Bible Point

It’s good to tell God how much we love him.

Bible Verse

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name” (Psalm 100:4).

Growing Closer to Jesus

Children will
■ learn what it means to praise someone,
■ write a poem that praises God for his creations,
■ discover that praising God is fun, and
■ talk about what they love about God.

Teacher Enrichment

The Bible Basis

■ Hannah praises God.

1 Samuel 1:21–2:11

In last week’s lesson, we learned of the birth of Samuel. This week’s lesson moves on to show Hannah keeping her vow to God by presenting Samuel for a lifetime of service at the temple. Samuel was likely around 3 years old when Hannah took him to Eli at the temple. That was the typical age for weaning in Jewish culture. It’s good to note, especially for your students, that Hannah didn’t abandon 3-year-old Samuel to an old man at the Temple. She likely visited him often, and we know from 1 Samuel 2:19 that she brought him a new robe every year.

As you look at Hannah’s prayer of praise in 1 Samuel 2:1-10, keep in mind that the boy she was presenting at the temple was the one she had wanted so desperately and had pleaded with God to give her (1 Samuel 1:11). God had honored her prayer, and she was honoring him—first by keeping her promise to dedicate Samuel to a lifetime of serving God, and then through her song of praise.

Hannah’s prayer is a magnificent demonstration of worship. Notice that she doesn’t beg to have Samuel back—Hannah was praising God for his goodness in all of life!

Prayer

■ How does Hannah’s prayer compare to Mary’s?
■ How does your praise to God stack up to that of these two faithful women of God?
■ Pray: Lord, let me praise you more faithfully for all the wonderful things you’ve done in my life, and let my students see how thankful I am by…
### This Lesson at a Glance

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Welcome

**SUPPLIES:** “Prayer Name Tags” (p. 134), safety scissors, markers, tape

- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- As children arrive, ask them about last week’s “Growing Together” discussion. Use questions such as “Where did you and your family pray last week?” and “As you looked at pictures of family and friends, who did you pray for?”

- Say: **Today we’re going to learn that it’s good to tell God how much we love him.**

- Hand out the name tags children made during Lesson 10, and help children attach the name tags to their clothing. If some of the name tags were damaged, or if children weren’t in class that week, have them make new name tags using the photocopiable handout.

- Tell children that the attention-getting signal you’ll use during this lesson will be blowing the _bird whistle_. Ask children to respond by raising their hands as they stop talking and focus their attention on you. Rehearse the signal with the children, telling them to respond quickly so you have plenty of time for all the fun activities planned for this lesson.

Attention Grabber

**Cheers for Peers**

**SUPPLIES:** none

Have children sit in a circle.

Say: **We're going to play a game. One person will be “It.” We'll call “It” our “Cheer Captain.” The Cheer Captain will get the tissue shaker and walk around the outside of the circle gently tapping each person on the head. The Cheer Captain will stop behind someone and shake the tissue shaker over that person's head. The rest of us will shout out a cheer. For example, if the Cheer Captain picks Nicholas, we'll yell, “Nicholas, Nicholas, we like Nicholas! Yea, Nicholas!” Then Nicholas becomes the next Cheer Captain.**

For more fun, add sound effects during the cheer. Have children slap their thighs to sound like a drumroll during the word _yea_ and then clap twice as you shout out the name the last time.

Choose a volunteer to be the Cheer Captain by choosing the person with the birthday closest to today. Give him or her the _tissue shaker_, and play the game until everyone has been cheered for. Then put the _tissue shaker_ away.

Say: **That was a lot of fun! I can tell you really like each other.**

Ask: • **When do we cheer for people?** (When they win an award; when they do something good; when they are famous or important.)

• **Who do we cheer for?** (Basketball players; football players; people who do special things; people we like.)
• What would it be like if no one ever noticed when you did something good? (I’d feel bad; I’d think nobody cared about what I did.)
• What would it be like if people never told you they liked you or loved you? (I’d be sad; I’d feel bad; I’d think nobody loved me.)

Say: It feels good when people say they love us. It makes others feel good when we tell them we care. Today we’re going to say “I love you” to God. Sometimes we call that praising God. ►It’s good to tell God how much we love him.

