

Welcome to Families on Faith Adventures @ Home!

This resource has been put together for you by the United Reformed Church Children's and Youth Work team and the synod CYDOs and their equivalents.

We hope you will enjoy sharing a time of faith and fellowship together as a family through these stories, games, activities and prayers. They are designed as a 'pick and mix' of ways to experience God's message through the Bible, exploring what it means to you and express that in words and action. They are not linked to the lectionary but can be used in any order as we explore all the different parts of the Bible.

The Walking the Way challenges are one way of continuing our walk with Jesus throughout the week.

These ideas are designed to be intergenerational - maybe even to be shared with members of the family you can't see now except via the internet.

The resources are based on our non-uniformed children's groups, Friends on Faith Adventures and Pilots, but have been modified to make them suitable for all families at home.

*These activities are planned to be used together as a family and under adult supervision. Please be aware of your family's ages and abilities as some activities may need more adult support than others. **Stay safe and have fun!***

This week's Bible story is:

Is That You God?

1 Samuel 3



Illustration by www.lambsongs.co.nz via freebibleimages.com



With many varieties of activities and things to do to help explore the theme. Look out for this 'hands on' symbol.

Get to know your Bible

The Bible is like a library made up of 66 books written by many different people over many years.

The Old Testament books were written before Jesus was born. They are the holy stories he would have grown up hearing and reading. There are 39 of these.

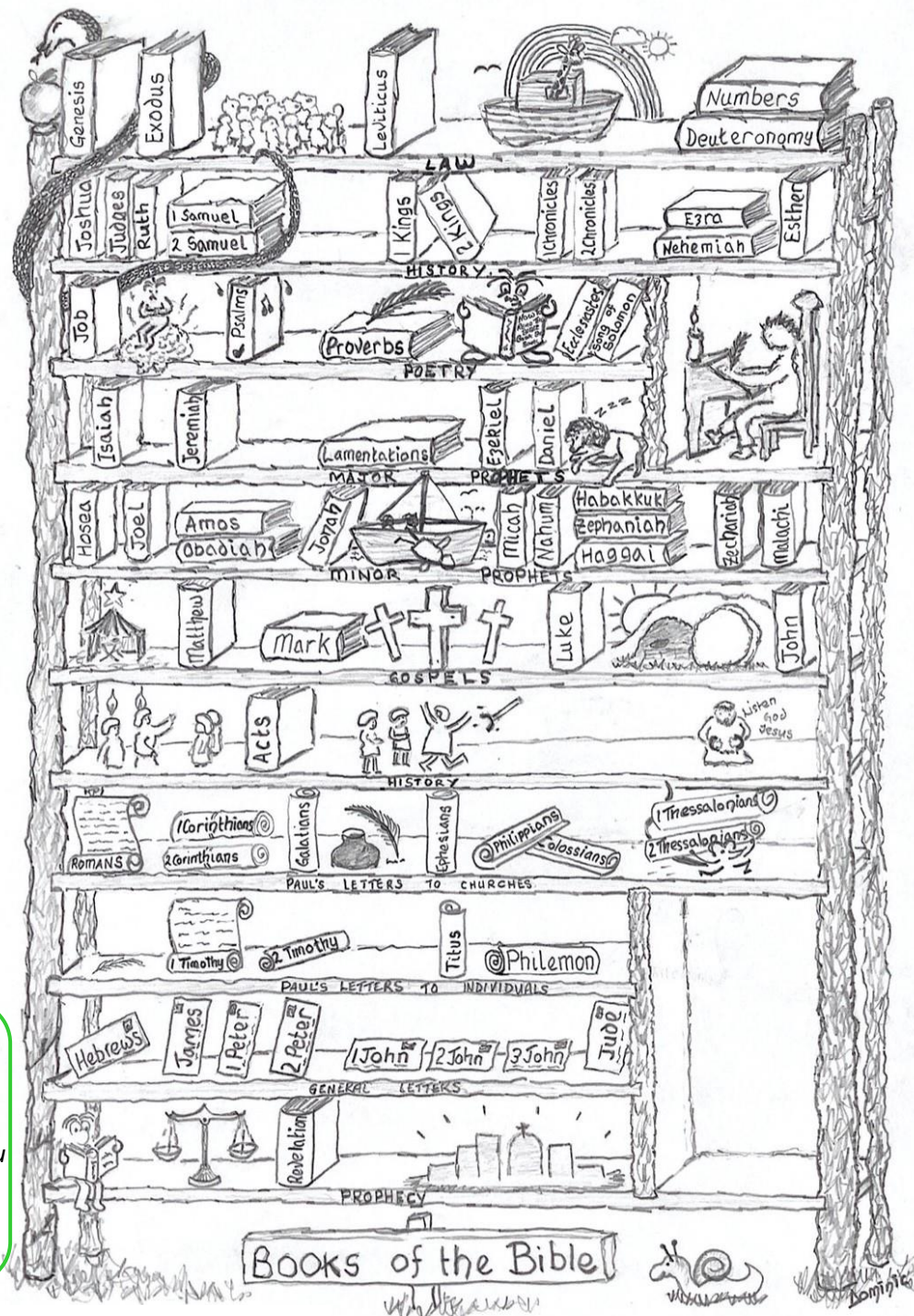
The New Testament tells us the stories of Jesus and his followers. There are 27 books in the New Testament.



Can you find and colour the book on the bookshelf that this week's story is from?

If you have a Bible, see if you can find the story in there.

You could print this out once and colour each new book on the bookshelf as you read stories from it.



Bible context – Is that you God?

The book of Samuel was written around 900 BCE by a few authors, including Samuel himself. It was originally a very long scroll which became two separate books (1 and 2 Samuel) in the bible. The book tells the story of three men. Samuel the prophet and the two people he anointed to be king of Israel, Saul, and David.

Samuel was born to Hannah who prayed for a baby and promised God that if she had a son, she would give him back to God to serve in the tabernacle. Samuel lived in the tabernacle, serving God with the Priest Eli.

The Story – 1 Samuel 3 (The New Revised Standard Bible)

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!"^[a] and he said, "Here I am!" and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. The LORD called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." Then the LORD said to Samuel, "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle. On that day I will fulfil against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. For I have told him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever."

Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." He said, "Here I am." Eli said, "What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you." So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, "It is the LORD; let him do what seems good to him."

As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beer-Sheba knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the LORD.

Online versions of the story

Watch and listen

Animation by Lifekids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-njbf6fO7g>

Cartoon by Saddleback kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P13ulsFW7OA&t=3s>

Cartoon by Crossroads Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XRZAQXcWfxk>

Animation by Superbook

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9D35Gtd2ys>

Story told in song by Saddleback Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2AWohew3QtC>

Dance and sing

God speaks, we listen by Collective worship

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5wRCWldvXU>

Light by VBS <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALkvwSfRozE>

God is always with us by Lifetree Kids https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0S9iU7B_lzY

God is light Lullaby by The wonder kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3luRAZ17LbQ>

Light of the world by hillsong Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-hgd-9r56k>

Ideas to Retell/Explore the Story

Get Dramatic together

This is a fabulous story to re-enact together, you only need three people (Samuel, God, and Eli). Have some fun setting up a bed area and a tabernacle with a light and recreate the story, showing Samuel running to Eli's room every time he hears a voice, Eli getting more and more frustrated as he tries to sleep, then God and Samuel finally talking together at the end. I wonder what God sounded like? You could video your production, or even re-enact it using Lego.

Balloon game

In the story we read how the words of God did not fall to the ground.

I wonder what this means?

Have some fun whilst you mull it over.

Take some balloons and write important words on them, perhaps words that have come from God e.g. love, hope.

The idea of the game is simple, try to not let the words touch the ground, work together to keep them up in the air and moving around. Start with one balloon and add others one at a time to make it trickier.

Consider: How can we do the same with God's messages? What can we do to keep them alive and moving around?

Family Challenge

The story says that in those days, God's words and visions were rare.

Were they rare or were they not heard/recognised?

Samuel heard a voice and immediately thought it must be Eli. Even Eli took three times to realise it was probably God speaking.

How often do we recognise that God is speaking to us in a situation? How often do we wonder whether a coincidence in the day, bumping into someone or passing someone in need for example, is actually a God-incidence?

This week begin each day by asking God to help you to be aware and open to hearing and seeing God's call. As you go about your day, take time to intentionally stop, look, listen, and ask – is this you God?

Share your experiences with each other each night to encourage each other.

Table Top Discussions

Each day over a mealtime, have a quick conversation. Here are a few questions to get you going.

- I wonder what God sounded like if Samuel kept thinking it was Eli? Does God sound the same to everyone?
- Is there something that you feel God has been saying, that you are keeping to yourself?
- Why do you think some people find it easier to sleep with a little light on? I wonder what this says to us about God in our lives?
- Samuel heard God in the tabernacle. Where do you feel closer to God?
- Share with each other examples of times when you believe you have heard God or knew that God was asking you to do something.

What's in the box?



What treasures can you find to put in the box for your little ones to explore?

Perhaps older children could help find the things.



Use a box or a bag to hold the treasures and encourage any little ones to explore what's in the box/bag each week to go with the Bible story.

This week's Bible story is:

Is That You God?

1 Samuel 3



Illustration by www.lambsongs.co.nz via freebibleimages.com



A couple of pillows



Some blankets to
lay on and under

Something with
rainbow colours
for God's
promise



Toys to
represent Eli
and Samuel

Please supervise small children! Watch out for chain or string getting caught around fingers, wrists or neck etc.

A battery candle (flameless), or torch or LED light, to represent the 'Lamp of God'.



Pray Together

Prayer Candle

Turn out the lights or darken the room.

Light a candle or use one of the tea light ideas and place it somewhere in the middle of the table or room. Sit still and watch the flames or light and take a moment to remember that God is with you.

Sit quietly and give your prayers to God - you can do this out loud or quietly to yourself.

Give thanks for all the ways God has been made known to you.

Give to God any worries you have about things you don't know, or areas where you feel alone.

When you are ready blow out your candle and watch as the smoke continues to drift even when we cannot see the light the smoke continues to fill the room just as God is all around us and hears our prayer.



Lights

But even the darkness is not dark to you.

The night is as light as the day.

Darkness and light are the same to you. Psalm 139 :12

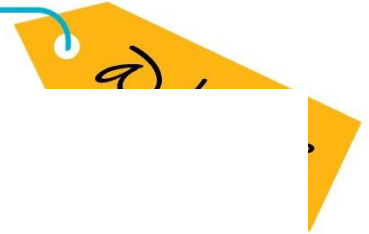
Samuel had the temple light burning all night where he slept so that he was not in darkness. The bible tells us that God was always with Samuel and God's light never goes out.

Take some time to look and notice at all the different lights that you have in your home. What are they used for?

Perhaps you have a night light by your bed or a plugin light outside your bedroom.

Do you have lights that are on timers that come on when it gets dark or lights that are always switched on but only light when it gets dark?

Do you have any torches or candles in the house and when do you use them?



Each light has a special purpose, to shine in the darkness, to show us the way to light our path and guide us. Remember that God's light is always with you.

Place a lamp or lantern lit in the middle of the table as a reminder of God's light.

Say thank you to God for all the lights you have and think about all the different ways you use them.

As you think about all the different lights:

- Think about situations that feel dark or sad and ask God's light to be in them
- Think about things that you might find difficult and ask God to show you the way
- Think about people who are lonely and ask God to be with them.



A prayer to say together

Dear God

Shine in our lives and help us to see what we should do.

Shine in our hearts when we are lonely, sad, scared or hurting.

Shine through us into the lives of other people.

Light up the world with your glory,

Amen.

Listening

We can listen for God in many ways, here is a prayer to say to ask God to help you listen,

Dear God,

Help us to hear your voice every day.

To hear your voice in the words and stories of the Bible.

To hear your voice in the songs we sing.

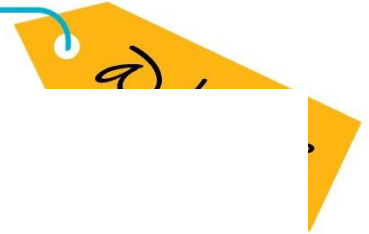
To hear your voice in the stillness and in the noise.

To hear your voice in our conversations with friends.

To hear your voice through your creation and the things we see each day.

Help us to hear your voice.

Amen.



Listening for God

Find a quiet place to make a bed on the floor, get your favourite cushion or pillow and a blanket and lie down.

Lie as quietly and as still as possible and just listen. You might find it helpful to close your eyes.

