

# *Balaam, the donkey, and the angel*



**Text:** Numbers 22-24

**Focus statement:** Pay attention to God's voice.

**Visuals:** Old-fashioned hearing aid, bell, shofar, cell phone, and other items that get our attention

## **GATHERING**

**Welcome**

**Call to worship:** Psalm 29:1-9

**Prayer:** HWB 672 or:

It is in you, O God, that we live and move and have our being. As we meet you in worship this morning, make us sensitive to your presence and your voice. Open us to your guidance and give us the courage to follow. You are worthy of our trust and we worship you, God.

## **PRAISING**

**Song suggestions:**

SS 5 *Open my ears, open my eyes*

HWB 163 *Obey my voice*

HWB 569 *Day by day, dear Lord*

SJ 5 *Come and be light for our eyes*

**Praise song:** "In the Secret" by Andy Park, Vineyard Music

## **OFFERING**

### **LISTENING TO GOD**

**Confession:**

Sometimes we wish that God were clearer when trying to get our attention. We confess that because we are focused on our own agenda and very busy, we often miss God's voice. Read 1 Kings 19:11-13 a. Follow with silence.

**Song:** HWB 594 *Lord, you sometimes speak*

**Children's time:**

Ahead of time record about 5 sounds that children will be able to identify (dog barking, car horn, baby crying, thunder storm, someone whispering). Ask the children to name the sounds they hear. How do they identify the sounds? We have to listen carefully and pay attention. In the same way, we need to listen carefully for God's voice. We can hear God's voice in the gentle words of people, in the sounds of nature and when we are all by ourselves. Invite response from the children on other ways to pay attention to God. Invite them to listen to the Bible story to learn of a very surprising way that God spoke to a man named Balaam.

**Scripture reading:** Numbers 22:18-35

**Sermon seeds:** (See *Connect* and *Youth* for further inspiration.)

In the time and culture of Balaam, donkeys were valued and an indicator of wealth. They carried heavy loads but were treated well. Perhaps Balaam's treatment of his donkey indicated not only his frustration with the animal but also his struggle with God. Did he want to hear what God was saying? Did the sound of recognition, wealth, and power drown out God? What blocks us from hearing God's voice? How do we respond if what we hear isn't what we expect or what is pleasant? Nothing is more important than obeying God. Who has helped you hear God's voice?

## RESPONDING TO GOD

**Song of response:** SS 65 *Abre mis ojos* (*Open my eyes*)

**Prayers of the people**

## SENDING

**Song:** SJ 42 *Listen, God is calling*

**Benediction:**

Go now and be aware of God  
Go now and hear God speak.  
Go now and be surprised by God,  
For God may come to you anytime and anywhere.  
Go anticipating to meet God.  
Listen and be blessed.

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Session Two

# *Deborah the prophet*



**Text:** Judges 4 & 5

**Focus statement:** God provides leaders.

**Visuals:**

Balance scales, symbols of leadership – mallet, award or plaque; pictures of past and present congregational and denominational leaders

## GATHERING

**Welcome**