



Magnify

the Message

Samuel Seeks a King

A Short Drama

Ellie and John Macpherson

Samuel Seeks a King

1 Samuel 15: 34 – 16: 13

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This simple skit is part of the series *Magnify the Message*, designed to enhance children's Bible Story Time interpreting the story through drama. It includes some basic suggestions for costumes and directions.

We might structure our Bible Story time like this –

- Introduction – focus the children on the story to be told
- Story – present the story
- Response – reflect on the messages for our group

Others in the *Magnify the Message* series –

- *Open Up* – a bright Introduction song that you can use over and over
- *The Good Samaritan* – a story and song to dramatise
- *Jesus Walking on the Water* – a story to dramatise and song to move to
- *The Sower, the Seed and the Soil* – a musical drama

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Samuel Seeks a King

Synopsis: A simple five-minute drama that presents the story of the prophet Samuel being called by God to anoint a new king for Israel, and the selection of David from amongst the sons of Jesse.

The piece requires three actors: God, Samuel and Jesse. Jesse's eight sons are selected from the group, and can include children and adults. The performance needs minimal props and costuming. This is a fun piece that can be presented in a kids group or church service. It carries an important message: while we humans look at outwards appearances, God looks deep into the heart (I Sam 16:7).

Cast:

- 1) *God* – dignified, talks to Samuel, observes the action and gives Holy Spirit to David.
- 2) *Samuel* – prophet who talks freely with God, show his frustration but always obeys.
- 3) *Jesse* – father of the eight sons, orders them around in a loud voice like a sergeant-major.
- 4) *Sons* – numbered 1 through 8, where Number 8 is David.

Costumes: The three actors can wear costumes or be in street clothes. God can wear something white, while Samuel and Jesses could wear a biblical robe and/or head covering. The sons are in street clothes.

Props: Numbers 1 through 8 on paper, to be given to the sons.

Stage: The action takes place in an open area where the participants are free to move around.

Directions: The following directing tips are suggestions only. God and Samuel will need to learn their lines and rehearse together, while Jesse can be brought in just before the start. Think about how God and Samuel interact: when we perform this, Samuel and Jesse do not look at God at any stage, so God remains "invisible". Also, Samuel would freeze in mid-action when God speaks. Feel free to adlib the interactions between Samuel and the sons, and for Samuel to ham up his assessments of the sons, e.g. miming "handsome", "warrior", "sportsman", "performer". We avoid mentioning David's name until the very end, to maintain some suspense.

Context: The story comes from 1 Samuel 15: 34 – 16: 13. God has freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and now settled them in His promised land. Having been ruled over by a series of judges, the Israelites ask God for a king, like other nations. God grants their request, and his prophet Samuel anoints the first king – Saul. Saul, however, turns out to be somewhat of a failure; and God asks Samuel to anoint one of the sons of Jesse of Bethlehem to be the next king. Thus begins the story of the great king David, who prefigures the coming of God's Son Jesus, our King, to be born in Bethlehem some 1,000 years later.

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Introduction by one of the actors (in this example it's God) –

Actor: *(You may need to give some of the context here)* Our story today is from 1 Samuel 15: v 34 - 16: v13 and we are going to dramatise it. We have the prophet Samuel (*hand costume to actor to put on*), Jesse (*as for Samuel*), and his sons. (*Select eight participants, ideally of varying ages and sizes; and give each a number – 1 tall person, 2 – small person, and so on to Number 8. Don't give names to them, just "Son Number One", etc. Number 8 will be David. They remain where they are.*) We also have God – that's me – in this story.

Action –

(Samuel looking restless, frustrated, worried, God comes alongside)

God: What's up Samuel? You look a bit down in the dumps.

Samuel: It's Saul. I anointed him king, like you said, but it hasn't gone well.

God: Frankly, I'm not surprised. Go to Jesse of Bethlehem and anoint the son I've chosen as king.

Samuel: What... but Saul will kill me!

God: Go.

Samuel: OK. You're right, you're supreme, omnipotent and all that. (*Samuel walks to Jesse*). Greetings Jesse (*exchange greeting, Samuel draws Jesse aside*). God has told me to anoint one of your sons. Could you ask them to gather please.

Jesse: Sure. (*shout*) **Oy you lot! Roll call!** When I call you, say 'here' and come out here to me. Son Number 1 (*answers 'here', comes out*) Number 2 (*etc, to son 7*). Now line up from 1 to 7. Yes all here – except the little tacker up on the hill, he's minding the sheep.

Samuel: Very good, what a fine lot. Let's start with Son Number 1 (*motions Number 1 to step forward*). Hmm, very handsome, tall. (*to God*) God, he must be the one.

God: A fine man, but not this one Samuel.

Samuel: OK thank you Number 1, now Number 2 please. Yes, strong, a warrior no doubt. (*to God*). A warrior king, O God?

God: Strong, yes, but not this one, Samuel.

Samuel: Number 3 please. (*Nods appreciatively*) Ah-hah! (*to God*) Beautifully dressed, God – dare I say... regal?

God: Indeed, but not this one, Samuel.

Samuel: (*Slightly annoyed*) All right then, let's have Number 4. Wow, a sportsman! (*to God*) Hey God, everyone loves a great sporting hero.

God: Interesting, but not this one, Samuel.

Samuel: (*Now determined*) OK Number 5. Hey, I see a real performer – showbiz potential. (*to God*) Let's give the kingdom a bit of pizzazz! A bit of fun! A bit of....

God: (*Interrupts*) Samuel! No!

Samuel: (*Disappointed*) Hmmph! Number 6. (*To God*) Well?

God: Not this one, Samuel.

Samuel: (*Desperate*) Number 7. (*to God*) Surely it has to be this one?

God: Not this one, Samuel.

Samuel: (*Frustrated*) Come on God, aren't you being too fussy in your old age? And you're making me look like an idiot!

God: You, Samuel, look at the outward appearance, and while all Jesse's sons are fine young men, I look deep into the heart.

Samuel: (*Thoughtful, to Jesse*) Did you say you have another son?

Jesse: Well yes, there's Number 8, but he's just a kid, he's out with the sheep (*Samuel gives him a meaningful look*). I'll call for him (*shout*). **Son Number 8, get down here, now!** (*David runs up to Jesse and Samuel*)

Samuel: (*Places hand on David's shoulder*) Yes, a handsome, healthy young man... and look at those sparkling eyes.

God: This is the one, Samuel. Anoint him. (*Samuel mime anointing with oil*)

God: (*Proclaims*) I have chosen this young man, David of Bethlehem, to be the next king of Israel. (*Mimes Holy Spirit coming upon David*) From this day on my Holy Spirit is upon you. (*Freeze, all exit*)