



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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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





SMALL GROUP SKILL BUILDING

Being a Part of a Kid's Pit Crew

Life can be rough sometimes. We all get our fair share of bumps and bruises along the way, but wouldn't it be nice if life had a pit stop that you could pull into so you could get 4 new tires and a tank of gas! As rough as we think we have it, kids have it just as bad (and sometimes worse). And for a lot of them, their time with you at church is the closest thing they'll get to a pit stop. Every week they do a lap around life's track, enduring emotional and spiritual bumps and bruises, before they come screeching into your presence. This is your chance to bang out some dents and refuel those kids for another lap. One of the best ways to do that is with words of encouragement. Don't know what to say? Start with this:

Call out the truth in them. How often do you notice or think something positive about someone, but fail to share it with them? If all you did was to give voice to the wonderful things you notice or think about the kids in your group, you would light up their week. More than that, you'll be helping them to form a positive identity that will stick with them for life!

I'm glad to see you. If kids know that their presence brings joy to people, they'll want to come back over and over again. A simple "I'm glad to see you" reinforces that they're someone worth knowing.

I missed you last time. If one of the kids in your group was gone the last time you served, let them know you noticed. This will help your kids realize they're an integral part of the community.

Great answer! I like how you think! Unfortunately, kids are far more prone to hearing someone tell them they're "dumb" than they are to have someone call out their brilliance. When you bring positive attention to a kid's answer and thought process, it encourages them participate all the more in the future. Positive reinforcement helps to produce great thinkers.

Develop an arsenal of encouragement. Have some "go to" words of encouragement that will brighten your kid's day. Like these...God thinks you're awesome! Way to go! You're a really cool kid! Great idea! You're the best! That was awesome! Nice try! You're a lot of fun! You make me smile! I can't wait to see you again!



4.4 Small Group Lesson



★ GET GOING (Small Group Connect)

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 placed onto one of 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.

TEAM SPIRIT CHALLENGE—STRIKE A POSE

Directions: Sometimes you need to let the opposing team know that you're serious and you mean business! Striking a pose is a great way to do that. For this challenge, kids will be asked to work together within their small group to strike a team pose. Tell your group to think about what kind of pose a bunch of Space Ninjas or Pirate Squirrels would strike. You might want to have a camera handy; this would be a great time for a group photo! If your group finishes early, ask them the following questions:

Question: If you had to choose between talking to someone all day long or listening to someone all day long, which would you pick?

Question: Do you know anyone who is a really good listener? What is it about her that makes her a good listener?

ADDITIONAL TIME ACTIVITY—THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN

If you have additional time before Large Group begins, play “Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down”. Simply ask the kids in your group to share one good thing that happened this week (thumbs up) and one not-so-good thing (thumbs down). This is a great way for your group to share celebrations and struggles with one another.

★ GO! TELL IT (Large Group Lesson)

THE BIG BIBLE STORY QUESTIONS

Directions: During the Large Group program, kids will be asked to turn briefly to their small group and answer the following questions:

For Younger Kids:

1. What was your favorite part of that story? Why?
2. What do you think it would be like to hear God talking to you? How do you think it would feel?

For Older Kids:

1. What do you think this story teaches us about God?
2. Why do you think God chose to give the message to Samuel instead of just telling Eli?

Be sure to sit near your kids during large group so that you can quickly gather together.





BATTLE FOR THE CHEESE

Directions: During the GO! TELL IT large group lesson, there will be numerous opportunities for kids to earn points for their team. One of those opportunities will come during the “Battle for the Cheese” trivia competition where kids will be asked a series of multiple choice questions about the story they just heard. Be sure that your small group is seated close to you during the GO! TELL IT large group lesson. Once the question has been asked, kids will have a short time to tell you, the small group leader, what they think the answer is—A, B, C, or D. You will then hold up the card that corresponds with their answer. If your group’s answer is correct, you will earn a point for your team.

★ GO! FURTHER (Small Group Activities)

THE LISTENING LAUNCHER (Application Activity)

Set up: Tape the handle of a plastic spoon to the metal clip on a clipboard. The spoon should tilt up and away from the clipboard like a catapult. To use as a launcher, simply place a ping pong ball in the spoon, push the spoon down slightly and release. Next, use a permanent marker to write one of the numbers 1-6 on each of the six plastic cups. Each group should have one ball launcher, one ping pong ball, and one set of cups.

