

**Supplies:** 1 chair per student, preferably around a table(s). The Either/Or list in the lesson plan.

### OPENING PRAYER

#### TELL

- For the opening question, I'm going to ask you a question and then we'll go around the circle and say our names and then our answer to the question.
- I'll ask the question and then I'll answer first, ok?
- Opening question: *Can you think of something that you really wanted, but then when you got it, you didn't really like it or use it as much as you thought you would?*

#### GO AROUND THE CIRCLE

- During this session, we'll be talking about the prophets and some of the first kings of Israel.
- All of these stories that we're hearing and talking about in this Session are from the Old Testament. That means these things happened well before Jesus was born.
- For our first story, we're going to start with the prophet Samuel. He's probably about 50 years old at this point (an old man for that time period). And for about 30 of those years, Samuel has been the judge and prophet of Israel. This means he's been the unofficial leader of the country.
- This story starts with Samuel wanting to semi-retire and have his sons take over for him. The people of Israel, though want something else. Listen for why they might want something else.
- This story happens over a thousand years before Jesus was born.

#### READ 1 Samuel 8:1-21 (The Message)

8 When the prophet Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. 2 The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beer-sheba. 3 Yet his sons did not follow in God's way, but paid attention to money; they took bribes and undermined justice.

4 So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, 5 and said to Samuel, "You are old and your sons do not follow God like you do; appoint for us, then, a king to govern us, like other nations." 6 But when they said, "Give us a king to govern us," Samuel was displeased. So Samuel prayed to the Lord, 7 and the Lord said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected *you* and your sons, but they have rejected *me* from being king over them. 8 Just as they have done to me, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so also they are doing to you. 9 Now then, listen to their voice; however — you shall solemnly warn them, and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them."

10 So Samuel reported all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking him for a king. 11 Samuel told them, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and make them into soldiers and servants. 13 He will take your daughters to be beauticians and cooks and bakers. 14 He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards. 15 He will take one-

tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to the people he likes better than you, like his officers. 16 He will take your best servants, and the best of your cattle and donkeys. 17 You will be like slaves to your king. 18 And in that day you will cry out to God because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves; but the Lord will not answer you in that day.” 19 But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel; they said, “No! We are determined to have a king over us, 20 so that we also may be like other nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles.” 21 When Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in prayer, asking what he should do. 22 The Lord said to Samuel, “Listen to their voice and set a king over them.”

### ASK

- So what did the Israelites want? (A King)
- And what was Samuel’s response to this? (It hurt his feelings; he felt displeased/rejected)
- What did God tell Samuel? (That the Israelites were rejecting God, not Samuel, just like they’ve been doing and to warn them what they’ll get if they get a king)
- What does Samuel tell the Israelites a king will do? (take a lot of stuff)
- Do the Israelites still want a king? (yes)
- What does God say to the Israelites request for a king? (Give them a king)

### TELL

- The Israelites were originally led by people who were chosen by God. These people were called judges and prophets.
- But in today’s story, we hear that the people of Israel wanted to change and to be like other nations. They wanted a king because all the other nations had a king.
- But kings don’t become leaders of their people because God chooses them. Instead, kings become kings because they are sons who inherit the throne from their father, or, they are someone who overthrows the king, usually by killing the king.
- This way of choosing a leader does not require or involve God.
- And that’s why God tells Samuel that the Israelites are rejecting him, God.

### EXPLAIN First ACTIVITY

- Both God and Samuel understand that if the Israelites decide to have a king, then they are rejecting God as their leader.
- This is an “either/or” situation.
- EITHER the Israelites pick God to lead them OR they pick someone else to lead them.
- In this case, they pick a king.
- We’re going to play a game that helps to demonstrate this either/or principle.
- This game is called “Would you rather.”
- How it works is that one of us will read you a question that will always starts with “Would you rather”
- And then we’ll give you two choices
- Then, you HAVE TO choose one over the other.  
For example, I might ask you “Would you rather eat peanut butter or jelly?”
- And then most likely you’ll all start talking at the same time.
- Then I’ll say “Wait, wait. Those who would rather eat peanut butter, raise your hand.”
- And then I’ll ask one or two of you to tell the class why you’d rather eat peanut butter.

- Then I'll ask one you who didn't raise your hand, why you'd rather eat jelly.
- Any questions?
- Ok, here we go!

