



Abigail Makes Peace

Goal: To explore ways that showing hospitality to others can help bring peace.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In 1 Samuel 25

The story of Nabal, Abigail, and David shows a resourceful woman who made peace and prevented violence between powerful men.

Nabal was “a very rich man” in Maon who was also “rough and mean” (vv. 2–3). David was the leader of a group of men who protected persons around the borders of Judah. When David’s men asked Nabal to share his food with them, Nabal refused and insulted David. This incited David, who set out to do violence to Nabal.

Abigail, Nabal’s wife, was told of the impending doom. She put much food and drink together and met David. Abigail said, “Don’t pay any attention to that good-for-nothing Nabal. His name means ‘fool,’ and it really fits him! I didn’t see the men you sent, but please take this gift of food that I’ve brought and share it with your followers” (vv. 23–27).

This gift was important in extending good will. David recognized Abigail had averted many deaths. He told her, “Your good sense kept me from taking revenge and killing innocent people” (v. 33). After Nabal died, David and Abigail were married.

Abigail was a peacemaker and extended grace. This showed David that vengeance was not right, and he expressed gratitude.

. . . In Your Children’s Experiences

David’s meeting Abigail and Nabal will not be as familiar to the children as the stories you have been sharing previously. With this story, children will be able to hear about a wise and resourceful woman, which is so important for girls and boys. It tells about a wise peacemaker who made a wise decision about how to help someone and avert violence. David praises her good sense in the actions she took to help his men. Children can identify a variety of ways that Abigail could have responded and realize that we face choices all the time in our interactions with others.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

This story is rich in action and will be one with which children of all ages will be able to engage. Identifying the characters, the setting, and the plot of the story will be a great way for them to see how the character of David evolves, and how his mind changes as a result of his interaction with Abigail. One of the things they can learn from this story is that we can be determined to take action against someone, but our minds can change when a friend helps us see another way that might work.

God of peace, help me and the children to hear about ways to make peace. Help us be peacemakers too. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2023–2024

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 9, 19, 22

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

story audio (see p. vii)

green cloth

candle

raisins, grapes,
flatbread, juice

guest to portray Abigail

Grace Notes (GN) 1

two colors of sticky
notes

Responding

Celebrating

food on the worship
table

Praying

GN 2

Offering

large bowl; large spoon;
ziplock bags; dry
cereal; raisins; dried
fruit, such as pineapple,
apples, and cranberries;
chocolate chips

Extra

copies of GN 3

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule,” to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

Before the session, invite a woman to portray Abigail and read the script on **GN 1** during “Hearing the Story.” Inform her that the children will ask questions after the reading and she may answer them as she thinks Abigail might have.

“Offering God’s Grace” requires more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing

LG **A** **B** **M** **MS** **FA**

Greet the children by name and with the words “The grace of Christ be with you.” Prompt the children to respond with the same words.

Invite children to help prepare the worship space. Provide a green cloth, a candle, and a Bible, as well as raisins, grapes, flatbread, juice, napkins, and paper cups for the table. Wonder together about hospitality, what it is, and how people show hospitality. Comment that, in Bible times, people lived by a code of hospitality. They knew that offering someone shelter was often a matter of life and death in the harsh conditions of the wilderness. They believed it was wrong to refuse a request for food or shelter, even from an enemy. Tell the children they will share the food later in the session.

Ask two or three children to make two posters with sketches of donkeys and one poster with a peace sign. Place the posters in the worship area.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities, and suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing.

Singing

MS

Gather the group in the worship space. Play “Shalom, Chaverim!”—**MM 25**; **SCM 22**. Invite the children to dance and sing along.

Praying

M

Turn on the candle. Invite children to close their eyes and breathe deeply. Encourage them to imagine God as their friend, who loves them deeply. Offer the following prayer or one of your own:

Dear God, thank you for welcoming us and providing us with what we need. May we offer others hospitality, making them feel welcome and cared for as well. Amen.



Preparing to Hear the Story



Invite the children to tell what they know about David. Use the following points, if necessary, to share some background about David:

- ▼ David was a shepherd boy around the hills of Bethlehem.
- ▼ His father was Jesse, and he had seven older brothers.
- ▼ When he was a shepherd, Samuel, a prophet, came to bless and anoint the person who would be king, as God had told him to do. After seeing seven of Jesse's sons, none of them were the one. When he saw David, God told Samuel this was the one because God saw David's heart and love for God, not just his outward appearance.
- ▼ Samuel anointed David to be king someday.
- ▼ David went to see his brothers, who were fighting in King Saul's army. There he saw Goliath, the giant soldier from the other side. David defeated Goliath because he knew that he had skills as a shepherd and that God was with him.

Explain that the story they are about to hear takes place after the defeat of Goliath but before David became king of Israel. Help the children better understand the background of today's story, by telling them the following:

David had once been like a son to King Saul, but the king's feelings had changed. He chased David all over the country, wanting to harm him. David was forced to live in caves and even lived outside the country for a while. During this time, men who thought that David would be a good king joined with him. They protected the people and villages in the area. As the Bible story begins, David has been protecting the shepherds and flocks of a man named Nabal.

