

The Birth of Samuel

I Samuel 1

LEVEL 4 – HANNAH PRAYS FOR A SON

MATERIALS NEEDED

Incense Stick or Scented Candle

Matches

The last of the judges who led Israel into the period of the kings was Samuel. Now you have read the story of his birth. His mother wished for a son from the bottom of her heart, and earnestly prayed to the Lord to hear her anguish. Read her prayer (from I *Samuel* 1:11):



“O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your Maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head.”

The Lord answered her prayer with the conception and birth of Samuel. Then the mother, Hannah, prayed again. This second prayer was a prayer of praise, not of asking for something.

Prayer is speech with God

Hannah’s two prayers illustrate what the Lord teaches us about prayer. The Word teaches us that **“prayer is speech with God”** (*Arcana Coelestia* 2535).

Hannah spoke with God in two ways—

- ❖ **to ask Him for something**
- ❖ **and to praise Him with thanks**

Both of these were what we would now call “spontaneous prayer”—speaking from your heart in your own words.

To burn the incense stick (or scented candle):

Please do this under parental supervision:

Put a dab of clay into a ceramic candle holder or on a plate.

Stick the incense into the clay so it is upright.

Light the top with a match.

What do you notice?

1. It takes fire to start it.
2. The smoke rises up to the sky.
3. The smell permeates the room.

Anything else?



How is incense like prayer?

Incense can help teach us things about prayer:

1. What do you suppose starts prayer, the way fire from a match starts incense? (Hint: what does *fire* stand for in the Word?)

1. What does the smoke rising up to the sky show about prayer?

2. The smell of incense fills the room. What do you think this tells about prayer?

(HINT: *smell* stands for feeling something (insight or perception).
A room stands for an inner part of your mind where you keep your thoughts about the Lord and heaven.)

4. Did you notice anything else about incense that taught you something about prayer?
