

Tableaux Vivants: First Samuel and Ruth

Answer Key

Passage	1. Characterization of the Israelites (particularly vis-à-vis the covenant)	2. Portrayal of or Emphasis on God's Fidelity to the Israelites
1 Samuel 1:1–28	Hannah and Elkanah faithfully worship God at the temple at Shiloh; Hannah is faithful to her vow of offering her son Samuel (miraculously conceived) to God as a nazirite.	God is faithful to Hannah: "The Lord remembered her" (verse 19), and she conceived a son.
1 Samuel 2:1–10	Hannah's canticle demonstrates her praise of and gratitude to God, who has been faithful not only to her (in granting her a son) but also to all people in need. Hannah brings Samuel to serve God with the priest Eli, as she had promised.	Hannah's canticle praises God's fidelity to all those who are poor, hungry, and needy. She portrays God as faithfully on the side of the oppressed.
1 Samuel 3:1–18	Samuel is faithful: Once Eli helps him to realize that it is God who is speaking to him, he listens to God's message and conveys it to Eli. Eli is faithful to an extent: Although he does not reprimand his sons even when he knows they are blaspheming, he is open to hearing God's message (delivered via Samuel). Eli's sons have not been faithful.	After several failed attempts, God successfully communicates with Eli via Samuel. God faithfully maintains a relationship with Eli, even as he condemns the sins of Eli's sons.
1 Samuel 8:1–22 and 10:1a	Samuel's sons (Joel and Abijah) are not faithful: They are described as "perverting justice" (8:3). In repeatedly asking for a king, the Israelites demonstrate a lack of faith in God as their king. Samuel faithfully carries out what God has directed him to do: anoint Saul as king.	God gives the Israelites what they desire by sending Samuel to anoint Saul as Israel's first king.
Ruth, chapters 1–2	Ruth , although Moabite (i.e., not Israelite), demonstrates fidelity by remaining with her mother-in-law, Naomi, and returning with her to her hometown, Bethlehem. She expresses the beginnings of a faith in the God of Israel when she promises Naomi that "your God [will be] my God" (1:16). Naomi wavers in her faith, blaming God for the "evil" (1:21) that has befallen her; i.e., the deaths of her husband and both of her sons.	God is faithful in providing for Ruth and Naomi via Naomi's kinsmen, Boaz, who allows Ruth to glean in his fields. This allows these two widows—who are very vulnerable in this place and time—to survive.
Ruth, chapters 3–4	Ruth and Naomi are faithful to God's plan as it unfolds in their lives: Ruth marries Boaz and bears a son, Obed, who will be the future King David's grandfather. None of this would have been possible were it not for Ruth's initial choice to stay with Naomi after both became widows.	God brings Boaz and Ruth together in marriage, and they have a son, Obed, who will be the grandfather of King David (and an ancestor of Jesus).
3. What can this passage teach us about God's fidelity to us today?		
All Passages	<p><i>Student responses will vary but may include reference to any or all of the following ideas:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is faithful to us regardless of whether we are faithful to God or not. In other words, we will sometimes waver in our fidelity <i>to God</i>—we make mistakes, we sin, we fail to put God first in our lives—but God will never waver in fidelity <i>to us</i>. • Sometimes God's fidelity may be evident to us directly. For example, we may, like Samuel, have a sense that God is speaking to us directly in our prayer, in our reflection, in the liturgy, or through Scripture. • At other times, as demonstrated in the Book of Ruth, God's fidelity may be evident to us through the love and concern of other people. • Although God is faithful to all, God has particular concern for people who are poor, marginalized, and oppressed. 	