Sometimes we are too quick to fill the quiet with our voices so just take time to listen.

Eli told Samuel to lie quietly and then told him to say 'speak Lord your servant is listening'.



Here is a prayer you can say as you lie down and then again at the end of your prayer time.

Dear God,

Sometimes we are not sure if we can hear your voice or not.

Please help us to listen carefully for you.

Help us to know when it is your voice we can hear.

Help us to notice you in what all we see and do.

Help us to know you are always near, holding our hand.

Amen.

Adapted from Roots

I wonder what is your favourite part of this story?

I wonder whether Samuel was a little confused about what was going on?

I wonder whether you find it easier to sleep with a light on in the room? Why do you think this is?



Illustration by lambsongs.co.nz via www.freebibleimages.com

I wonder why it took Eli three times to work out that it was God calling Samuel?

I wonder whether God has spoken to you about something that you've kept to yourself?



TO DO TOGETHER...

Craft – Make a night light

Night Lights are so simple but can offer reminders in the darkness that we are not alone, they can offer us comfort.

In the story we read that Samuel was lying near to God's light, that had not gone out, he was in the place where the Ark was. The lamp of God was a large candlestick with seven branches (seven oil lights). It was kept burning all through the night till the morning. Both the lamp and the ark are symbols of God's presence.

God's light never goes out; God is with us always as we are reminded at the end of the story "God was with Samuel always as he grew up".

Make a night light as a reminder that God is always with us.

You basically make something to go over a candle (battery candles are safest) that has holes or shapes in it to let the light through.

We made three different types.



1. Paper cup light

Take a paper cup, mark out your pattern/design for the 'holes'. A toilet roll tube or rolled up card will also work well.

Cut them out and stand it over your candle.

Adding colour with felt pens can add effects to your light.

For a slightly trickier activity, you can slice the cup rather than cut the hole completely, this allows you to lift the sliced flap to add texture to your light.



2. Lego Light

Build a cover of any shape, making sure you leave windows for the light to shine through. We made window boxes, a throne and a lighthouse.



3. Tissue paper windows

For those who like to get sticky.

Use tissue paper (or magazine pages, or sweet wrappers) to cover a glass jar, using Pritt stick or white glue.

Plan out a design first for maximum effect.

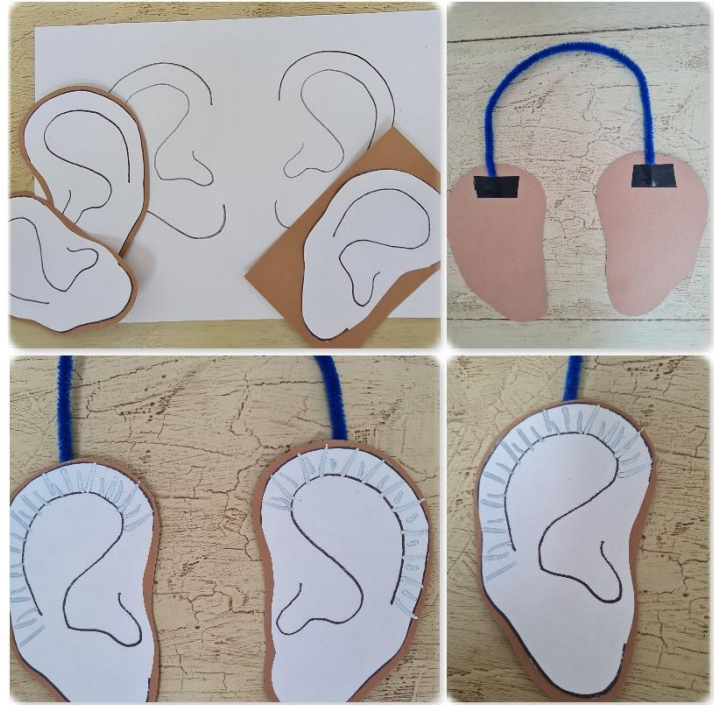


Listening ears craft

"Speak, for your servant is listening." 1 Samuel 3:10

You will need:

- Paper and card
- Printout of the template for ears (as big as you like!)
- A pipe cleaner
- Glue
- Tape