Bible Exploration & Application

Hannah’s Song

SUPPLIES: Bible

Say: The Bible story today is about a woman who had a special reason to tell God she loved him. This story comes from the book of 1 Samuel in the Old Testament. Show children the book in the Bible. Help me tell this story. Listen carefully the first time I read it.

Read the following poem enthusiastically. Convey to the children how exciting it is to tell God we love him. Then have the children form trios and choose one person to be Hannah, one to be the priest, and one to be Samuel. Have trios silently act out the story while you read the poem again.

Hannah’s Song

For years I waited for a child,
But yet no baby came.
Mean words from other mothers
Made me cry with tears of shame.

We traveled to the house of God
To give our offering there.
“Child—please, God, I want a child,”
I bowed and cried in prayer.

“What troubles you?” the old priest asked.
“You’re drunk—how very bad!”
“Oh, no, sir,” I assured him,
“I’m not drunk—I’m just quite sad.

“I’ve been telling God my problems—
Things that only God can know.”
“I wish you well,” the old priest said.
“God bless you as you go.”

A few months passed, and then one day
I had a baby boy.
A son so small and beautiful—
He filled my heart with joy.

Bible Insight

When God answered Hannah’s prayers by giving her a son, she expressed her great joy in a song of thanksgiving. This song contains the first direct biblical reference to the Messiah—the Lord’s anointed one. Since there was no king in Israel at the time, the reference is believed to refer to Christ.
“Look here,” I told my husband,
“See what God has done!
My prayers have been answered—
God’s given us a son!

“I love this baby, Samuel,
But when he starts to grow,
I’ll take him to the kind old priest.
It’s what God wants, I know.”

So Hannah raised her baby son
And loved him with all her heart
Because she knew the day would come
When they would have to part.

Samuel grew, and Hannah said,
“Here’s what we need to do:
We’ll take you to live in the temple—
God has special plans for you!”

So they packed their things and traveled
Till they stood at the temple door.
Hannah asked the kind old priest,
“Remember me from before?

“I’m the woman who stood here praying,
Asking God to give me a son.
Now I’m giving my child back to God
In thanks for what he’s done.

“God’s filled my heart with love and joy
And taken away my tears.
Because the Lord is on my side
I can say goodbye to my fears.

“There’s no one in heaven like our God,
No one on earth below.
The Lord is a God who sees everything,
There’s nothing he doesn’t know.

“God created this beautiful earth;
He cares for those who are sad.
God is stronger and wiser than soldiers and kings;
God knows who’s good and who’s bad.”

Samuel and Hannah said goodbye,
And Samuel stayed with the priest.
But each year he saw his mother
When she came to town for the feast.

God gave Hannah five more kids
Who filled her life with laughter.
Hannah praised God for the rest of her life—
And lived happily ever after!
Say: Thank you all for your help in telling the story. I appreciate your fun actions.

Ask: • How do you think Hannah felt when she sang her song of praise to God? (I think she felt good; happy.)
• How do you think God felt when Hannah praised him? (I think it showed God that Hannah loved him; I bet he felt good.)

Say: Hannah was so happy about what God had done for her that she wrote a song of praise to God. I’m sure it made God happy when Hannah said thank you to him. ►It’s good to tell God how much we love him. Our Bible verse for today tells us that, too. Listen while I read you Psalm 100:4:
►“Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name.”

Ask: • Who is being referred to in the Bible verse? (God.)
• What are some ways we can thank and praise God? (We can sing to him; we can clap our hands; we can say thank you.)

Say: There are many ways we can thank and praise God to tell him we love him. Hannah praised God with a poem. Let’s make a poem for God, too.

**Praise Poem**

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, CD player

Before this activity, cue the CD to track 14, “Praise Poem.”

Say: ►It’s good to tell God how much we love him, so we’re going to write a praise poem just as Hannah did. Think of your favorite things to hear, taste, smell, touch, and see. God created all these things, and we can give praise for them.

Part of the poem is already on the CD. We’ll listen to the first part of each sentence, and then everyone can call out answers to complete the sentence. Then you’ll hear music, and that’s your signal to be quiet and to listen for the next part of the poem.

Let’s practice once before we listen to the CD. Be ready to call out answers to complete the sentence. I’ll blow the bird whistle to signal when you’re supposed to share answers. Here we go.

The best sound I’ve ever heard is... Blow the bird whistle, and pause for children to fill in the blank with sounds such as wind, laughter, or birds singing. Praise God for sound! You’re super praise-givers. Let’s turn on the CD now.

