

PrayKids!

ADVENTURES WITH JESUS IN PRAYER

The Word On...

HEARING GOD

How can we “hear” God?
Can we hear His voice with
our ears, just like we hear
Mom call us to dinner?

Usually, **hearing God** means that our hearts receive an idea from Him. Here’s an example: I can point to the sky and say out loud, “The sky is blue.” But I can also close my eyes and say silently in my mind, *The sky is blue*. To me, the words said in my mind are just as clear as those spoken out loud. They are real words, even though my ears can’t hear them. When we hear like this from God, it is called the “still, small voice of God.” ★

—By Dick Eastman

Did you know that God wants to talk to you? In chapter 10 of John, Jesus says He is the Good Shepherd and we are His sheep. Sheep always recognize and listen to the voice of their shepherd—that’s what keeps them from getting lost or eaten by a wolf! For similar reasons, Jesus wants you to recognize His voice when He speaks to you.

No matter how young you are, since you have the same Holy Spirit inside you as grownups do, you can **hear God**. He loves to hear you talk to Him when you pray. But prayer isn’t just talking to God. Prayer is also listening, because God loves to talk to you, too.

How do you know God will speak to you? It’s a promise! In Jeremiah 33:3, God says, “Call to me and I will

continued on page 2

Hotline
By Cheri Fuller

From Heaven



continued from page 1

answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know." Some people call this verse "God's Hotline"—and you can use it to call Him any time, day or night. God will never put you on hold or just leave you a voice mail message! He is straining His ears to hear you. But when you call on God, don't forget to listen for what He has to say back to you!

You can prepare to **hear God** by getting quiet and waiting a few minutes. (Waiting is hard for everyone, but we can ask the Holy Spirit to help us be

still and wait.) It also helps to get rid of any "clutter" that can block you from **hearing God**. You see, God is speaking all the time, but there is inside clutter (sin in our hearts, like disobeying or lying) and outside clutter (like the noise of video games, TV, or a CD player) that make it hard to **hear God**.

To **hear God**, start by confessing the things you've done wrong, because sin clogs up your "spiritual ears." Turn off the TV and video games, and plug into God. You may be surprised at what God says to you! ★

Cheri Fuller is a popular speaker and the author of *When Children Pray* (Multnomah). For more information, go to her website, www.cherifuller.com.

PrayKids!®

Email: praykids@navpress.com
Website: www.praykids.com

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EDITORIAL TEAM

Published in cooperation with
members of the
PrayKids! Advisory Team:

Kim Butts
HARVEST PRAYER MINISTRIES

Cheri Fuller
FAMILIES PRAY USA

Members of the Children's Prayer
Mobilizers Network

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Mission Statement

The mission of PrayKids! is to teach, encourage, and equip children (ages 7 to 12) as they develop a deepening relationship with Christ through prayer, so that they might become more effective prayer warriors.

Grown-ups!

Sign up now for
the PrayKids!
Online
Newsletter

This is a *free* monthly newsletter, including timely PrayKids! articles you may have missed, exclusive subscriber-only offers, and updates on newly released resources and tools. It's perfect for Sunday school teachers, children's workers, Christian school teachers, homeschool parents, and anyone else who has a heart to encourage kids in growing their prayer lives! Just go to www.praymag.com, look at the lower left under the newsletter sign-up section, check the box next to PrayKids! Online Newsletter, and click the SIGN-UP button!

God Speaks to Kids

After you get rid of the "clutter" and start to pray, invite the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts and prayers. Then spend a few minutes waiting in silence and listening to what God has to say.

Here are some ways God may speak to you:

- Sometimes God shows you what He wants you to pray by putting someone's name in your mind, or maybe you'll get a strong feeling about a certain person.
- God may bring a picture of a person you can help or how to help them into the "movie screen" of your mind.
- God may direct your prayers by bringing a Bible verse to your mind.

Adapted from *Kids Pray!* by Jane Mackie. (Peacemaker's Ministries, Cootamunda, NSW, Australia).



