



Primary Collective Worship Resources

The enthronement of the Bible

Step 1: We gather

Gather the children and use some music to create the right mood. David Evans' "Be still for the presence of the Lord, the holy one is here" will work well. For young children, you only need to use the refrain, which can be repeated a couple of times:

"Be still for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here.
Come bow before him now in reverence and fear.
In him no sin is found, we stand on holy ground.
Be still for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here."

This session should be the first in this series of primary school materials. As our Scripture Initiative is called "The God Who Speaks", it is fitting, therefore, to begin the series with an enthronement of the Bible.

Step 2: Our life experience

By way of introduction, talk to the children about why the Bible is important and what God's Word means in their lives. Explain to them, too, why the Bible is usually a beautiful book and show them the Bible you will be enthroning in this session.

Ask the children to share their experiences of sensing that someone is present to them. It may be that they are busy doing something and they suddenly realise that one of their parents has come into the room and sees what is going on. Or, it might be a time when their dog or cat comes into their presence and they know, before they see them that they are there.

Ask for two volunteers. Present the Bible to one of the children selected and present a candle to the other and ask them to wait for the group to move to the Sacred Place (please see the guidelines for more on this).

Step 3: What the Bible says

Once the group has settled and silent, the children with the Bible and the candle should move in solemn procession and place the Bible and the candle carefully on the table (or another suitable surface). The teacher can then light the candle, saying "We light the candle to remind us that Jesus is here with us".

Explain to the children that, in order to prepare to hear God speaking, an acclamation is sung. In other words, we greet the Scriptures. (The word "acclamation" comes from the Latin 'ad clamare', to cry out in one united voice of agreement or approval.) Here is a simple acclamation which can be sung to the tune of 'London Bridge is Falling Down':

We are here to hear God's Word, hear God's word.
We are here to hear God's Word, let us listen.

Now, invite the children, if they want to participate, to copy you as you trace the sign of the cross on yourself with your thumb, and pray:

God be in my mind (sign the forehead)
God be on my lips (sign the lips)
And God be in my heart (sign the chest).



Explain to the children that Christians believe that God speaks to them through the words of the Bible, and that they show this by treating it with great reverence. The reader picks up the book and, holding it up high, reads this simplified version of 1 Samuel 3:1-21:

One night Samuel was sleeping when he heard God call his name.

He got up and ran to Eli and he said *"Here I am!"*

But Eli said "I didn't call you".

So Samuel went back to bed and, again, God called, "Samuel!"

Samuel jumped out of bed and went to Eli.

And he said: "Here I am!"

Again, Eli said "I didn't call you, go back to bed".

A third time God called Samuel and Samuel got up and went to Eli.

And, again, Samuel said: *"Here I am!"*

Eli realised that it was God who was calling Samuel.

He told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you again, say, 'Speak I'm your servant and I'm listening'".

That's what Samuel did when God called again.

God spoke to Samuel and said he had important work for him to do.

The teacher says, "The Word of the Lord". The response is "Thanks be to God".

Tell the children a little bit about the passage they have just heard. Samuel was the son of Hannah, who wanted Samuel to know and serve God so she sent him to stay with Eli, who was a holy man. Samuel went on to become a servant of God and a great prophet. Christians understand this passage to show them how important it is for them to listen to God just like Samuel did, because he may have jobs for them to do as well.

Ask the children if they can imagine what it must have been like for Samuel to hear God calling him. You can bring this part of the session to a close with the refrain "Here I am Lord" by Dan Schutte, which can probably be sung without musical accompaniment:

"Here I am Lord, is it I Lord? I have heard you calling in the night.

I will go Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart."

Step 4: Our life experience

In this first session, we are introducing the belief that our God is the God who speaks. This is the foundation of this series of sessions.

Christians believe that God has spoken throughout history and to all generations. Just as he spoke to Hannah and Samuel, so he speaks to us today. God is present to us wherever and whoever we are. Therefore, we must be open to listening to his voice, as we do not know when or through whom God will speak. Let us always be ready to listen to God speak.



Liturgy Sheet: The enthronement of the Bible

Gathering Song

Be still for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here.
Come bow before him now in reverence and fear.
In him no sin is found, we stand on holy ground.
Be still for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here.



Acclamation to greet the Scripture reading:

We are here to hear God's Word, hear God's word.
We are here to hear God's Word, let us listen.

Now, trace the sign of the cross on yourself with your thumb as we pray:

God be in my mind (sign the forehead)
God be on my lips (sign the lips)
And God be in my heart (sign the chest).

A reading from the First book of Samuel 3:1-21:

Samuel was the son of Hannah. Hannah wanted a baby boy very much and she wanted him to know and serve God so she sent him to stay with Eli, a very holy man. One night Samuel was sleeping when he heard someone call his name. He got up and ran to Eli and he said "*Here I am!*" But Eli said "I didn't call you". So Samuel went back to bed and, again, the Lord called, "Samuel!" Samuel jumped out of bed and went to Eli. And he said: "*Here I am!*" Again, Eli said "I didn't call you, go back to bed". A third time God called Samuel and Samuel got up and went to Eli. And, again, Samuel said: "*Here I am!*" Eli realised that it was God who was calling Samuel. He told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you again, say, 'Speak Lord, for your servant is listening'". That's what Samuel did when God called again. God spoke to Samuel and said that even though he was young, he had jobs for him to do.

The reader says "The Word of the Lord" and everyone responds, "Thanks be to God".

Closing Song

"Here I am Lord, is it I Lord? I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart."