

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year B – Proper 28**  
**Lesson Plans for Younger Children**  
*Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One*

**Scripture: 1 Samuel 1:4-20**

**Background**

There are times in life when we want something with all of our heart but there doesn't seem to be anything we can do to get it. Looking around and seeing our friends and neighbors with the blessings we desire can make us feel jealous and sad. The challenge in these times is to keep focused on the good we have in our lives and to keep our hearts and minds open to the blessings God has provided. Our scriptures tell us to “pray without ceasing” but what can we do when it feels like our prayers are going unanswered?

**A Notation for This Week's Scripture Passage**

Hannah is a lucky woman. She is beautiful and her husband Elkanah loves her more than anything. But Hannah desperately wants to have a baby. She has prayed feverishly, night and day, to the point that she seems to be losing her sanity. Through it all Elkanah steadfastly proclaims his love and stands beside her. But Hannah's mind is made up and she does not care how it looks to others on the outside, she knows the deepest desire of her heart and pleads with God asking for God to send her wholeness. While this verse can be challenging because it seems to suggest that God's answer will always be “yes” to those who pray hard enough; it is also vital to our understanding of healing in the modern form. What if Hannah's healing was not that she bore a child, but that she got up the morning after her tear-filled prayer at the temple and worshipped God despite her sadness?

**Theme: Oh Lord Hear My Prayer**

**Before Class:** You will need: play dough and a rolling pin.

**Beginning:** Invite the children to join you in the circle. Ask them to tell you about a time when they really, really wanted something but it seemed like they would never get it.

**Opening Prayer:** Dear God, thank you for listening to our prayers. Amen.

**The Story: 1 Samuel 1:4-20**

There once was a man named Elkanah. Elkanah had two wives: Peninnah and Hannah. Peninnah had many children with Elkanah and he loved them all very much. Now, Hannah had tried to have a baby but she hadn't had one yet and this made her very sad. When Elkanah would bring home food for his family he always gave the most food to Hannah because he loved her so much. But Hannah was so sad she could not even eat. Elkanah was very worried about Hannah. He said to her, “Hannah, why is your heart so sad? I will love you no matter what; even if we never have a baby.” But Hannah was still very sad.

Sometimes, when Peninnah would see Hannah playing with Peninnah's children she would make fun of Hannah. Hannah was jealous of Peninnah and it hurt her feelings when Peninnah was mean.

One day, Hannah went to the Temple of God to pray to God to have a baby. Eli, the priest of the temple, was there and saw Hannah praying. Hannah was crying and talking to God so quietly no one could hear her words, but they could see her mouth moving. Eli thought something was wrong with Hannah so he went to her and asked if she was okay.

Hannah told Eli how sad she was that she didn't have a baby. She told Eli that she felt like God wasn't listening to her prayers. Eli could see how sad Hannah was so he prayed for her, too. Then, Eli said to Hannah, "Go in Peace. God will give you a baby when it is time."

Hannah was so relieved and happy! She thanked Eli and said a prayer for him.

The next day, Hannah and Elkanah went to the temple praising God. Then, just like Eli said, when it was time, Hannah had a baby and named him Samuel.

### **Reflection Questions:**

- I wonder how Elkanah felt when he was trying to help Hannah.
- I wonder why Hannah was so sad.
- I wonder why Hannah goes to the temple.
- I wonder what Eli thought when he saw Hannah crying and praying.
- I wonder how Hannah felt at the end of the story.
- I wonder what will happen to Samuel when he grows up.

**Activity:** Building Prayers for God: For the activity today the children will have an opportunity to build a prayer for God out of play dough. Invite the children to search deep inside of themselves and find the prayer that is most important for them. Next, ask the children to build their prayer out of play dough. When everyone has had time to build their prayer, ask them how they felt making their prayers. Do they feel like God is listening?

**Getting Closure:** If any of the children want to share their prayer, invite them to do so. After you finish talking about the prayers, tell them about your plan to send them to God. One at a time, go around the circle with the rolling pin and invite that child to close his or her eyes and pray their prayer to God – either silently or out loud. After they are done, they should say a loud AMEN! After their amen, help that child to roll out his or her dough. We roll out the dough because God has heard our prayer and so we do not need to hold onto our sculptures. After all of the prayers are rolled out, join hands in a circle for your closing prayer.

**Closing Prayer:** God of all power, thank you for the ways that you bless us. We pray that you would answer the prayers we sent up to you in the best way for us. Amen.

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