

# CONNECTING FAITH AND LIFE

FAITH FORMATION FOR CHILDREN | YOUTH | FAMILY | ADULT

## God does what!?!...The Surprising Work of God in the Lives of People Week 3 - God Remembers

### **KEY POINT**

Hannah models obedience and trust in God.

### **KEY VERSE**

1 Samuel 1: 26-27  
And she said, "Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the Lord.

For this child I prayed; and the Lord has granted me the petition that I made to him."

### **OPENING PRAYER**

Begin your time together with this, or another, prayer:

God of promises, you continue to hear the cries of your people. Help us to trust in you when things seem hopeless. Give us strength when we feel we have none. Empower us to bring your mercy and grace to others who suffer. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

### **READ**

1 Samuel 1:9-11, 19-22, 23b-28a (Additional text: Luke 1:46-55)

### **ABOUT THE STORY**

Since last week's lesson, Moses has died and God has called Joshua to lead the people into Canaan and claim that land. The Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings that follow are grouped together as Historical Books. This is not to say these books recount history as we understand it today. Instead, they give an account of events that occur once the Israelites are in the Promised Land with a goal of teaching the pattern of sin, consequences, repentance, and forgiveness that characterizes much of Israel's experience as God's people.

Life in the Promised Land is not easy. The Israelites have yet to create a formal government for themselves. Instead they have relied on a loose order under the judges. The judges of Israel are not deciders of guilt or innocence under the law as we think of judges today, but they are leaders called by God to remind the people of their dependence on God. The judges also help protect the 12 tribes from external threats. As the Israelites become more chaotic and vulnerable, they long for a king to rule them.

1 Samuel opens before Samuel is born. Samuel's parents, Elkanah and Hannah, have been childless for many years. Elkanah's other wife, Peninnah, has given him several children and she holds that over Hannah. Hannah is distraught because at that time a woman's worth was largely tied to producing a male heir for her husband. Elkanah loves Hannah. Hannah promises God that if she is blessed with a male child, she will commit his entire life to God's service.

After receiving a blessing from Eli the priest, Hannah and Elkanah finally conceive a son. Samuel is born and Hannah keeps her promise in committing him to God's service. Chapter 2 is Hannah's song of gratitude for a God who hears the people's prayers, lifts up the lowly, provides for the poor, and protects the faithful. Samuel will be the last of the great judges of Israel before he anoints their first kings: Saul and David.

God hears the prayers of everyone. There is a saying that every time we try to draw a line in the sand, Jesus is standing on the other side. We so often think we are right or righteous, but God loves all people unconditionally—even those we find unworthy. The world would be so much kinder if we could see each other as God sees us. At the same time, know that whatever your struggle, God is there to comfort you, heal you, and provide for you. This may not always be seen in physical terms here and now, but we know God continually keeps God's promises.

## SHARE

- Hannah promises God that if God gives her the son she has longed for, she will commit that child to God's service. God gives her Samuel and she keeps her word. Share a time when you have "negotiated" with God. Did it work?
- Do you think Hannah wants a son for her husband, for herself, or for God? Why?
- Do you find it helpful to worship and pray in times of difficulty? What about in times of ease and joy?
- Which line of Hannah's song brings you the greatest hope or comfort?

## PRAY

As your closing prayer, take turns reading chapter 2 verse-by-verse. After each verse everyone shouts, "Alleluia!" in praise to God's faithfulness. At the end of verse 10 all say together, "Amen."

## BLESS

Share this verbal blessing with one another: "You have an awesome God, who lifts you up when you are down. Amen."

## FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION AT HOME:

- Type or write out Hannah's song (1 Samuel 2:1-10) and post it in your kitchen. Each morning as you prepare breakfast, read it aloud as a devotion.
- Pray for a different person or group of people each day this week. Perhaps someone you hear about who is suffering on the other side of the world, a neighbor who has fallen on tough times, or a friend or family member struggling with something. Keep that person or group in mind all day and ask God to help them.
- Find one person this week that you can share God's love with by supporting them. Take soup to someone who is sick or offer to shop or babysit for a single parent. Call or visit someone who is home-bound so she knows she is not forgotten.