My Sister Bethany

By Jocelyn Shover, age 12

One night when I was nine, my parents were praying with me before I went to bed. We talked about not just asking God for things, but the need to listen to Him too.

That night, shortly after I started listening, I believed that God told me we were to adopt a little girl and name her Bethany.

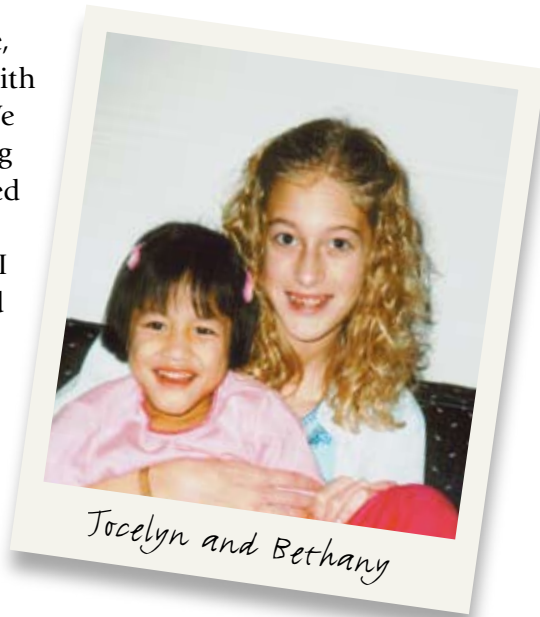
After I was finished praying, my mom asked me if I had **heard God** say anything. I said to her, "If I tell you, do you promise not to laugh?" She said she promised, and I told her what I had heard from God. At that time we weren't planning on any new additions to our family, so it was hard for my family to understand what God was doing.

Almost exactly a year later, my parents were in Thailand on a prayer journey. My mom had trouble sleeping one night, so she began to pray. God told her we were to adopt a little girl from Thailand.

When my parents came home from Thailand, they told us the exciting news. God revealed to us that what my mom heard was a confirmation of what I had heard the year earlier.

Now, three and a half years after the first time I **heard God**, despite all the adoption obstacles, our new family member—Bethany—is home with us. Our whole family had the chance to travel halfway around the world to get her. She is adjusting very well and acting like she has always been a part of our family. She is learning to communicate using sign language because she is deaf. We know that we will be happy in the years to come because we **heard God** and obeyed Him.

Through this experience, I have learned that you always need to follow God's voice no matter how hard or easy it may seem. God may take a long time to bring about His plans, or He may choose to reveal His plans quickly. God knows what He is doing and He often uses children in His plans. ★



Jocelyn and Bethany

God, Is That YOU?

How can you be sure that what you are hearing is God's voice and not something you made up on your own?

Check it out: What God tells you will *never* go against what the Bible says!

That's why learning to pray God's Word is so important! The more you know about His Word and what it says, the more you will know if you are really **hearing God**. Thank Him that He talks to you and that His Word is truth. Here is a Scripture prayer to get you started:

"Father, thank You for promising to talk to me and lead me. Thank You that I can listen to Your voice, that You know me, and that I can follow You (John 10:3,27). Thank You that I can trust Your Word because it is the truth (John 17:17). Amen."

Now you try it. Turn these Scriptures into your own prayers to God:

- Psalm 119:89,105
- Isaiah 30:21;
- 2 Timothy 3:16. ★

The Voice in t

A fictional story based on 1 Samuel 3

Shadows flickered across the wall. I was tired and yanked the blanket over me. Suddenly I heard a voice call my name: "Samuel!" At first I wasn't sure whether I was awake or dreaming.

I sat up. Wasn't everyone asleep?

"Samuel!" The voice came louder.

It must be Eli, I decided. I'd been helping the almost-blind priest in God's house since I was little. "I'm here," I called. "Coming." Pulling my nightshirt tightly around me, I ran to his bedside. "What do you need, Eli?"

4 He rubbed his eyes and looked surprised to see me. "I didn't call you." He sounded groggy. "Go back to bed."

I shrugged and tiptoed back to my room. I dared not wake Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas. They always made fun of me because I was eager to serve God.