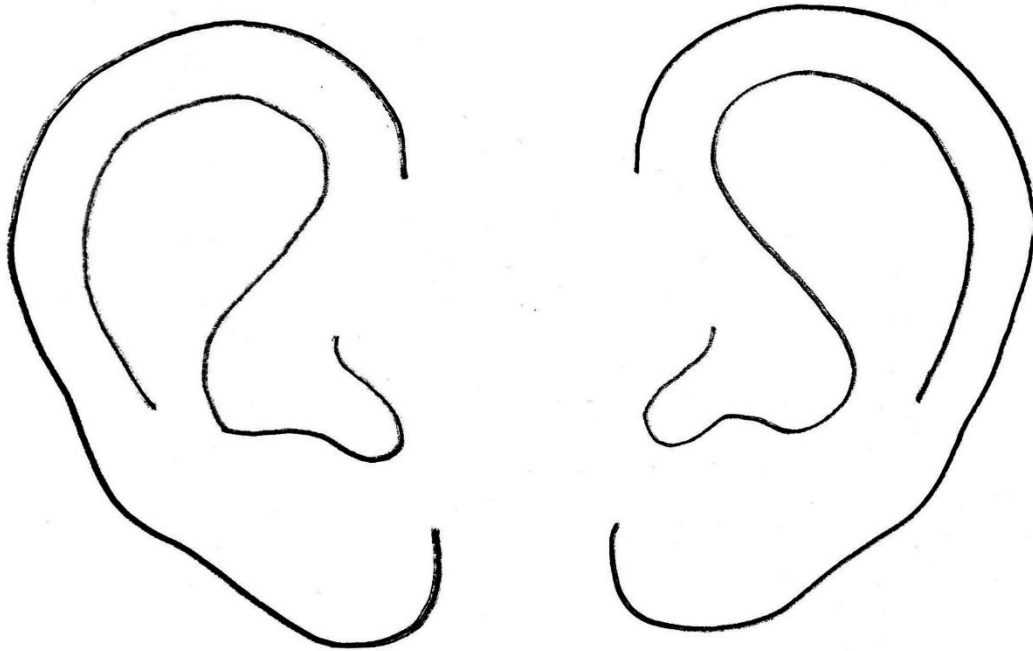


Cut out the ears from paper. Stick the ears on the card. Cut around the ear, leaving a border of the card. This will add strength and colour to the ears.

Place the ears facing away from each other with the front facing down. Tape the pipe cleaner to the back of the ears as in the picture. You can now wear your big listening ears. God said to Samuel "I am about to make the people's ears tingle with what I am telling you." Why not decorate your ears to make them sparkle or shine.

"See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle" Samuel 3:11

Listening Ears Template



Tea or Tie Dye Pillowcases

You will need:

- An old pillowcase
- Tea bag, plus a kettle to heat the water
- Food dye
- Elastic bands

What to do:

To 'Tea Dye', you will need to brew the tea in a large mixing bowl. Adults should boil the kettle and pour the water into the bowl. Stir the tea bag in the water until the colour is as dark as you would like it. Then remove the tea bag and wait for the 'tea' to cool down.

Decide how much and what part of the pillowcase you would like to dye and dip this part into the bowl of tea. We just did each end of the pillowcase but dye any part of the pillowcase you would like. Leave the part of the pillowcase in the tea and allow the tea to seep up the pillowcase so you create a graded change of colour.



