

Supplies Needed: *Bibles, prop chair, prop cloth to spread with snack food, several decks of cards.*

Notes for leaders: *As revealed through the verses of Psalm 19 below, God continually speaks to us through every part of creation in ways that are 'sweeter than dripping honey.' In contrast, our culture has developed an appetite and admiration for clever biting language, especially retorts. Given that bullying behavior are on the rise, even in elementary school classrooms, it is critical that our children be given examples to follow and practice opportunities to 'speak grace' into their daily conversations (trusting that God's grace draws us closer).*

Opening/Centering Prayer – led by Student

Supplies: Bibles

Suggested Time - 3 min

Ask students to sit in a circle and find Psalm 19: 1-4a, 7-10, 14 in their Bibles and follow along as individual students read the verses below (drawn from the Common English Bible):

- 1 Heaven is declaring God's glory;
the sky is proclaiming his handiwork.
- 2 One day gushes the news to the next,
and one night informs another what needs to be known.
- 3 Of course, there's no speech,
no words— their voices can't be heard—
- 4 but their sound extends throughout the world;
their words reach the ends of the earth.

- 7 The LORD's Instruction is perfect, reviving one's very being.
The LORD's laws are faithful, making naive people wise.
- 8 The LORD's regulations are right, gladdening the heart.
The LORD's commands are pure, giving light to the eyes.
- 9 Honoring the LORD is correct, lasting forever.
The LORD's judgments are true. All of these are righteous!
- 10 They are more desirable than gold— than tons of pure gold!
They are sweeter than honey— even dripping off the honeycomb!

- 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing to you, LORD, my
rock and my redeemer.

Conversation for Introductions & Re-Introductions

Supplies: None

Suggested Time - 10 min

Remaining in a circle, ask the following questions:

1. Who has cousins or extended family members that are your age?
2. Even if you do not get to see them very often, are they still your family?
3. Because they are family, do you speak to them with more love than you would offer to a stranger at the grocery store?
5. Is speaking lovingly only reserved for family and close friends?

Scripture Lesson & Discussion

Supplies: Bibles, a chair, cloth on the ground with snack food Suggested Time – 20 min

Scripture (NRSV) 1 Samuel 1-18, 20.

¹There was a certain man of Ramathaim (rä-mä-thah'yim), a Zuphite (ZUHF'-ait) from the hill country of Ephraim (ef-rah'yim), whose name was Elkanah (el-kä-nä') son of Jeroham (yer-ō-khäm') son of Elihu (el-ē-hü') son of Tohu (tō'khü) son of Zuph (tsüf), an Ephraimite (EE'-fray-ihm-ait). ²He had two wives; the name of one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah (pen-in-nä'). Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

FREEZE/TAG

³Now this man used to go up year by year from his town to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni (khof-nē') and Phinehas (pē-nekh-äs'), were priests of the LORD. ⁴On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters; ⁵but to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the LORD had closed her womb. ⁶Her rival used to provoke her severely, to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. ⁷So it went on year after year; as often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. ⁸Her husband Elkanah said to her, 'Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? Why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?'

FREEZE/TAG

⁹After they had eaten and drunk at Shiloh, Hannah rose and presented herself before the LORD. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. ¹⁰She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD, and wept bitterly. ¹¹She made this vow: 'O LORD of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a nazirite until the day of his death. He shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants, and no razor shall touch his head.'

FREEZE/TAG

¹²As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. ¹³Hannah was praying silently; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought she was drunk. ¹⁴So Eli said to her, 'How long will you make a drunken spectacle of yourself? Put away your wine.' ¹⁵But Hannah answered, 'No, my lord, I am a woman deeply troubled; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD. ¹⁶Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation all this time.' ¹⁷Then Eli answered, 'Go in peace; the God of Israel grant the petition you have made to him.' ¹⁸And she said, 'Let your servant find favour in your sight.' Then the woman went to her quarters, ate and drank with her husband, and her countenance was sad no longer.

²⁰In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, 'I have asked him of the LORD.'

Instructions for Scripture Lesson & Discussion on next page.

