



## Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels

### God Calls Samuel

**BIG IDEA:** God knows us by name and calls to us, so we can listen for His voice.

**BIBLE BASIS:** 1 Samuel 2-3

**KEY VERSE:** John 10:27 “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me.” (NirV)

## SCHEDULE

### GET GOING

(Small Group Connect)

7-15 minutes

### GO! TELL IT

(Large Group Lesson)

30-40 minutes

### GO! DEEP

(Large Group Reflect and Respond)

7-15 minutes

### GO! FURTHER

(Small Group Activities)

15-25 minutes

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# 4.4 Large Group Lesson



## LEADER DEVOTIONAL

We were on a family vacation at a nearby lake and I was enjoying some down time on the elevated deck. The lake house had been filled with the chaos of a dozen kids and all I wanted was a short respite from the noise. It was so beautiful and peaceful outside. As I sat there, I heard some rustling in the leaves. I kept looking around for a deer to come bounding through the trees, but to no avail; no deer came. Instead, I finally spotted a little turtle crawling through the brush. I was a bit shocked. I remember thinking “Wow, I can’t believe I can hear a turtle from all the way up here.” How often do you hear someone say, “And then, all of the sudden, I heard this turtle coming towards me.” It’s amazing what you can hear when you step out of the noise and chaos for a moment.

In Samuel 3, we read about a young boy named Samuel who received a calling from God while lying in the stillness and quiet of his bed. I mean—an *actual calling* from God. “*Samuel, Samuel.*” God actually called Samuel by name, but Samuel didn’t know who it was. In a strange way, it actually gives me comfort to know that someone like Samuel, who had lived his whole life in God’s very own house, didn’t know what God’s voice sounded like. He had to learn it. But once he did, Samuel listened and then he followed. John 10:27 says “My sheep *listen* to my voice, I know them, and they *follow* me.”

God’s voice is personal. Like Samuel, God speaks to each of us individually because he know us personally. It is our job to learn the sound of his voice and then truly *listen*. Sometimes we expect God’s voice to sound big and knock us over, like a deer bounding through the forest, but often it’s a soft whisper, like an unimposing turtle. I know I am relating God’s voice to a turtle, but stick with me. The only reason I heard the turtle, was because I had left the noise. I had quieted myself and I was listening. We have to learn to quiet everything else in our lives to truly listen and give God our full attention. Once we recognize His voice and listen fully, we can confidently follow Him.

*Mindy Rausch*  
GO! Team Member





## LARGE GROUP SKILL BUILDING

### *7 Steps to Becoming a Master of Memorization*

Alright, I'm going to be honest here. I've never heard anyone say that memorization is their favorite thing in the world, but great communicators love delivering great messages and part of delivering a great message is committing it to memory. Think for just a moment about the best speeches or sermons you've ever heard. I'll bet it wasn't being read to you from a script. One of the reasons it was such a good message is because the pastor or speaker had it committed to memory which allowed them to focus on delivering it in a powerfully impacting way. There's no way around it, memorization requires some work, but the payoff is huge and there are some things you can do to make it easier. Here's a quick guide to get you started:

**Read the whole lesson first.** Before you commit anything to memory, you have to know the big picture. It's kind of like using plans to build a bird house. Before you make your first cut or start hammering on things, it helps to know what it's supposed to look like when you're finished.

**Mark the lesson up.** Pens and highlighters are your best friends! Underline and highlight key phrases, transition sentences, difficult lines and anything else you think is worthy. This will create visual handles in the lesson that your brain can grab ahold of.

**Chunk it.** Your brain has trouble remembering vast amounts of unbroken information, so break the lesson down into smaller chunks. When you memorize, just focus on one chunk at a time and then put them all together at the end. The GO! curriculum helps with this by labeling many of the different chunks for you.

**Read and recite.** Starting with the first chunk, read the first sentence or two. Then put the lesson down and recite it back from memory. Continue doing this until you reach the end of the chunk. Then return to the top and recite the whole chunk in its entirety.

**Focus on the transitions.** Often times the most difficult parts to remember are the transitions from one "chunk" to the next. Be doubly familiar with your transitions.

**Write out trouble spots.** If there's a line or section that keeps giving you trouble, hand write it out. This involves a separate part of your brain and can help with retention.

**Recite the lines out loud.** It may seem awkward at first, but speaking the lines is tremendously helpful. Practice teaching the lesson out loud in front of an imaginary audience. It's even better if you can do it in the actual space where the lesson is being taught.



