

January 2012

SCRIPTURE: 1 Samuel 3: 1-20

THEME: Winter Wonderland

Every snowflake is different but equally wonderful. Celebrate the differences in your family. For example, is everyone right handed? Your family may have a left-hander, which is different... but still wonderful!

#### Decorations:

As some members of the family are getting the meal ready, invite other members to make cut paper snowflakes to decorate the table. Plain white paper and scissors are all that is needed. You may make several small flakes to spread around the table or make one big flake for each person in the family. If you get really adventurous, could hang snowflakes all around the room.

family  
'round  
the  
table



## MENU

Lasagna (use your family recipe or save time by using prepared frozen lasagna), Tossed Salad, Garlic Bread (to save time get a prepared loaf from the grocery), Snowmen Sundaes

### Snowmen Sundaes

#### *Ingredients:*

Vanilla ice cream  
Sprinkles, several kinds (to create features)  
Several Toppings

#### *Instructions:*

1. Find two or three different size scoops.
2. Scoop vanilla ice cream into a bowl with the biggest scoop on bottom and the smaller scoops on top.
3. It may be necessary to press the scoops into one another slightly so they will stand atop one another. Don't worry if the scoops are not perfect, you will get the general shape.
4. Use all kinds of toppings to decorate your snowmen.
5. Have a snowmen fashion show before you dig in.

### Blessing:

*Almighty God, we thank you for gathering us around this table tonight. We thank you for this warm meal as we celebrate the wonders of winter. Please bless this food to the nourishment of our bodies. Amen*



# PLAYING TOGETHER

## Activity One: Snowball Fight

**Materials:** If there is snow on the ground, bundle up the family and head outside for a snowball fight. If you live in a “snow-challenged” area, use balloons for snow balls.

### Directions:

1. Blow up a 5 to 10 balloons.
2. Have half of the family sit on one side of the room and the remaining family members on the other half.
3. When the oldest person says start, hit the balloons to the other side of the room.
4. When the oldest person says stop all balloons will fall to the floor and the team with the fewest balloons on their side wins. If you suspect the oldest person is a bit biased, set a timer to mark the end of the game.
5. Repeat the game as long as interest continues.

## Activity Two: Sticky Cotton Balls

**Materials:** Bag of cotton balls, white hand lotion, a CD player, peppy/fun music, lightweight bowl, paper plates, white hand lotion

### Directions:

1. This is a game similar to musical chairs.
2. Place some cotton balls in the bowl.
3. Squeeze some hand lotion onto a paper plate in the middle of the table.
4. Designate a person to be in charge of the CD player.
5. When the music plays, the bowl of cotton gets passed around the table.
6. When the music stops, the person holding the bowl (or most recently touched the bowl) must take a cotton ball and dip it in the lotion and stick it on his or her face, arm or any exposed skin.
7. Continue the game until everyone is covered in cotton balls!



## STUDYING GOD'S WORD TOGETHER

- Locate I Samuel 3: 1-10 and 11-20 in the Old Testament and read it aloud or invite a family member to read. Invite family members to act out the passage by having one person read the passage and two others act it out. You will need a Samuel (young and eager) and an Eli (elderly with very poor eyesight).
- Explain that Samuel was very young when this story happened. He was a prophet, which is someone who gives messages and information from God to others. It was very unusual for God to use someone so young to deliver important news:

### *VERSES 1-10*

*The boy Samuel was serving GOD under Eli's direction. This was at a time when the revelation of GOD was rarely heard or seen. One night Eli was sound asleep (his eyesight was very bad—he could hardly see). It was well before dawn; the sanctuary lamp was still burning. Samuel was still in bed in the Temple of GOD, where the Chest of God rested.*

*Then GOD called out, "Samuel, Samuel!"*

*Samuel answered, "Yes? I'm here." Then he ran to Eli saying, "I heard you call. Here I am."*

*Eli said, "I didn't call you. Go back to bed." And so he did.*

*GOD called again, "Samuel, Samuel!"*

*Samuel got up and went to Eli, "I heard you call. Here I am."*

*Again Eli said, "Son, I didn't call you. Go back to bed." (This all happened before Samuel knew GOD for himself. It was before the revelation of GOD had been given to him personally.)*

*GOD called again, "Samuel!"—the third time! Yet again Samuel got up and went to Eli, "Yes? I heard you call me. Here I am."*

*That's when it dawned on Eli that GOD was calling the boy. So Eli directed Samuel, "Go back and lie down. If the voice calls again, say, 'Speak, GOD. I'm your servant, ready to listen.'" Samuel returned to his bed.*

*Then GOD came and stood before him exactly as before, calling out, "Samuel! Samuel!"*

*Samuel answered, "Speak. I'm your servant, ready to listen."*

- Continue the passage by reading or inviting someone to read verses 11-20.

### *VERSES 11-21*

*GOD said to Samuel, "Listen carefully. I'm getting ready to do something in Israel that is going to shake everyone up and get their attention. The time has come for me to bring down on Eli's family everything I warned him of, every last word of it. I'm letting him know that the time's up. I'm bringing judgment on his family for good. He knew what was going on, that his sons were desecrating God's name and God's place, and he did nothing to stop them. This is my sentence on*

*the family of Eli: The evil of Eli's family can never be wiped out by sacrifice or offering."*

*Samuel stayed in bed until morning, then rose early and went about his duties, opening the doors of the sanctuary, but he dreaded having to tell the vision to Eli.*

*But then Eli summoned Samuel: "Samuel, my son!"*

*Samuel came running: "Yes? What can I do for you?"*

*"What did he say? Tell it to me, all of it. Don't suppress or soften one word, as God is your judge! I want it all, word for word as he said it to you."*

*So Samuel told him, word for word. He held back nothing.*

*Eli said, "He is GOD. Let him do whatever he thinks best."*

*Samuel grew up. GOD was with him, and Samuel's prophetic record was flawless. Everyone in Israel, from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south, recognized that Samuel was the real thing—a true prophet of GOD. GOD continued to show up at Shiloh, revealed through his word to Samuel at Shiloh.*

### **Reflection Questions for the Family**

1. How often do people in your family wake up in the middle of the night? Do they call out for someone? Who gets up the most?
2. Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the bad news. Have you ever been afraid to tell someone bad news? Who was it and what was the news?
3. When Samuel told Eli the news, how did Eli react? Why do you think Eli so calm?
4. Even though Samuel was very young, he was able to do special things for Eli, and when he grew up he did special things for God. What are some special things young people can do for your family? For God?
5. Verse 19 says that God was with Samuel as he grew up. Share a time or experience when you felt God was with you.
6. What questions about this story do you have?



## PRAYING TOGETHER

- Place a lighted candle and an open Bible on the table to create a worship center.
- Open the time of prayer by singing the first verse of “All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night” <http://www.oremus.org/hymnal/a/a155.html>, or another family favorite hymn or song of praise.
- Invite family members to take turns sharing their favorite part of the week, least favorite part of the week, and what they are looking forward to in the coming week. Have one person keep track of everyone’s answers.
- Using the family’s responses, create a prayer that includes thanking God for the favorites, asking God for healing from the least favorites, and requests blessings for what lies ahead in the next week.
- Close with a different type of prayer; read Psalm 139 aloud together, or have one person read the odd numbered verses and the others read together the even numbered verses.