chosen. Isaiah 43:1b says, "*Do not be afraid, because I have reclaimed you. I have called you by name; you are mine.*"

Stamp of Excellence:

Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the leader is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.



Worship

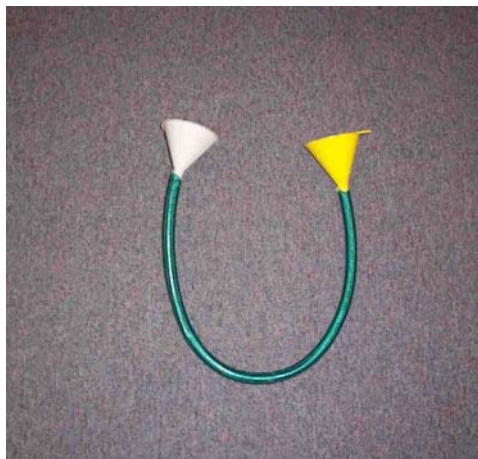
Invocation:

Let kids bring forward the worship symbols, such as the cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Attention Grabber:

Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.

Supplies: A garden hose and two funnels or earphones made from the necks of two 2-liter bottles. Cut the bottle in half and attach one bottleneck to each end of the hose with tape.



Pick two kids to come forward as volunteers. Bring the hose "phone" on stage. Put one of the earphones (*funnel*) from one end of the hose to the first volunteer's ear. Wait as an assistant and the second volunteer stretch the hose as far as it will reach (*into a hallway or to another room would be fine*). Ask the first student:

What do you hear?

Have another adult assist the second child volunteer on the other end of the hose to whisper to the first one on stage:

Hey (insert name of your on stage student volunteer), **this is God. Do you hear me?**

Ask the student on the stage:

Who's on the other end? God? (*Student will probably respond, "no."*)

Well, who do you really think is on the other end? (Let them name student.)

That's right. It's your friend. But what would it be like if God really spoke to you that way? Today, we will talk about how that very thing happened to another boy just a little younger than you. God talked directly to that boy and God speaks to us today, too, through his word.

How do we respond back to God? Well, we don't speak to him through a funnel. We respond to God through our worship and singing. Let's tell him how much we love him and thank him for who he is and what he has done.

Songs of Worship:

Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!

Your choice of music.

The Power of the Cross:

Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.

Props needed: hose "phone," large wooden cross, and a helper hidden somewhere behind the cross

Have you ever been disappointed that you couldn't see or hear God? Perhaps we have all had these times. But there is an important truth for us to remember. God still has ways to speak to us and we still have ways to see him work.

Today, I'm going to lay one end of the hose "phone" next to the cross. The cross is just a symbol, but it speaks to us. What does it say? Does anyone want to come up and listen to it?

Call a child up to the stage and have him or her put an ear to the funnel and hose to listen to the cross. Have an assistant call the child by name through the hose, saying:

Because of Jesus, I accept you, forgive you, and live in you.

Presenter asks the child what he/she heard.

Call another child up to the stage and have him or her put an ear to the hose and funnel and listen. Again, the assistant calls the child by name and says:

Because of Jesus, I accept you, forgive you and live in you.

Presenter asks this child what he/she heard.

Does anyone else want to come up here and listen to what comes from the cross?

The next child is invited up to listen. Again, the assistant calls the child by name and says:

Because of Jesus, I accept you, forgive you, and live in you.

Presenter asks this child what he/she heard. Then say:

The cross is the symbol of a powerful message that speaks to us. Though we are pretending today, the words are true. God calls us by name and tells us that he accepts us as his own sons and daughters because of what Jesus has done. As long as we trust Jesus, there is no sin too great to keep us from claiming our inheritance as God's children. Let's take time to let the cross speak to us as we confess our need for God.

Dear Jesus, we thank you that you gave your life for us. Thank you that you speak to us. Thank you that you accept us, forgive us, and live in us. Please forgive us for the things that have stood in the way of our friendship – any stubborn things we have done, ways we've been hurtful to others, or ways we've ignored you. Please forgive us, accept us and live in us. In your Holy name, we pray. Amen.

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.

Your choice of music.

Offering:

Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.

Put a funnel from the hose next to the offering plate. Say:

Jesus calls us to serve him with every part of ourselves. This even includes our possessions. So we want to give our offering thankfully and let our cheerful giving be a way to serve him.

Discuss your current mission project and how God has called your children's ministry to serve these people.



The Word

Learning Game:

Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.

“What’s Your Name?”

Arrange the children in one large circle with all of them sitting on the floor or on chairs. Someone is designated as “it” and is placed in the middle of the group. That child will choose a person, walk up to them, and that person then stands up. The person on each side of the chosen one also stands up.

Then, whoever is “it” asks the person they chose, “What is your name?” He/she responds with his/her name. The “it” child says, “No you’re not, you’re a...” They then must choose one of the following animals to “call” the person they chose.