I had just snuggled down again when I heard "Samuel! Samuel!" What was going on? Again, I ran to Eli—and, again, he sent me back to bed.

By the third time the voice called, I could hardly breathe. Were Hophni and Phinehas pulling some prank? Was I in danger? I ran to Eli. "Surely you called me, Sir," I said.

"No, I didn't." Eli's eyes began to sparkle, however, as he realized what was happening. "Next time say, 'Speak, Lord. Your servant is listening,'" Eli told me.

A chill ran through me as I returned to bed. *The Voice was*

and worked busily so Eli wouldn't ask what happened.

Soon he caught me by my tunic. "What did Jehovah say to you last night, Son?"

I looked away, trembling.

"Don't hide anything," he scolded gently.

Fighting tears, I told Eli everything.

He sighed. "God . . . is . . . God," he

God's? Lying on my back, I stared into the darkness. Eli had told me about the times God spoke to him long ago. But Jehovah hardly ever spoke these days. Why would God decide to talk to *me*—just a boy?

I waited quietly. Soon the Voice filled my room. It felt like God stood next to me.

My heart pounded. "G-go ahead and s-speak," I stammered. "Your servant is listening." (Wow! I remembered what to say!)

"I warned Eli about his sons' wicked behavior, but he didn't stop them," God said. "Now I must take their lives . . . and his."

No! I screamed inside my head. For hours I tossed and turned. I loved Eli. He had always been so kind to me.

When the sun finally came up, I opened the doors to God's house—as I did every morning—

By Joyce K. Ellis



he Night

said with a snuffle. "Let Him do . . . as He sees fit."

Eli was right, of course, but the sparkle in his eyes disappeared forever. God's message soon came true, and Eli and his sons died horrible deaths.

That's how my life as a prophet began. Through the years, the LORD

gave me many messages for Israel—some bad, some good—all because I learned as a boy to **hear God** and obey. ★

Author and speaker Joyce K. Ellis created the book *One-Minute Bible Devotions for Kids* (Broadman & Holman), an enjoyable way for children to listen to and respond to God's Word each day of the year.



5

QUESTIONS TO ASK IF YOU'RE NOT HEARING GOD'S VOICE

- 1. Am I really listening?** Sometimes we get super busy or let radio and TV noise drown out God's voice.
- 2. Have I ignored something He already asked me to do?** If you're talking to a friend and he or she isn't listening, you'd probably quit talking, right? Don't you think God might feel the same way when we don't pay attention to Him?
- 3. Do I actually know God?** Jesus said that only His own sheep (those who belong to Him and follow Him) recognize His voice (John 10:4). If you are not sure you have asked Jesus into your life, then go to www.praykids.com, and click on "Want to Know Jesus?" It will help you know for sure.
- 4. Have I become careless about sin?** When we tell ourselves, "It's only a little thing," and don't confess our sin, we hurt God. Sin keeps us from **hearing God**.
- 5. Is God challenging me?** Sometimes God wants us to learn to trust Him by waiting to hear His voice instead of running ahead without listening. ★





Let's Pray for World Leaders

Want to know something that pleases God? Read what Paul wrote in a letter to his young helper Timothy: "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

Paul had spent lots of time in jail because the king and other leaders were being cruel and unfair to Christians at that time. Even though he had suffered because of those leaders, Paul asked Christians to pray for them.

In our time, we may feel that a leader is bad and we don't want to pray for him or her. But God is pleased when we pray for all leaders—both good and bad. God can surprise us and use a leader we

think is bad to do good things for the kingdom of heaven. Remember, we can't always see the big picture that God sees.

Are you wondering what leaders to add to your prayer list?

