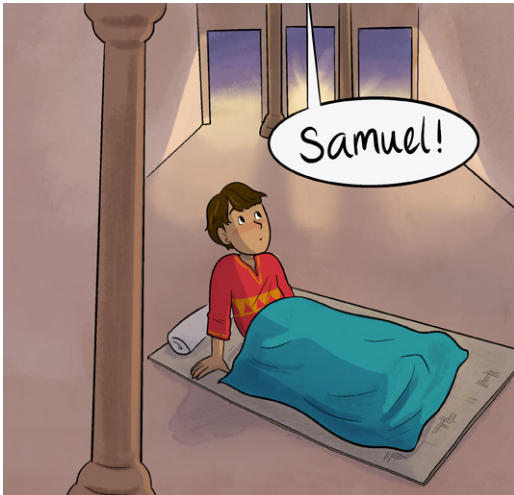


1 Samuel 3:1-10,(11-20)

Recognising when and how God calls

The young Samuel hears the Lord call to him, but thinks it is his master, Eli. After this happens three times, Eli tells Samuel to answer the Lord, saying 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening'. Samuel does so and receive a vision that God was about to do something new. After sharing his vision with Eli, and receiving more encouragement, Samuel grows up to be a renowned and trustworthy prophet of the Lord.



Bible notes



In the dark days, at the tail end of the time of the Judges – a time in Israel when life was chaotic and violent, and when the people had forgotten their links with God – a child is born. The birth of a child is often the harbinger of a new move of God. Samuel was born to a faithful mother, Hannah, who pledged to give her son to the service of God. So, here he is in the Temple with the old reprobate priest, Eli. People had forgotten what God's voice sounded like.

But one night, God calls Samuel's name. The boy had no idea it could be God, so he runs to Eli thinking he's called him for something. After this has happened a couple of times, Eli twigs that it is God calling Samuel. So, the old priest tells him what to do and, when God calls again, Samuel is ready.

As ever, when it comes after a long absence, God's presence is both welcome and unsettling. The new move of God would involve judgement on the house of Eli before renewal of the house of Israel. And the young Samuel faced a stern test. Eli instructed him to repeat all that God had said. What a tough ask for a young boy who had been raised by this elderly priest. But Samuel delivers the message God has given him, and Eli believes it and submits to his fate. Samuel grows in stature and Israel is reborn under his leadership. It is an object lesson in God choosing who God pleases – even a child – to be both the messenger and instrument of renewal.

DRAW



Look at the 'So many ways' mandala. How might this image help you to think about ways in which God speaks to us? Make your own 'doodle mandala' by writing words or drawing images on a circular piece of card or paper, to represent how God can show or tell us a message. Which of these ways resonates with you?



First impressions

- This painting illustrates different ways in which God speaks – how many can you identify?
- When have you felt or known God calling you?
- How can we help each other to hear God's call?

A prayer of thanksgiving

God, you gave us a calling: Thank you for choosing me. You know us better than we know ourselves: Thank you for making me. You love our strengths and weaknesses: Thank you for loving me! Amen.

CREATE



Make a paper lantern to remember that the light burned as God called. Follow the instructions on this website:

www.easypreschoolcraft.blogspot.com/2014/09/easy-japanese-paper-lantern-craft.html



LISTEN



Look at the words to the hymn 'Hushed was the evening hymn'. Sing too, if you wish! See which lyrics have meaning for you. Try and remember them this week.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7fP7j8EfpsY>



Find out about the call to ministry of Martin Luther King Jr., and pray for guidance as to where God is calling you.