Listen to the CD, and have children call out answers to complete each sentence. You may want to hold a finger to your lips and point to your ear when the music plays to remind children to listen for the next part of the poem.

You may want to play this poem several times. After you’ve completed the poem, turn off the CD player, gather the children, and have everyone sit down.

Ask: • What else do you like about God? (The way God takes care of me; the promises God makes; the flowers God created.)
• What are some other things you can do to let God know how much you love him? (I could pray; I could draw a picture; I could obey him.)

Say: The Bible tells us lots of ways to praise God. I’ll read Psalm 69:30. Be listening for different ways to tell God we love him. Read Psalm 69:30 aloud.

Then ask:
• **What kinds of ways can we tell God we love him?** (Sing songs; say thank you for good things he gives us; go to church.)

• **Why is it good to praise God?** (It makes God feel good; it makes us happy; it shows we love God.)

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**Hands-On Bible Curriculum—Grades 1 & 2**

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**Hannah Praises God**

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Say: **Saying “I love you” to God can be lots of fun. And hearing God tell us he loves us is even better.**

The biggest way God tells us “I love you” is through his Son, Jesus. God sent Jesus to stand in our place and take the punishment we deserve for our sins by dying on the cross—what incredible love that is! We are letting God know that we love him when we tell him we are sorry for our sins and that we believe in Jesus. **Jesus is alive, so we can live with him and love him forever! Hurray!**

Play “His Great Love” (Romans 5:8) on track 4 of the CD. Play it a second time, and encourage the children to sing along with the CD. Lyrics are at the back of this book. Then say: **God loves us very much, and it’s good to tell God how much we love him, too. Now let’s praise God some more.**

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**HANDS-ON BIBLE**

Before class, create a megaphone for yourself, following the instructions for the “Shout to the Lord!” activity near Psalm 100 of the Hands-On Bible. For this activity, you will need colored sheets of construction paper and empty paper towel rolls—one for each child—as well as safety scissors, crayons or colored markers, and tape for children to share. Say: **It’s good to tell God how much we love him. Sometimes we can get so happy about God that we want to shout about it! Let’s see what the Bible tells us about praising God.**

Direct children to open their Hands-On Bibles to find today’s Bible verse, Psalm 100:4, and have them follow along the highlighted text as you read it aloud. If you have readers in your class, have them read aloud with you. **“Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name.”** Then point out the activity titled “Shout to the Lord!” on the opposite page. Show children the megaphone you created before class, and tell them they will be creating megaphones of their own so they can shout to the Lord, too. Hand a sheet of construction paper and an empty paper towel roll to each child, and set out safety scissors, crayons or colored markers, and tape for children to share. Walk the children through the instructions for the activity, assisting children as needed.

When children have completed their megaphones, read Psalm 100 in its entirety. Let volunteers take turns making up cheers to praise God. Then ask:

• **Why should we praise God?** (Because we love him; because he is good; because he is God and he deserves it.)

• **What’s your favorite way to praise God?** (Sing; jump for joy; clap my hands; shout hurray.)

Lead children in a cheer for God, encouraging them to use their megaphones to shout their praises.
Praise Interest Centers

Interest Centers are designed to run simultaneously and to be completed with minimal teacher supervision. Children will choose which Interest Center to participate in. They may choose to visit both centers if time allows. Circulate between the centers, offering help and directing conversation as needed.

Interest Center 1: Pop-Up Praises

SUPPLIES: “Pop-Up Praise” handouts (p. 168), safety scissors, markers, construction paper, glue

Provide safety scissors, markers, construction paper, glue, and photocopies of the “Pop-Up Praise” handout. On the handout, children will finish the sentence, “God, I love you because…” with words or pictures and then follow the printed instructions to cut and fold the pop-up card and add a construction paper cover. Encourage the children to finish the sentence several different ways or to draw their praises in bright, happy colors.

Circulate among the children as they work. Invite them to show you what they’re adding to the cards. Encourage them to tell you why they wrote or drew specific things.

Interest Center 2: Praises for Protection

SUPPLIES: markers, newsprint, tape

Provide markers and the black-rimmed glasses. Hang a large sheet of newsprint on a wall. At the top, print this excerpt from Hannah’s song of praise: “He will protect his faithful ones” (from 1 Samuel 2:9). Beneath that, write, “We praise you, God, for watching over us.” Read the words aloud as you write them so nonreading children will understand.