Try praying for the leaders you hear mentioned in the

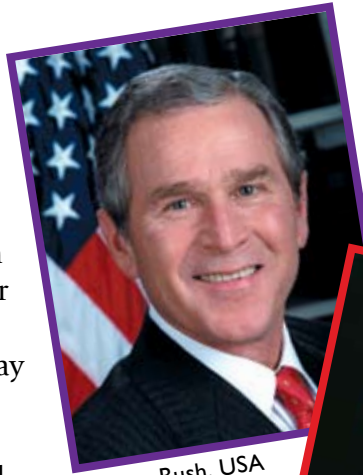
news. If someone at your school or in your neighborhood is from a different country, find out which

country and pray for its leaders. Or pray for the leader of a country you learned about at school. You may know missionaries to another country—

pray for the leaders of that country.

If you don't know the names of a country's leaders, check out this website, which lists every country and its leaders (www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs). ★

Gary Bergel is president of Intercessors for America (www.ifa-usapray.org) and Youth Interceding for America (www.yifa.org).



George Bush, USA



Tony Blair, Great Britain



Hugo Chavez, Venezuela



Kim Jong Il, North Korea



Jacques Chirac, France



Mohammed Mubarak, Egypt

SIX

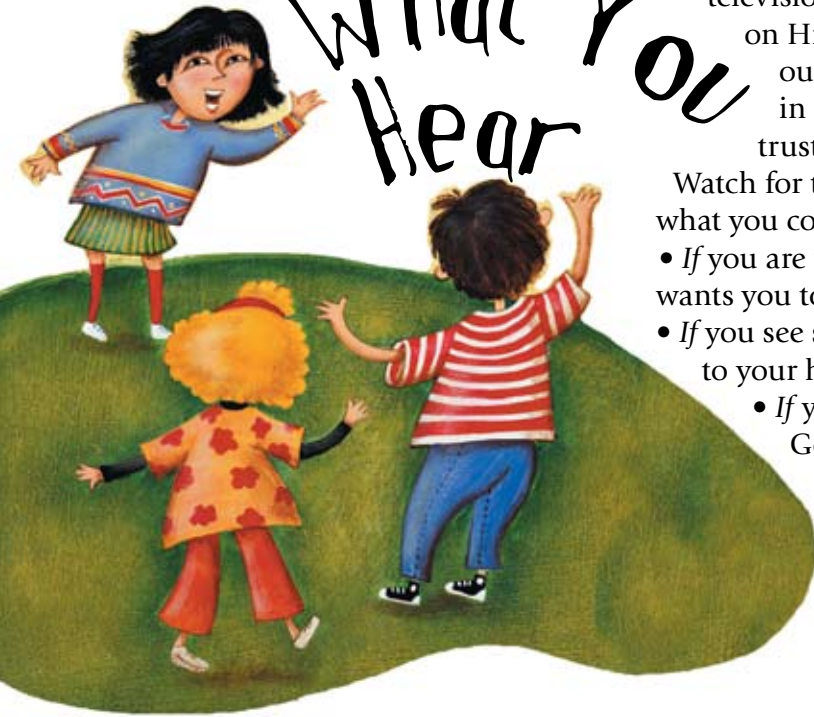
COVER THE GLOBE

Prayers for World Leaders

1. Lord, please bless these leaders and give them wisdom to govern well (1 Timothy 2:1-2).
2. Heavenly Father, help world leaders, their families, and their staffs to know Jesus Christ as their Savior. If they already know You, help them grow stronger and bolder in their faith (1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:18).
3. God, we ask that You shield them from evil and demonic influences, and instead surround them with godly counselors (Matthew 6:13; Psalm 1:1; Proverbs 15:22).
4. Lord, if these leaders have made it difficult for people to be Christians in their country, we pray that You would soften their hearts (2 Chronicles 36:22).



Doing What You Hear



Have you ever “tuned out” when your parents were talking to you? Or have you been too distracted by the computer or the television to hear? Well, God doesn’t want us to tune out on Him. He wants us to be good listeners who perk up our ears at the sound of His voice. If we are faithful in **hearing God** in the small things, then He will trust us with bigger things!

Watch for times when God is speaking to you. Think about what you could do to obey Him. Here are some examples:

- If you are thinking about a friend of yours, *then* maybe God wants you to call him or write a note.
- If you see someone who looks sad, *then* the Lord may speak to your heart a way to cheer her up or help in some way.
- If you wake up thinking about someone, *then* maybe God wants you to pray for that person.