Say: Our Bible verse for today says, “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me.” Listening to God’s voice is one of the most important things we can do as followers of Jesus, but sometimes that can be kind of tough. We’re going to play a game right now that will help us talk about some of the reasons we don’t hear God’s voice more often.

Directions: Place the 6 plastic cups with numbers written on them in a cluster in the middle of your group. Give the ball launcher and the ping pong ball to one of the kids in your group. Give each kid up to three turns to launch the ball toward the cluster of cups. They’re allowed to place the launcher as close to or far from the cups as they want. When the ball lands in one of the cups, remove the cup from the cluster and read the “Obstacle to Listening” (listed below) that corresponds with the number on that cup. Have the kids talk about what they could do to overcome that obstacle. When your group is finished discussing the obstacle, give the launcher to the next kid in the group and continue play.

Note: If the kids are having difficulty landing the ball in one of the remaining cups, you can modify the rules to help them. For example, you might require them to only hit the cup for it to count. Towards the end, you might have them bounce the ball by hand into one of the cups.

OBSTACLES TO LISTENING

1. I’m too busy to stop and listen to God.
2. There’s too much noise and too many distractions for me to listen to God.
3. I always forget to listen to God.
4. There’s too much noise in my brain. I can’t hear what God is saying.
5. It’s too hard. I don’t hear anything when I listen to God.
6. Free play. Ask the kids to come up with reasons they don’t listen for God’s voice more often.

4.4 Small Group Lesson



WORD DROP (Bible Memorization Activity)

Directions: Place the stack of “Word” cards in the middle of the group. Each card will have a small part of today’s Bible verse on it. Today’s verse is from John 10:27 and it says:

“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me.” (NIV)

Begin by having your group sort through the cards and figure out what order they go in. Have them lay the cards in the correct order in the center of the group. Allow your kids to read the completed verse a few times. When finished, have one of the kids in your group roll the dice. If they roll a 1-5, remove that number of cards from the verse. After removing the cards, have your group recite the verse again. If someone rolls a 6, the entire group must stand up, run counter-clockwise around the circle and sit down in their original spot. Once seated, have the entire group recite the verse together. Choose another kid to roll the dice and continue doing this until all of the cards have been removed and your group can completely recite the verse from memory. If your group still needs more practice by the end, lay all of the cards back on the floor in the correct order and play another round. When finished, talk about the following questions:

For Younger Kids:

1. Did anyone hear God talking to them earlier during our listening exercise? If so, what do you think He was telling you?
2. Why do you think the Bible describes followers of Jesus as sheep? How do you think Jesus is like our Shepherd?

For Older Kids:

1. When God speaks to us, we often times hear it quietly in our hearts or our minds. How do you think you can tell if something in your heart or mind is God’s voice or if it’s just something you thought up?
2. Why do you think the Bible describes followers of Jesus as sheep? How do you think Jesus is like our Shepherd?

Possible Modification for Younger Kids: If your kids still struggle to read, consider using the following modification. Lay the cards in the correct order for the kids to see. Slowly repeat the verse with the kids numerous times so they can begin to memorize it with you. When they seem ready, choose a kid to roll the dice. If he rolls an even number, have the entire group recite the verse together. If he rolls an odd number, have everyone in the group make a silly face. Repeat until everyone has had a turn.

PRAYER CIRCLE (Group Prayer Activity)

Say: It’s really easy to remember to pray for ourselves, but sometimes we forget that God wants us to pray for others too. We’re going to spend some time right now and over the next week doing just that.

Directions: Go around the circle and ask each kid to share one thing they would like prayer for over the coming week. Start the group by sharing something age-appropriate that you need prayer for. This is a great way to demonstrate vulnerability. After each kid shares, ask the rest of the group if there’s someone who would like to pray for that person at the end. When everyone is finished sharing, open the group in prayer and then allow the kids to take turns praying for one another. Encourage the kids to remember these prayer requests throughout the week and to pray for them continually.