## DO Opening Activity "Either/Or"

(Note: Ask 10 questions at most – I recommend 5 to 7. Feel free to jump around the list to pick your favorites. If the students really seem to enjoy the activity, encourage them to think of their own questions):

- Would you rather be able to fly or breathe underwater?
- Would you rather drink old milk or old coffee?
- Would you rather not brush your teeth for a week or not bathe for a week?
- Would you rather breathe fire, or have 3 million dollars?
- Would you rather cut a 1/8 of an acre of grass with your teeth, or lick up a rain puddle 6ft by 6ft?
- Would you rather eat a lime or a lemon?
- Live without music or live without T.V.?
- Eat a bar of soap or drink a bottle of dishwashing liquid?
- Have a beautiful house and ugly car or an ugly house and beautiful car?
- Have 3 eyes or webbed feet?
- Always have to say everything on your mind or never speak again?
- End hunger or hatred?
- Always lose or never play?
- Know it all or have it all?
- Give bad advice or take bad advice?
- Have sand in your shorts or water in your ear?
- Forget who you were or who everyone else was?
- Have one wish granted today or three wishes granted in 10 years?
- Be the sand castle or the wave?
- Have half days everyday or no homework forever?
- Be a deep sea diver or an astronaut?
- Run a mile or give a speech?
- Have a pie-eating contest or a wheelbarrow race?
- Not be able to talk or hear for one day?
- Wear a school uniform or last year's Halloween costume?
- Be saved by Superman or meet Winnie the Pooh?
- Have a kangaroo or koala bear as your pet?
- Pick your own nose or someone else's?
- Be a tree or live in a tree?

## TELL

- Thank you for participating in the "Would you Rather" game.
- In it you chose one thing over another.
- That's what the Israelites did in the story we read. They chose having a king lead them instead of having God lead them.

## **EXPLAIN Second Activity**

- When the Israelites want to choose having a king, then they are also NOT choosing God. God tells Samuel that the Israelites are “rejecting” him.
- That doesn’t feel good.
- We’re now going to play another game that helps illustrate how when you choose one thing, then you are NOT choosing other things.
- We're going to play the game Seven-Up [Note: If you have less than 14 students, use a number that is less than half of your class]
- The way this game works is that I'll pick 7 students to come up front.
- The rest of us will be sitting at our seats.
- Then I'll say, "OK, everyone! Heads down (Or, "Eyes shut!")! Thumbs Up!"
- If you are sitting down, then you have to close your eyes/put your head down and put your hand up with your thumb up.
- Then the 7 people who are up front will go to ONE person and push their thumb down and go back to the front.
- While this is happening, those of you who are sitting may not look! Heads should stay down and eyes remain shut.
- Once the 7 people are back up front, I'll say, "Heads up!"
- Everyone's heads should come at this point and eyes are opened.
- Then I'll say, "Stand up if your thumb was pushed down."
- Those who stand up get one guess as to who pushed their thumb down. If they guess correctly, they switch places with the person who picked them.

## **DO 7 Up Activity**

### **ASK/TELL**

- When a round happened where you were not picked, did you feel a little left out?
- Did you feel like other people who were picked were being favored over you?
- So this is a little bit how Samuel was feeling. The Israelites were playing a game of 7-Up as a way to pick who ruled them. And as we heard, the Israelites did not pick Samuel.
- So Samuel was feeling bad about this. But then God reminded him that what the people were really doing was not choosing God. So while this was true, do you think it made Samuel feel any better? (probably not - he still didn't get picked).
- So the story we read today is kind of sad. The people make a bad decision and that decision hurts Samuel's feelings and eventually rejects God's guidance.
- But the Good News that we can see in this story is that even though the people reject Samuel, God does not. God stays friends with Samuel, encourages him and guides him throughout the story.
- God also does not quit on the Israelites, even though they don't choose God. Even when we mess up or when others are not choosing us, God is always choosing us.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

### **TELL**

- This is a "repeat after me" prayer.

- After I say a line, then you say the same line as a class.
- Let's pray:
  - Dear God (Dear God)
  - Thank you for choosing us (Thank you for choosing us)
  - Please help us to choose you back (Please help us to choose you back)
  - Help us to choose you... (Help us to choose you as our king)
  - ...as king in our lives. (...as king in our lives.)
  - Thank you for your guidance and love (Thank you for your guidance and love)
  - Amen (Amen)