Remember, God wants you to listen and to obey so that He can use you to do great things for Him. ★

By Kim Butts. Kim and her husband, David, direct Harvest Prayer Ministries (www.harvestprayer.com).

WORD SCRAMBLE



Let’s check and see how carefully you’ve read this issue. Unscramble the words printed above the boxes and find the sentence where the words belong.

lilts, malls, icove	liseltng	kapes
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reven	drimopse	trutlec
□□□□□	□□□□□□□□□□	□□□□□□□□
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1. God sometimes speaks to us through a _____.
2. Prayer is not just talking to God, prayer is also _____.
3. Jeremiah 33:3 tells us that God has _____ to speak to us.
4. Sometimes the inside and outside _____ makes it hard to **hear God**.
5. In the Bible story, Samuel said, “ _____, Lord. Your servant is listening.”
6. When God speaks, it will _____ go against what the Bible says.
7. Pray for the _____ you hear mentioned in the news.
8. God wants you to listen and _____ what you hear.

(Answers: 1. still small voice, 2. listening, 3. promised, 4. clutter, 5. Speak, 6. never, 7. world leaders, 8. obey)

Family Hearing Aids

You can help your kids hear from God by creating opportunities and the right atmosphere. While you're at it, you may even **hear God** yourself!

1. Create an atmosphere conducive for "listening." Turn off the TV, computer, or radio. You may even want to dim lights or play soft worship music.

2. Always begin with prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit to speak. If there is something in particular that your child wants to hear

from God about, tell God specifically what it is.

3. Take into account your child's age and personality. One child may want to go off by himself to listen, while another child may want you sitting quietly alongside him.

4. Leave plenty of time for listening—don't rush.

5. Once they've finished listening, ask your children what they've heard (or discuss their

drawings or letters—see the activities below). Talk about whether or not what they heard lines up with Scripture. If it does not, be gentle in your explanation and say, "Let's try again." Never ridicule or belittle what a child says he's heard.

If your family is asking God about something in particular, come together when everyone has listened and compare notes. Often each person will hear something that confirms or builds on what someone else has heard. If there is a discrepancy, ask the Holy Spirit for clarification and try again.

6. Don't be discouraged. If your child does not hear something, tell him not to worry. God has *promised* to give us wisdom when we ask for it (James 1:5). But it often takes practice and experience to recognize God's voice (see the activities on the left). The important thing is to believe that we will hear from Him and to keep trying (James 1:6-8). ★

FAMILY LISTENING ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

Give children paper and crayons and ask them to draw the picture God is giving them in their head as they listen. Date the drawings, include any explanatory notes, and keep them in a notebook.

Activity 2

Give family members paper and pencils and have them write letters to God. Have them start out with "Dear God," and write what is on their hearts as if writing a letter to another person. When they are done, have them draw a line across the bottom of the page. Below it, they should write "Dear (their own name)." As they hear from God, have them complete the letter from God back to themselves. If they have trouble getting started, encourage them to begin with "I love you" after the salutation. This is always something God wants us to know and it often "primes the pump" for hearing more. Date the letters and keep them in a notebook.

Activity 3

Tape record about five different voices saying, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). The voices should be easy for your children to identify—except for the last voice (choose someone they don't know). Play the tape and have your children name the voices they hear. Talk about how easy it is to recognize the voices of people they know well because they have a relationship with them. Let them know that when they take time to get to know God well, they will easily recognize His voice!

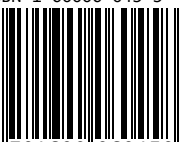
MEMORY VERSE

Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.

—Jeremiah 33:3

PRAYKIDS! TEACHER'S GUIDE! Are you ready for a leader's guide that makes it even easier and more fun to teach elementary-age children to pray? This REVISED and EXPANDED version of the 26 leader's guides comes handily bound in a single, easy-to-use volume. *PrayKids! Teacher's Guide: A Hands-on Guide for Developing Kids Who Pray* is currently available at www.praykids.com.

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