# 4.4 Large Group Lesson



## SET UP INSTRUCTIONS

It's the distant future, the year 3,000, and the universe has run low on its most precious resource—cheese. During the “Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels” series, small groups will be divided into two teams and will battle each other for one of these last few blocks of delicious goodness. In order to win the coveted wheel of cheese, though, kids will have to exhibit team energy, team spirit and compete in the “Battle for the Cheese” team trivia competition. To succeed in the “Battle for the Cheese”, kids will have to pay close attention to our Bible story and lesson to answer questions and earn points.

### Do the following ahead of time:

- Divide your small groups into the two teams. Each team can have multiple small groups representing it. Kids will work within their small group to earn points for their team. If you have an uneven number of groups on the teams, you may want to award the team with fewer groups more points for some of the competitions in order to make it fair.
- Lay down a strip of tape through the middle of the room. During the lesson, have the “Space Ninjas” sit on one side and have the “Pirate Squirrels” sit on the other.
- Place the bin or bag containing all of the point balls in the teaching area.
- Place the two team bins in the teaching area. Print out the team signs ahead of time and attach one sign to each bin. These bins will be used at the end to collect all of the points that were tossed out to each team.
- Print out a set of A, B, C, and D signs for each small group. Give the set of signs to the small group leaders to have with them during the GO! TELL IT large group time.
- Create a “Wheel of Cheese” trophy for the winner of the competition. If you would like, purchase a small wheel of cheese. Attach part of a trophy to the top or adorn it in any other way that makes for a great “Wheel of Cheese” trophy. Be creative.
- If you're brain hurts from thinking about creating a “Wheel of Cheese” trophy, you can opt to print out the trophy picture included in the Resource Folder.
- Write the words, “Speak God, I'm listening” on a piece of poster board or butcher block paper. Place it on a wall (low enough that kids can reach it) or on the floor so that kids can gather around it and write down what they heard from God.
- Place some pens or markers near the “Speak God, I'm listening” sign.
- Choose which of the GO! DEEP Reflect and Respond stations you would like to make available. Set out the appropriate materials for each of those stations.

## 4.4 Large Group Lesson



# ★ GO! TELL IT (Large Group Lesson)

**CG:** show “Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels” title graphic  
**Sound:** PLAY upbeat music as kids move to large group area

**Tech Note:** When all of the kids have moved to the Large Group area and have taken a seat, begin playing the “Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels” intro video. When the video is finished, return to the title graphic.

**VDO:** PLAY “Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels” intro video

### PREPARE FOR BATTLE!

**Large Group Leader:** Hello everybody and welcome to another exciting week of “Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels”! When I call your team’s name, I want you to show me your excitement!

Go back and forth a few times calling out “Space Ninjas” and “Pirate Squirrels”. As the kids cheer for their team, toss them points for showing energy.

That was pretty good! I have a weird question for you, though. Could you tell who was calling out the team names just then? (*Kids respond.*) Of course! It was me. But have you ever had someone call out your name and you couldn’t tell who was doing it? (*Kids respond.*) Yeah—me too! Maybe you were in a big crowd or you had your back to the person, or maybe you didn’t really even recognize the voice. Well, that’s exactly what happened in today’s Bible story, but you won’t believe who was actually calling out the name. We’ll find out who it was in just a bit during our competition, but let’s go over our rules first.

The object of the competition is to be the team with the most points at the end of the hour. Each one of these (*hold up ball or other object representing points*) is worth one point. Your team will be collecting them throughout the lesson. There are three ways that you can earn points: Team Energy, Team Participation, and Team Competitions.

**CG:** Team Points graphic

At the end of the hour, we’ll count up the points. Whichever team has the most will win the coveted “Wheel of Cheese”! (*Hold up cheese wheel trophy for kids to see.*)

The points are a wonderful group management tool. Use them to reward positive behavior. Toss out points when kids are cheering their team on, participating in something or exhibiting other positive behaviors.

**CG:** “The Big Bible Story” graphic

### THE BIG BIBLE STORY—GOD CALLS SAMUEL

During last week’s story, we learned that God raised up leaders to help Israel follow Him. Does anyone remember what those leaders were called? (*Take answer from a kid. Give a point for a correct answer.*) That’s right—they were called “judges”. In the book of 1 Samuel, we learn about the last two judges. The first of them was named Eli. Eli was a pretty nice dude, but his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were *not*.

## 4.4 Large Group Lesson



Have the “Space Ninjas” stand, put their “dukes” up, and say “Grrrrr”. Toss them points.

The Bible says in 1 Samuel that they didn’t know God. And because of that, they had no problem with stealing food from the Altar of Sacrifice. This food was a gift to God, but Eli’s sons were taking it for themselves. When their dad, Eli, heard what they were doing, he said, “Knock it off!”

Have the “Pirate Squirrels” stand, point to the “Space Ninjas” and yell “Knock it off!” Toss them points.

