



On your marks

A way-in to the story of God calling Samuel as a young boy (1 Samuel chapter 3)

With possible links to:

- the topic of hearing God in prayer
- other Bible stories where God spoke directly to people
- how God speaks today

Get set

You will need:

- copies of magazines with TV and Radio listings
- some mobile phones
- telephone directories
- pretend child's walkie-talkies or something similar
- a radio
- Bible and palm cross
- 30 minutes

Go!

1. Start by inviting the group all to talk at once - perhaps each giving name, age, address, family and hobbies etc. It should be as noisy as possible! Could anyone hear anybody else?
2. Now suggest they try to be really quite. Sit the group down in as comfortable a position as possible and bring the group to complete silence by slowly lowering your voice quieter and quieter to a tiny whisper. Can you still hear me? At given signal, have complete silence. After a while, ask 'could anyone hear anything?' Discuss what sort of sounds they could hear. Did they all hear the same sounds? Are these the only sounds in the room?
3. Introduce the TV and Radio listings from magazines, the mobile-phone telephone directories, walkie-talkies. In groups ask them to discover as many possible other voices that could possibly be heard in the airways in the room at that particular time, if they were able to pick them up, e.g. *What programmes are on the radio or TV at that moment?*(see all channels, cable and satellite)
What text messages may be being sent? (use imagination!)
What telephone conversations? (suggest who is phoning whom about what!)
What police calls may be coming through?
Are there any other possibilities? This room and the world in general are constantly full of people's voices, even if we can't hear all of them ourselves.
4. Why can't we hear all these voices? We need to have the right equipment and be able to tune in. Use a radio to do just that!
5. Christians believe that God is always speaking to us but that, in the same way as the radio, we



need to use the right equipment and be able to tune in. Maybe a Bible with a palm cross coming out of it like an aerial might be useful as a visual aid to show one piece of equipment we can use and how the story of Jesus is a way of tuning in.

6. Young Samuel in the Bible heard God speaking at night in the temple where he was living as a sort of school-boarder. Read the story in 1 Samuel chapter 3. In pairs, this is the sort of story that could be dramatised as a mine, with young Samuel waking up old Eli. Include expressions of amazement, puzzlement, annoyance, surprise etc.
7. Get the group thinking about the story with some question prompts such as:

I wonder why Eli didn't realise for a while that it was God who was speaking to Samuel?

I wonder why Samuel didn't recognise God's voice straight away?

I wonder why God chose to speak to Samuel and not to Eli?

I wonder if God still speaks like this today?

I wonder if God has ever been trying to speak to me?