



LESSON PLAN

Scripture Texts:

1 Samuel 28:3-19

Hebrews 4:9-13

Session Theme:

Disobedience

a. Welcome to Class

Teachers should arrive in the classroom well in advance of class. Welcome students as they enter, and inquire about their week. Pass out name tags and record attendance on a classroom chart.

b. Warm Up: No Crystal Balls

Bring a medium-sized ball (preferably white) and a jar lid to class. Set the ball on the jar lid so the ball won't roll. When kids arrive, let them guess what this looks like (a crystal ball). Explain that sometimes, people called mediums, psychics or fortune tellers try to predict the future or guide people by reading crystal balls, palms, tea leaves, tarot cards, etc. Ask kids if they think it's a good idea for us to look to people and things to predict our future like this.

In today's story, we'll learn about a king who went to a medium. He didn't turn to God, and God was not happy with his choices. As Christians, we want to look to God and listen to his Word — not fortune tellers, mediums or psychics. We can trust God with our future!

c. Opening Prayer

Lord God, you are worthy of our trust! Help us to listen to you, and to look to you for help and guidance. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

d. SEED Video or Song (Optional)

The teacher may introduce the lesson by playing the video clip from the SEED website. This time may also include an opening song or two, using a commercial Sunday School music CD.

Song suggestions for this lesson:

- "He's Got the Whole World" (children's song)
- "Trust and Obey" (hymn)

e. Brief Bible Background

Read together the introduction to the lessons for the day, and briefly summarize the context and setting:

- Today's Lesson is from the Old Testament
- Scripture Section: Transition

Israel's path to becoming a united monarchy was not an easy one. Samuel was raised up by God at the end of the period of the Judges and became the first of the prophets to serve as God's advisor to the king.

f. Communicate the Bible Story

Always keep in mind that the main purpose of Sunday School is to put people in contact with Bible stories. Use a version that is appropriate to the age level.

Upper Elementary: Read the Bible Story and Rhyme

Youth/Adults: Read the Scripture text from the Bible

For Upper and Lower Elementary, use the Storyteller questions to help the students think about the events of the story.

g. Complete the Worksheet(s)

Continue with the handout sheets appropriate to the age level of the students in class:

Upper Elementary: Worksheet and Drama

Youth: Bible Study (Maps, Timelines, Questions)

Adult: Bible Study Sheet (Introduction and Discussion)

h. Craft and Activity Time

If there is time after covering the Bible story, the class may move to craft and activity time, described on the following page. (Do not let the activity time supersede the actual time spent on the Scripture lesson.)

i. Summarize and Review

Before ending class, briefly summarize the day's lesson one last time. If you have not already done so, introduce the Theme Word for the week, providing the definition, and asking how the lesson connects to that theme.

Youth/Adult: Discuss "Reflection for the Week Ahead"

j. Closing Prayer

Close the session in prayer before dismissal:

Upper Elementary: Practice a prayer from memory (e.g., the Lord's Prayer, Luther's Morning Prayer, etc.)

Youth/Adult: Use the ADTRC Prayer format



Bible Study Leader's Guide

The following is a discussion and answer guide for the Youth and Adult Bible Study sheets. For all leaders, it can serve to provide some background on the Bible lesson.

Discuss: 1 Samuel 28:3-19

1. In earlier days, when he was still obedient to God, Scripture says, "Saul had put the mediums and the necromancers out of the land" (v. 3). What changed that led Saul to break his own law?

The prophet Samuel had died and Saul no longer had a godly advisor to guide him. God no longer seemed to be with him, so he turned to other supernatural forces. Saul may have rationalized to himself that he was still seeking Samuel's help as he always had. (It didn't matter that Samuel was dead; after all, he was a saint.)

2. A *medium* is a person who uses occult means to contact the dead. Why does God consider this a sinful act? What commandment does it break?

The word *occult* means "covered" or "concealed" — referring to practices that are hidden in darkness. Necromancy (death magic) and sorcery (demon magic) both draw upon spiritual forces other than God for help and guidance. Such practices are forms of idolatry and break the First Commandment ("Have no other gods").

3. What sense do you get in this story that God was already angry with King Saul? In what way is God's silence a punishment in and of itself?