Unfortunately, Eli’s sons didn’t pay any attention to him and kept on stealing from God.

Have the “Space Ninjas” again put up their “dukes” and say “Grrrrr”. Tell everyone to take a seat.

At that same time, there was a boy named Samuel who loved God and served Him by helping Eli in the Tabernacle. One night, Samuel laid down to sleep in God’s house.

Tell all of the kids to lie down and pretend to sleep.

As he was lying down, Samuel heard a voice calling out to Him. **SFX: Play “Samuel, Samuel” #1 sound effect.** So he jumped up from bed.

Have all the kids jump up as quickly as possible. Toss both teams some points. Give extra points to the team who gets all of their kids up first.

He ran over to Eli and said, “Here I am, you called me.” But Eli just looked at him funny and said, “I didn’t call you. Go back to sleep.”

Tell the kids to lie back down and pretend to sleep.

Samuel lay down to sleep, but moments later it happened a second time. **SFX: Play “Samuel, Samuel” #2 sound effect.** So once again Samuel jumped up from bed.

Have the kids jump up as quickly as possible for the second time. Give points out just as you did the first time.

Again, Samuel ran over to Eli and said, “Here I am, you called me.” But Eli, even more confused and a little annoyed, said, “I didn’t call you. Go back to sleep.”

Tell the kids to lie back down and pretend to sleep.

For a third time, Samuel lay down to sleep. He wasn’t down for long before he heard it again. **SFX: Play “Samuel, Samuel” #3 sound effect.** So once again Samuel jumped up from bed.

Have the kids jump up as quickly as possible for the third time. Give points out just as you did the previous two times.

But this time, Eli realized what was happening. It was God who was calling Samuel. Let’s see what Eli tells Samuel to do.



## 4.4 Large Group Lesson



Tell the kids to turn in their Bibles to 1 Samuel 3:9. Give some points to the team who finds it first. Choose a kid from that team to read the verse aloud. **For younger kids, you may want to read the verse for them.** The verse says, “So Eli told Samuel, “Go and lie down. If someone calls out to you again, say, ‘Speak, Lord. I am listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.” (NirV).

Shortly after laying down again, the voice returned. **SFX: Play “Samuel, Samuel” #4 sound effect.** This time Samuel did as Eli had instructed. Samuel replied to the voice, “Speak, Lord. I am listening.” Now that he was listening to God’s voice, God told Samuel what He had to say. **SFX: Play “God’s Message” sound effect.** *(Transcript of SFX: “Pay attention, for something terrible is about to happen to Eli’s sons. They have made a joke of my sacrifices and offerings and Eli has failed to stop them. Because of this, all the men in their family will die young. In fact, Eli’s sons will die on the same day.”)*

The next morning, Eli called to Samuel and asked what God had told him. Samuel told Eli everything. And just as God had said, a short time later, Eli’s sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were killed in a battle with the Philistines. When Eli heard how his sons had been killed, he fell backwards in his chair and died. As for Samuel, he loved the Lord and continued to listen to Him. And because of this, God continued to give Samuel messages and called him to be the final judge over Israel.

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

At the end of the Bible story have the kids turn briefly to their small groups and discuss the following questions: **For Younger Kids: What was your favorite part of that story? Why? What do you think it would be like to hear God talking to you? How do you think that would feel?** **For Older Kids: What do you think this story teaches us about God? Why do you think God chose to give the message to Samuel instead of just telling Eli?** After a few minutes, draw their attention back to the teaching area. You may want to ask the kids for some of their answers.

### BATTLE FOR THE CHEESE

Now that you’ve heard the story, I think it’s time to see how well you were listening. Are you all ready to “Battle for the Cheese?”

**CG: “Battle for the Cheese”**

*(Kids respond.)* If you think you’re ready, let me hear you chant, “We want cheese!” *(Toss out points to teams for spirit. After a moment, raise three fingers in the air. Give a point to the first team to get quiet.)*

Here’s how the “Battle for the Cheese” works. I’m going to ask you all a series of multiple choice questions. If you think you know the answer, turn to your small group leader and tell them what it is. Your leader will then hold up the sign with the most popular answer from your group. Here we go...

Read the questions one at a time. Once all of the multiple choice options have been read, give the groups about 10 seconds to choose their answer and hold up the right sign before the answer is revealed. **For younger kids, you may elect to give them more time.** Once the answer is revealed, toss one point to the groups with the right answer. *(Correct answer is in italics below.)*



# 4.4 Large Group Lesson



**Music:** (Optional) Play upbeat music during game  
**CG:** Eli had two sons. What were their names?

- A. Phinklestein and Hophni
- B. *Hophni and Phinehas*
- C. Phinehas and Ferb
- D. Hasselhophni and Phinehas

**CG:** Eli's sons were sinning against God by stealing what?

- A. Money from the offering
- B. Incense from the Golden Altar
- C. *Food from the Altar of Sacrifice*
- D. Cable from their neighbors

**CG:** How many times did Samuel think Eli was calling him?

- A. 2
- B. 3
- C. 4
- D. 5

**CG:** What did Eli tell Samuel to say back to God when He called again?

- A. *Speak Lord, I'm listening.*
- B. Be quiet, I'm tired.
- C. Can you call in the morning?
- D. Speak Lord, I'm your servant.

