

Bible background

1 Samuel 1:1-20

Aim of lesson

To show that God cares about our problems and answers our prayers.

Preparation required

Find a picture of the tabernacle. Make one glove puppet from the activity sheet before class. Simply colour, fold and tape the top and side. (If you wish, a piece can be taped to the top to cover the back. This can be changed over during the rhyme.) Get to know the rhyme well and write out a copy, placing it where you can see the children and the rhyme at the same time. You will need colouring materials and sellotape.

Suggested outline of lesson

1. Tell the story using the glove puppet and the rhyme. Talk about babies and little children, and how mothers love them and care for them and watch them grow.
2. Ask the children the name of the lady, why she was sad and what she did. Explain the custom of going up to worship once a year, show the children the picture of the tabernacle and explain a little of its layout and purpose.

Note: it seems likely that the house of God described here was the tabernacle made in the wilderness and pitched in Shiloh by Joshua (Joshua 18:1, Psalm 78:60), though it was moved around (to Bethel, for example, Judges 20:26-28). The language used in some passages (house, temple, door) does not necessarily imply a fixed building, but it may be that the tabernacle had been adapted slightly in its more permanent site.

Use the opportunity to expand and clarify the narrative, bringing in Eli, the High Priest. The children may like to act out the dialogue between Eli and Hannah. Emphasise the way in which, having told God about her problem, Hannah was no longer sad. We should have the same trust in God to hear our prayers.

3. Ask the children to make their own puppet.
4. Repeat the rhyme whilst the children hold their puppet and turn it around at the appropriate time. Encourage the children to join in saying the rhyme, especially during the final lines.

Alternative activities

1. Draw or stick a sad face on one side of a circle of card or a paper plate and a happy face on the other. Attach the faces to a piece of thin dowel or a strip of stiff card so that they can be held up like a mask. Recap the story and get the children to show the appropriate face at each stage.
2. Make a prayer collage by drawing or cutting out pictures of things we can pray about e.g. food & drink, friends & family, homes, creation, weather.

Relevance to the children's lives

Ask the children about praying. Do they pray at night, in the morning, before meals etc? Teach them that God likes us to pray about everything in our lives.

Prayer

Ask the children what makes them sad. Then ask who would like to pray about the sad things you have discussed.

Verse

'Lord, teach us to pray.' Luke 11:1.

Rhyme

Here is a lady who's very very sad
She doesn't have a baby, and she wishes she had.
Her name is Hannah, and she thought one day
She would go to the temple and there she would pray.
She would tell God about the problem she had
And why she was feeling so very very sad.
So she told God why she felt bad
And now she is feeling so very very glad.
For God changed her sadness into joy
By giving her a lovely baby boy.
So when you're sad, remember what to do
Pray to God like Hannah. God loves you too!