These animal choices are as follows: an elephant, a kangaroo, or a whale. Regardless of which animal is chosen, the three people who are still part of the circle, combine their actions to simulate characteristics of the animal.

Described below are the animal actions students must create.

Elephant:

The center person takes an arm and slowly lifts it up over his/her head, in front of his/her face as if it’s a trunk. The children on each side, use their arms to make a large letter C which, when held against the middle persons body will look like the elephant’s ears. (See picture.)





Kangaroo:

The person in the middle has his/her arms tucked up against the chest, with wrists bent down and fingernails facing out to look like short legs. The two people on the outside join hands around his/her waist to make a pouch. (See picture.)

Whale:

The middle child demonstrates water spouting up and out with arm motions. The children to the side make waving motions with their outside arms as if they are fins or tails. (See picture.)



Once the person who is “it” states which animal to simulate, it is also his/her job to count to ten as fast as possible. If the three-member team has not yet created the animal correctly within that span of time, then the center team member becomes “it.” Then it is his/her turn to choose another person. Again he/she asks: “What is your name?” He/she responds with his/her name. The “it” child says, “No you’re not, you’re a...” They then must choose one of the listed animals to “call” the person they chose.

Make sure that each child gets chosen by the “it” person before anyone is chosen again. After everyone has seen this work a few times, you may choose two “its” to work around the circle at the same time.

Learning Point:

God said that he would raise up someone who would do what was in God’s heart and mind. He raised up a boy, calling him by name. At first this boy didn’t understand who was calling, but later he did and his life was never the same. God also calls you by name. Are you listening?

Bible Reading:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

Show the video: *The Animated Stories from the Bible: Samuel* by Nest Family Entertainment, Inc. 1993. Order from http://www.nestfamily.com/store/product_detail.asp?productID=SPD. Opening credits to 14 minutes or to the attack of the Philistines. *Option:* entire video (44 minutes).

Additional supplies needed: small candies

Use these questions to review the video and offer candy prizes to those who answer correctly.

What was Samuel's mother's name and why did she cry? (*Hannah. She couldn't have children.*)

What was the name of the place where they worshiped? It wasn't the temple but it was the _____. (*Tabernacle*)

The man in charge of the Tabernacle was a priest named _____. (*Eli.*)

What did Eli do that was not pleasing to the Lord? (*He didn't discipline his sons.*)

How many times did God call to Samuel? Who did Samuel think was calling him? (*God called to Samuel three times. Samuel thought it was Eli calling him.*)

What did Eli tell Samuel to say the next time he heard the voice? (*"Speak, Lord, I'm listening."*)

What did God tell Samuel about Eli and his family?

Read 1 Samuel 3:13-14:

"...I would hand down a permanent judgment against his household because he knew about his sons' sin – that they were cursing God – but he didn't try to stop them... No offering or sacrifice will ever be able to make peace for the sins that Eli's family committed."

Application:

Supplies needed: penny toy prizes

How does God talk to you today? He speaks to us in his Word (the Bible) and in prayer.

Isaiah 43:1 says, “*Do not be afraid, because I have reclaimed you. I have called you by name; you are mine.*”

The Bible says, “I have called you by name; you are mine.” You probably won’t actually hear God’s voice when you read his Word and think about him, but you can be certain that he knows you very well. He even calls you by your name. You can also know for sure that he gave his own Son for you so that you could be friends with him forever. There’s no one who loves you or knows you better. God gives you a chance to serve God.

Tell students that you have penny prizes to hand out as they share an example of how God might serve them or how they might serve him.



Witness

Witness and Tell:

Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.

Have kids tell about a time they were chosen to do something special that helped other people.

Conclude with:

God calls us by name and made us each special so that we can serve him in a special way.

Prayer:

Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.

Options: (select one from the options below)

Prayer Line Option: Kids line up and take turns stepping in front of the microphone to speak their prayers briefly.

Prayer Chair: Adults or children with special prayer needs are invited to sit on chairs. Kids gather around them, lay hands on their shoulders or knees, and take turns praying.

Popcorn Prayer: The leader moves through the crowd with a microphone and turns it toward kids who are raising their hands to pray. The kids speak their prayers into the microphone.

Lord's Prayer: Lead the children through the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, or let them pray the entire prayer along with you.

Blessing:

Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use a special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.

Song of Sending:

Choose one song. Briefly introduce song so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.

Your choice of music.

Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- garden hose, any length
- two funnels or earphones made from the necks of two 2-liter bottles (cut the bottles in half and attach one bottleneck to each end of the hose with tape)

Power of the Cross:

- large wood cross
- hose from attention grabber

Learning Game:

- *Optional:* chairs for each child

Bible Reading:

- video: *The Animated Stories from the Bible: Samuel* by Nest Family Entertainment, Inc. 1993. Order from http://www.nestfamily.com/store/product_detail.asp?productID=SPD.
- candy prizes

Application

- penny toy prizes

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