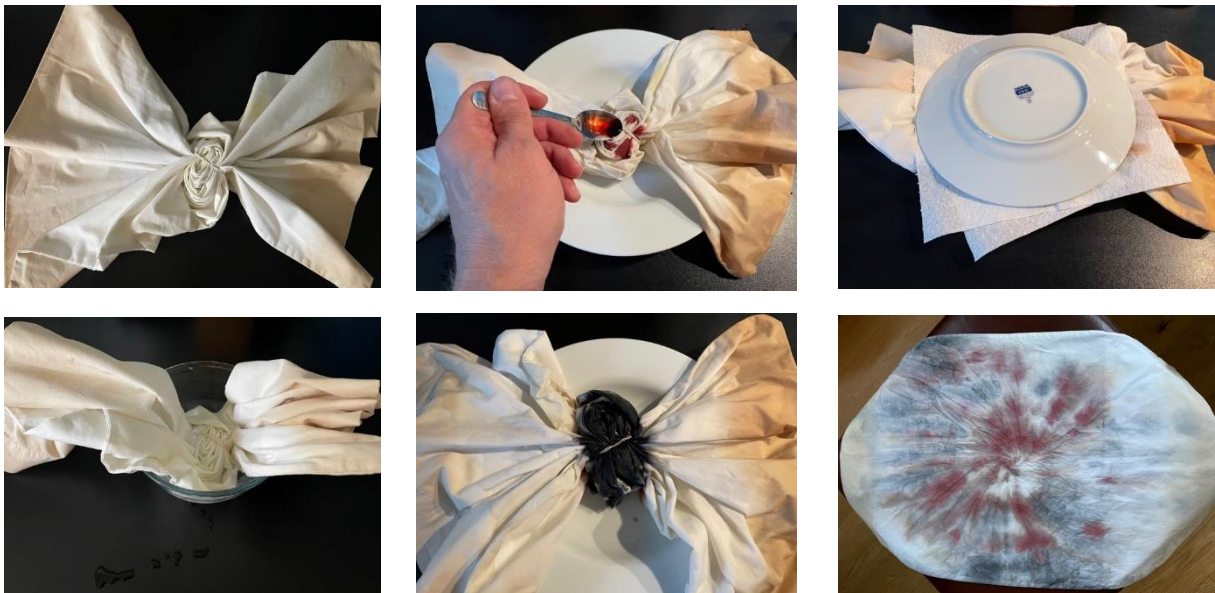
When you are ready, carefully lift the pillowcase out of the bowl and allow it to drip excess tea off. We soaked any further excess liquid off the pillowcase with paper towel before hanging the pillowcase up to dry.

To 'Tie Dye' with food colouring, gather some of the pillowcase to create the effect you would like. We twisted the centre and gathered the material to create a spiral effect. Once you have gathered the material, use an elastic band to hold in place. Then soak the gathered part in water so it is wet, ringing any excess water out.

Using a teaspoon, carefully dribble or drip the food colouring on to the parts of the gathered material held by the elastic band. We used red dye on one side and black on the other for a two-tone effect. Allow the food colouring to soak in. We did all this over a plate to collect the excess dye.

The next step is to soak any excess dye out of the pillowcase using paper towel. When you're ready and the pillowcase is not dripping, you can remove the elastic band and hang the pillowcase up to dry.

When you use this pillowcase in the future, let it remind you about Samuel listening to God. Can you make time to listen out for God?



Walking the Way

Living the life of Jesus today

**Our Walking the Way Challenge
this time is...**

At Home:

We can forgive Samuel for rationalising the situation and assuming it was Eli calling him, after all many of us would probably do the same today. When you are home, try being more intentional with recognising when God might be calling to you, through things happening around you and others in your life. Try not to 'rationalise' a situation to make sense of it, it might be God!

Outside:

The Lamp of God shone to remind the believers that God is always with us. In 1 Samuel 19 it tells us that the Lord was with Samuel, and everything Samuel said proved to be reliable. When you are out and about be intentionally aware of the Lord, our God, being with you. See his presence in everything you see and observe, and give thanks.

For Others:

How effective are we at helping others realise when God is trying to say something to them? As you interact with others, through church or in other areas of your life, try to be like Eli, and help others to discern whether God is speaking to them.



The
United
Reformed
Church

**families
on faith adventures**

at home

Adventurers Go!

You've shared together, now share with us!

Why not send photos of your crafts, your treasure boxes, your Walking the Way challenges - or dress up to make a tableau of the Big Story and take a photo to send in.

Email your photos to: lorraine.webb@urc.org.uk
with parental permission for them to be used in publicity and online URC social media.

Alternatively, share them on our Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/URCchildren.and.youth/>

Remember you can find more resources on our website:
<https://urc.org.uk/resources-for-children-and-youth>

And if you've enjoyed these activities, why not see whether your local church runs Pilots or Friends on Faith Adventures (FOFA) when things get back to normal again.

Created for you by Nicola Grieves (Eastern Synod), Judy Harris (National Synod of Wales), Hannah Middleton (Northern Synod), Philip Ray (Wessex Synod, North), Lorraine Webb (Programme Officer for CYW), and Ruth White (Wessex Synod, South) on behalf of the CYDO+ and Children's and Youth Work team and Pilots.



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