Formerly, God had spoken to King Saul through the prophets. When Saul wanted to have his own way, God effectively said, "Fine, if you want to do it on your own, go ahead; see how that works out for you." We who have the privilege of God's Word often don't realize what it would be like without it (no truth, no promise, no forgiveness). The silence of God is a terrible thing.

4. How did the woman respond when Samuel's spirit appeared? Do you think she actually expected the séance to work? Is it possible to contact the dead?

Ironically, though this woman claimed to have powers to contact the dead, when it actually happened, she was afraid (as if she hadn't expected this to be real). Sometimes people joke around or practice divination just for "fun" — not realizing spiritual forces are real and have real consequences! (Did you know that Ouija boards are made by the children's toy company Hasbro, Inc.?)

5. Read 1 Samuel 2:6 and Psalm 88:3-6. The biblical word *Sheol* refers to the place of the dead. From what you read in these verses, where did people of the Bible understand *Sheol* to be located? How does today's story share this same understanding of where people go when they die?

The word *Sheol* appears dozens of times in Scripture, along with various synonyms including Hades, the Pit, and the Grave.

However, many Christians are unfamiliar with the word and the concept. This is a subject that deserves greater discussion, but simply stated, people of Scripture believed that when a person died, their spirit went down to rest in the depths of the earth. Notice that when Samuel appeared, Scripture says his spirit was "coming up out of the earth" (v. 13).

6. Read Hebrews 4:9-13. Many Christian tombstones are inscribed with the phrase "Rest in Peace." What is the "Sabbath rest" of which Scripture speaks here? Is this something you look forward to?

Human beings are mortal, which means we have a finite lifetime. Only God himself is immortal (1 Timothy 1:17, 6:15-16). As God said to Adam, "You are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19). Scripture often uses sleep and rest as a metaphor for death, and a description of where we are prior to the resurrection (Daniel 12:2, 1 Thessalonians 4:13).

7. How does the Word of God "lay bare" some of the false assumptions we may have about the afterlife? Why is it essential to be guided by God's Word alone?

Many people have a hard time giving up assumptions they have about the afterlife (becoming an angel, earning your wings, etc.). Some of these false images come from Hollywood; some we are taught by well-meaning people in our lives. But the Word of God lays bare that death is real, we are mortal, and that only by being raised from death in Christ can we have life again.

8. What sense do you get that what Saul did here was the last straw for God? What were the consequences of Saul's sin?

Saul broke many commandments along the way by not obeying God. But now he was breaking the first and greatest commandment. Lack of trust in God (idolatry) is the source of all human sin. Samuel said that by the next day, Saul and his sons would be "with him" in *Sheol* (that is, they would be dead within 24 hours).

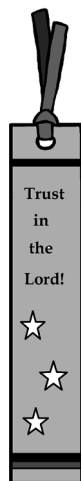
Classroom Craft and Activity Page

Listed below are in-class activities and craft projects related to the theme for the day. Choose one of the following based on the age and capabilities of the students. (Never let the activity or craft time take precedence over the biblical story.)

Activity 1: Trust in the Lord Bookmarks

Materials Needed:

- Colored card stock
- Stickers
- Pencils
- Rulers
- Markers
- Scissors
- Hole punch
- Colored ribbon



Instructions:

Let each person choose a piece of colored card stock. Hand out pencils, rulers and scissors.

Have kids fold the card stock in half. Cut down the folded line, making two pieces of card stock. Set one piece aside — this can be used for other projects on another day.

Direct everyone to do the following steps:

Place the remaining piece of card stock vertically (the long way) on the table. Holding a ruler horizontally across the middle of the card stock, make dots at the $1\frac{1}{2}$, 3, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ inch marks. Draw lines down the page at each dot. Cut along the lines, and you will have three equally sized bookmarks and a thin strip. Discard the strip of card stock.

Using a hole punch, make a hole at the top of each bookmark. Cut a 10-inch piece of ribbon for each bookmark and fold it in half. Push the folded side through the hole. Thread the ends of the ribbon through the loop and pull them through, securing the ribbon in place.