**CG:** Because of Samuel's love for God, God made him the final \_\_\_\_\_ over Israel?

- A. Prophet
- B. Priest
- C. *Judge*
- D. President

**CG:** "Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels" title graphic

At the end of the "Battle for the Cheese", have the kids place all of their points inside their teams bucket or bag. Set it aside for later. At some point after the GO! DEEP or GO! FURTHER small group time, count up the points for each team and announce a winner. Award the winning team with the coveted "Wheel of Cheese" trophy.



## 4.4 Large Group Lesson



### SPEAK LORD, I'M LISTENING

Does anyone remember what God said over and over when he called to Samuel? (*Take answer from kid.*) That's right—He said, “Samuel, Samuel”. Isn't that so cool! The God of the universe, the One who made the heavens and the Earth knew Samuel and called him by his name. And here's the wonderful thing—not only did God know Samuel's name; he knows *your* name too! God isn't sitting somewhere way far away, too busy to care about you. God is a personal God. Not only does he know your name, He knows everything about you. And just like God wanted to talk to Samuel, He wants to talk to you too!

In our story today, what did Eli tell Samuel to say when God called out to him? (*Take answer from kid.*) Good job—“Speak Lord, I'm listening.” Have you ever stopped to just listen for God's voice? What kind of things do you think God might say to you if you stopped to listen to His voice?

Spend some time taking answers from kids. Consider sharing a personal story about how you've heard God's voice in your life. When finished, have the kids turn in their Bibles to John 10:27. Read it aloud.

**CG:** “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me.” John 10:27

In the Bible, Jesus is called the Good Shepherd and we're like His sheep. He knows our name; He loves us and wants to talk to us. And when we love and follow God, we listen to His voice. In fact, I think we should give that a try right now.

Here's what we're going to do. In just a moment, I want for us to all lie down on our backs and close our eyes, just like Samuel did when he was trying to sleep. Instead of going to sleep, though, we're going to say, “Speak Lord, I'm listening” and then we're going to listen quietly for God's voice in our mind and in our heart. When we're finished, I'll tell you to get up. If you feel like you *didn't* hear anything from God, that's okay! It's still good to stop and listen sometimes. If you *did* hear something from God, though, I want you to go over to the “Speak Lord, I'm listening” poster and write down what God told you.

**Music:** Optional: Play quiet instrumental music

Tell the kids to lie down quietly and close their eyes. When they're all in place, pray over the kids in whatever way the Holy Spirit leads you. At the end of the prayer, say “Speak Lord, we are listening.” Allow the kids to listen quietly for about 1 minute or for as long as they seem to stay engaged. At the end, tell them to slowly get up. If you prefer, you can take some time to dialogue with the kids about their experience. Otherwise, direct the kids who feel like they heard something from God to write it down on the “Speak Lord, I'm listening” poster. Afterwards, allow the kids to move quietly into the other GO! DEEP Reflect and Respond stations.

Remind them to move about the stations very quietly. Tell them they are free to respond to God in whatever way the Holy Spirit leads them, but if they need suggestions, some of the stations will give them ideas for how to pray, write, or draw. Give each child one “GO! Home” sheet and instruct them to take it with them to the stations. Place small group leaders at the different stations to quietly help the kids. The stations listed below are just the ones that have prompts that are specific to today's lesson. For more instructions on how the GO! DEEP Reflect and Respond Stations work as well as a full list of possible stations, see the “GO! Guide”.



# 4.4 Large Group Lesson



**CG:** "Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels" title graphic

## ★ GO! DEEP (Reflect and Respond)

**Prayer Station prompt:** Write a prayer to God telling Him "thanks" for loving you and wanting to talk to you.

**Journal Station prompt:** Say to God, "Speak Lord, I'm listening". Listen quietly for God's voice. Is He telling you anything? If you think you hear His voice, write down what He's saying.

**Bible Station prompt:** Read it for yourself: 1 Samuel 3. Write to God what your favorite part of that story was. Tell Him why you liked it.

**Art Station prompt:** Draw a picture of yourself lying down to sleep like Samuel. Draw a speech bubble with the words, "Speak Lord, I'm listening" on the inside.