For the Teacher-tidbits

Pronunciation guide:

<https://biblespeak.org/>

- The birth story of Samuel is similar to the birth story of Samson in Judges 13 and John the Baptist in Luke 1. All three mothers are barren and give birth to extraordinary children.
- The Temple at Shiloh may have been the most important shrine before the building of the temple in Jerusalem.
- Hannah's distress is easier to understand when we factor in the reality that a childless mother could be forced into a life of extreme poverty.
- Nazirite: An Israelite consecrated to the service of God, under vows to abstain from alcohol, let the hair grow, and avoid defilement by contact with corpses (see story of Samson in the Book of Judges.)

Instructions for Scripture Lesson and Discussion:

Teacher to say: Today we are going to explore what happens when you speak to someone with grace. Put your Bibles down and everyone gather on one side of the room. Today's story comes from the Hebrew Bible, the book of 1 Samuel. Samuel was a prophet and then became a Judge of the Hebrew people.

Students, you will be acting out the story of Samuel's parents. As I read the story, I will pause and allow you to move into the playing area to do what a character is doing, and say what a character is saying. When I say "freeze/tag," all characters in the playing area will freeze while different students will run in, tag the characters and take their places. This means, as we move through the story, one character might be played by several different people.

Character list – FYI for the Teacher:

<u>Scene 1: 1 Samuel 1:1-2</u>	<u>Scene 2: 1 Samuel 1:3-8</u>	<u>Scene 3: 1 Samuel 1:9-11</u>	<u>Scene 4: 1 Samuel 1: 12-18, 20</u>
Elkanah (el·kă·nă') Jeroham (yer·ō·khām') Elihu (el·ē·hū') Tohu (tō·khū) Zuph (tsūf) Hannah Peninnah (pen·in·nă') "FREEZE/TAG"	Eli Hophni (khof·nē') Phinehas (pē·nekh·ās') Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters Hannah "FREEZE/TAG"	Eli Hannah God "FREEZE/TAG"	Eli Hannah God Elkanah (el·kă·nă') Baby Samuel

After acting out the story, ask the students to get their Bibles, sit down, find 1 Samuel 1-20 and answer these questions:

- 1. At the beginning of the story, how do you think Hannah felt when her husband's other wife provoked her year and year?**
- 2. How do you think Hannah felt when the priest, Eli, accused her of drinking too much?**
- 3. Was it true, had Hannah been drinking too much?**
- 4. How did Hannah respond to Eli's accusations?**
 - a) Was she honest or secretive?**
 - b) Did she turn and run away?**
 - c) Did she dissolve into tears and say nothing like she did with her husband for all those years?**
 - d) Did Hannah speak lovingly to Eli by telling her story?**
- 5. Did Eli respond lovingly to Hannah's story?**

Say: Despite being provoked by her husband's wife for years, despite being accused of drunkenness by the priest Eli, Hannah responded authentically, honestly, lovingly, filled with grace. When someone speaks with grace, even into a conflictive situation, the Holy Spirit has the power to turn conflict into blessing.

If you want to make a positive impact on the world: be the church, start a movement, speak grace to everyone you encounter and see how God can transform your language into the honey that changes everything for the

Hands on Activity/Game

Supplies: Several Decks of Cards

Suggested Time – 10 min

Divide students into groups of 5 or 6 to play “Crazy Eights” with cards. The rules are as normal EXCEPT, each time a student has to draw a card from the pile, they must tell the group something they love to do and why.

Rules for Crazy Eights:

1. Dealer deals 7 cards to each player.
2. Remaining cards of the deck are placed face down in the center of the table.
3. The top card is turned face up to start the game.
4. Players discard by matching rank or suit with the top card of the discard pile.
5. An 8 can be played at any time, and the player must declare a suit.
6. If a player does not have a rank, suit or 8, they must draw a new card. EACH TIME A PLAYER PICKS UP A NEW CARD, THEY MUST TELL THE GROUP SOMETHING THEY LOVE TO DO AND WHY.
7. Object of the Game: be the first player to get rid of all the cards in their hand.
8. Reason for telling something that they love: when we share stories of ourselves with grace, God’s love draws us closer.

Closing thought:

Like Hannah, when we speak grace to each other, we are the church in the world. God’s grace draws us closer together which makes the world a better place.

Closing Prayer/Benediction

Supplies: None

Suggested Time - 1 min

Psalm 19:14

- 14** Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing to you, LORD, my rock and my redeemer.