Invite kids to write the words “Trust in the Lord” on each bookmark. Decorate it with stickers, geometric designs, small pictures, etc. Kids can keep one bookmark for themselves and give two away.

Put this bookmark in a favorite book. Whenever you see it, remember how important it is for us to trust in the Lord. When you have big decisions to make, turn to God for help. Pray, read God's Word, go to church, and talk to trustworthy people of faith. God will guide you!

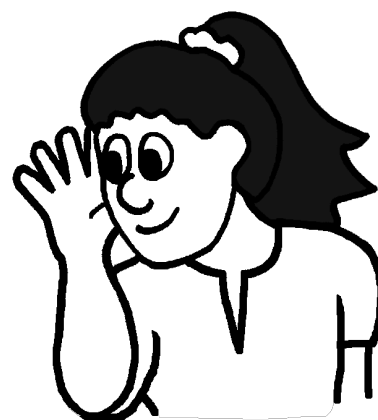
Activity 2: Watch and Listen Activity

Materials Needed:

- None needed

Instructions:

Invite the class to sit in a circle (or around a table). You (the Leader) will sit in the circle with them. Explain that for this activity, they are going to have to watch what you do very carefully, and listen very carefully as well.



Start by making a simple rhythm: Perhaps clap your hands twice, pat your legs (or the table) once. Keep repeating this rhythm and invite kids to join in and follow you.

When everyone has picked up the rhythm, change it slightly. You can do this by adding another step to it, or by creating a different rhythm entirely.

Once again, when everyone has caught on, change the rhythm again by adding another step or otherwise making it more complicated. Add some humor to this by speeding things up or adding vocal sounds, etc.

After a while, it will get difficult to follow the rhythm. At that point, stop and discuss the topic as noted below.

In this activity, you had to listen really well. The closer you listened, the better you did! In life, this is often true as well. When parents, grandparents, or teachers tell us something, it is wise to listen to them.

The same goes for God. King Saul did not listen to God and just did what he wanted. This was a mistake. How do we know how God wants us to live? Studying our Bible each week will teach us — and that's why we're here today!



Worksheet Answer Key

Shown below are the answers and solution to the children's worksheet for this week's lesson:



Regardless of how harmless they may seem, tarot cards, horoscopes, Ouija boards, and even magic eight balls are all forms of divination. We can be forgiven for past mistakes, but we should not continue in sin. It is best to put such things behind us. Instead, we can give glory to God and look to him alone. "In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid" (Psalm 56:4).

Bible Verse:

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68)

Map Answer Key

Marked with an X is where the Holy Land is located on the world map below:



On the Close-Up Map:

Mount Gilboa (where Saul died) was closer to Endor (where Saul consulted the medium) than it was to Gibeah (where Saul grew up).

Vocabulary Word for the Week:

Teachers may want to introduce the theme word for the week to help expand students' biblical vocabulary:

Disobedience

when we don't follow the rules
or don't listen to the one in charge

*Saul did not obey the Lord
or do what God wanted, so God
punished him for his disobedience.*

Reflection for the Week Ahead

Fascination with magic and occult practices has existed since ancient times and still persists today. But lest we assume that such things are limited to overtly evil and satanic practices, most examples of such things are rather mundane. Some people even use occult practices in a Christian context without even knowing it.

In talking about the occult, we often include such things as fortune telling, horoscopes, palm readings, tarot cards, and séances with the dead. But many people effectively engage in "fortune telling" when they pray for signs or use numerology to forecast the end times. Some Christians carry crosses and religious tokens as "lucky charms." Many openly pray to the dead (famous saints or family members) and consider it a faithful religious practice.

Throughout this week, count the number of times you do something that people consider good or bad luck: stepping on a crack, throwing a coin into a fountain, crossing your fingers, etc. Each time, ask yourself why having a faithful trust in God makes all such "magic" useless and unnecessary. Every time you are tempted to obey some silly superstition, offer a prayer to God instead.

The Practice of Prayer

On the lines below, write a prayer thanking God for being the source of our security and hope. Call upon him for his protection, strength, and guidance. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the faith to entrust your future to the hands of God.

Practice using the ADTRC Prayer Form: Address, Description, Thanks, Request, Conclusion.