

SPECIAL
SUNDAY

HUMAN RELATIONS DAY

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE



This children's message is part of the Human Relations Day pastor and leader kit and connects with the theme "Listening Hearts: Responding to the Prophetic Call." It can be adapted for your context and integrated into your worship service with the other material in the kit. It is based on the lectionary reading for January 14, 2024: 1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20).

(Use play figures or nativity set figures to illustrate the story with both figures lying down at the start of the story.)

Today's memory verse comes from 1 Samuel 3:10 (CEB).
Please repeat after me:

"Speak. Your servant is listening."

Samuel was a kind and obedient child who helped the priest, Eli, in the temple. One night, as Samuel laid down to sleep, he heard a voice calling his name. *(hold up the child figure)* He jumped out of bed, thinking it was Eli, and ran to him saying, "Here I am, for you called me."

(hold up the adult figure)

But Eli said, "I did not call you, go back to sleep."

(Continue to animate the figures throughout the telling of the story.)

Samuel went back to bed, but again, he heard the voice calling his name. Once more, he ran to Eli, and again Eli said that he hadn't called him. This happened not once or twice, but three times.

Finally, Eli understood that it was God who was calling Samuel. So, he told the young boy, "The next time you hear the voice, say, **'Speak. Your servant is listening.'**"

Samuel did just that. When he heard the voice again, he listened with his heart and responded, **"Speak. Your servant is listening."**

Let's say that together: **"Speak. Your servant is listening."**

And God spoke to Samuel, giving him a special message, just like messages given to the prophets in the olden days. Samuel learned

to listen to God's voice and follow God's instructions with his whole heart.

Many thousands of years later, just like Samuel listened to God's voice, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. *(hold up a picture of Martin Luther King Jr.)* also had a listening heart. He was a pastor and a servant leader who listened to the voice calling for justice, love, and equality. He fought for the rights of all people, no matter their skin color.

Dr. King's prophetic call was to stand up against discrimination and work towards a world of unity and love. He encouraged people to listen to the needs of others and respond with compassion, just like Jesus taught us to do.

On Martin Luther King weekend, The United Methodist Church celebrates by observing Human Relations Day. By following the examples of Samuel and Dr. King, we listen to God's voice to help God's people, especially those who are treated unfairly. We can respond with empathy, compassion and action to make God's world a better place for everyone.

We are each a child of God and each one of us is special and unique. On Human Relations Day, we remember how together we can help everyone experience kindness, respect and love, just as God intended.

Please repeat today's memory verse:
"Speak. Your servant is listening."