Have children take turns tracing around the black-rimmed glasses on the newsprint. Then encourage them to add decorative designs to the glasses they’ve traced and sign “Love, (name)” beneath their designs.

As your students work, ask questions such as “When has God watched over you?” and “How do you think God watches over the whole world at once?”

As the Interest Center time draws to a close, blow the bird whistle to give children a two-minute warning. Blow it once more to gather children. Return the black-rimmed glasses to the Learning Lab. Invite volunteers to share what they wrote and drew.

Closing

Banner of Praise

SUPPLIES: Bible

Give each child a heart or star from the linking hearts and stars. You’ll also need the glow-in-the-dark shoelace.

Say: Think about one thing you love about God.
When you think of something, come to me and tie your heart or star on this shoelace and tell us what you love about God. Here are some questions to get you thinking.

Ask: • What have you learned about God in our class? (God keeps his promises; God always hears us; God helps us with our problems; God made everything good.)

• What does God promise to do for you? (God promises to take care of me; answer my prayers; help me when I’m scared; take care of my problems.)

• What did he do for Hannah? Samson? Jacob? Isaac? Abraham? Noah? Adam and Eve? (Gave her a baby; gave him strength; helped him forgive; helped him be a peacemaker; led him to a new land; kept him safe during the flood; loved them even when they made a mistake.)

Have each child share a reason for loving God and loosely knot his or her heart or star onto the glow-in-the-dark shoelace. Then tie the shoelace ends together. Ask a volunteer to raise one arm straight over his or her head. Slip the shoelace over the child’s head and arm so it rests on one shoulder like a sash. Read Song of Songs 2:4b as you help each child put on the sash. (You may want to turn off the lights to let the shoelace “glow.”)

Say: These hearts and stars remind us of God’s love for us. There are many things to love about God. It’s good to tell God how much we love him. Say that with me: It’s good to tell God how much we love him. God’s love is exciting because he doesn’t keep it tied up in one place—it’s everywhere. Slip the hearts and stars off the sash, and carefully toss them around the room at floor level. He spreads his goodness and love all over so everyone can have it. Find a heart or star to put in your pocket to remind you to thank God for sharing his love with all of us.

Put away the glow-in-the-dark shoelace. Encourage the children to take the hearts and stars home with them.

Close with this prayer: Thanks, God, for being who you are. You are a great and awesome God, and we love you very much. Remind us to give you praise every day. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the “Takin’ It Home” handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your kids. Encourage kids and parents to use the handout to spark meaningful discussion on this week’s topic.
Pop-Up Praise

Make a photocopy of this handout for every child in your class. Encourage children to write or draw reasons they love God on the inside of their cards. Cut and fold the cards as the diagram shows. Then have children make and decorate construction paper covers for their cards.
Bible Story
Hannah praises God.
1 Samuel 1:21–2:11

God Is Great

Play a game of God Is SO Great. When you say, “God is SO great,” your child asks, “How great is he?” You answer, “God is SO great that...” and complete the sentence. Then turn the game around and have your child think of a way God is great.

Family Fun

Pick an object in your home to use as an award of praise. You could choose a jar of honey to represent sweet words or a wooden block to represent building each other up. Pass the object around the dinner table. As each person holds it, have the rest of the family offer affirming words of encouragement.

In Touch

Today your child learned that praising God is good. Children recognized why God is worthy of praise and had lots of fun telling God how much they love him. Use these ideas to praise God with your family.

Nature Notes

Read aloud Psalm 98:7-8. Talk about how nature praises God. Discuss questions such as “If the hills sing out their songs of joy, what kind of music do they make?” “Can you hear the rivers clapping their hands in glee for God? What does it sound like?” and “How do trees and flowers and grass and birds show their praise for God?”

Walking Wonders

On your next walk, discover reasons to praise God. Look for the smallest creation you can find. Praise God for his attention to detail. Then look for the biggest creation you can find and praise God for his huge imagination. Praise God for the sights, smells, sounds, tastes, and feels that he created. End your walk by praising God for who he is.

Key Verse

“Enter his gates with thanks-giving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name” (Psalm 100:4).

Key Verse

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9b).

Prayer 13:

It’s good to tell God how much we love him.