Point to the poster with the peace sign and offer that this symbol is to remind us of the wise actions of a brave woman to bring peace.

Hearing the Story



Have a child open the Bible to 1 Samuel 25 and place the open Bible on the worship table. Read **SCM 9** aloud to the children. Conclude the reading by saying, "Word of wisdom, Word of grace," and prompt the children to say, "Thanks be to God."

Introduce your guest and invite her to tell the story from the perspective of Abigail, using the script on **GN 1**. After she tells her story, invite the children to ask her questions.

Thank your guest for coming and sharing Abigail's story.



Today's story can be found in *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), www.pcusastore.com.



Reflecting on God's Grace

Read aloud 1 Samuel 25:18 and explain that people in Bible times ate food that was different from what we eat. Invite the children to name some of the things Abigail brought to David. Ask the children to write or draw the gifts on one color of sticky notes, then stick them onto the donkeys. Then, on a different color of sticky notes, ask the children to write down other gifts that Abigail offered, not food or items, but actions and attitudes that were gifts to David and his men. Assist children with writing as needed. Have them add these notes to the donkeys. Ask the children when they might offer these gifts of actions and attitudes to others.

Singing



Give God an offering of music. Invite the children to close their eyes and listen to “With My Hands Open Wide”—**MM 20; SCM 19**. Tell them to imagine the acts of hospitality and peace from the story as they hear the song. Play the song again and sing along.

Turn off the candle.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and for the time available.

Celebrating God's Grace



Ask volunteers to portray Abigail and her helpers. Have them pass out food items from the worship table. Enjoy a snack together and encourage children to imagine what it is like to come together after conflict. Sharing a meal is often a good way to make peace. Talk together about how Abigail used food to make peace. Wonder together about times that you have given a gift of food to bring people together or say you are sorry, or somebody has done that for you.

Praying God's Grace

Explain that every time we say, “Peace be with you,” to someone, we are praying for that person’s relationship with God and with their neighbors. Teach the children how to pass the peace of Christ in American Sign Language using **GN 2**.

To see the signs demonstrated, go to the religious signs section of handspeak.com.



Offering God's Grace



Explain that David was traveling because it wasn't safe for him to stay in one place. Talk about people in our day who have to move from place to place because they do not have permanent homes, such as people who are homeless and migrant workers. Talk about hunger and what it feels like to be hungry. Ask the children what they think God wants us to do when others are hungry. Suggest that, when people are hungry or homeless, the world is not the peaceful place God intends.

Have children wash their hands. Provide a bowl; a large spoon; dry cereal; raisins; dried fruit, such as pineapple, apples, and cranberries; and chocolate chips to make trail mix. Have the children combine the ingredients in a large bowl in whatever proportions you wish. Allow each child to add part of the ingredients and take a turn stirring with the spoon until the mix is blended.

Plan to share the mix, like Abigail, by mixing and bagging the trail mix. Fill a large bin or box with the bags of mix. Have the children make a sign inviting people at church to take bags and share them with people who are asking for food, perhaps on the side of the road, on street corners or sidewalks.

FA *Many children have food and other allergies such as peanut, milk, egg, wheat, latex, grass, mold, and others. Be aware of all allergy issues the children may have. Avoidance is the best practice. Provide alternate activities or use options to keep children safe.*

Extra Activity

Distribute copies of **GN 3**. Allow time for the children to complete the dot-to-dot puzzle. While they work, discuss the following.

- ▼ I wonder, "Do you remember being invited to a meal at someone's home? What was served?"
- ▼ I wonder, "What kinds of food did Abigail bring on the donkeys?" (*bread, wine, meat, roasted grain, raisins, dried figs*)
- ▼ I wonder, "What could we bring as an offering of peace today?"



LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Invite the children to gather, and lead them in cleaning up the worship space.

Read each line below while showing the children the hand motion that goes with it. Then repeat the line with them doing the action.

David was coming and wanted Nabal to share his feast. (*hold hands open, separated, palms up*)

Nabal frowned and made a fist. (*make a fist*)

Nabal shook his fist and said, "I won't share with David!" (*shake fist*)

His wise wife, Abigail, said, "We will share our food." (*hold both hands together, open, palms up*)

Abigail made peace all by herself. One person can make a difference. (*point index finger up*)

I can make peace. (*point to self*)

You can make peace. (*point to others*)

Play and sing together "Shalom, Chaverim!"—**MM 25; SCM 22**. Encourage the children to dance to the music. Send the children with a blessing:

Go in peace to make peace wherever you can. And know that the grace of God goes with you.



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads. Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).

Hello! I am Abigail. My husband is a very rich man named Nabal. But wealth does not make someone wise! I'm going to tell you what happened between my husband and David.

Do you remember David? The prophet Samuel told him that he was going to be king of Israel someday. King Saul was very jealous of David, so David had to hide out in the countryside.

One day, my husband was having his servants cut wool from our sheep. David sent messengers to Nabal, reminding Nabal that David and his men had helped to protect our sheep. The messengers asked for help with food and supplies.

And what did my foolish husband do? He pretended that he had never heard of David. "What makes you think I would take my bread, my water, and my meat and give it to you? Besides, David may not have even sent you!"

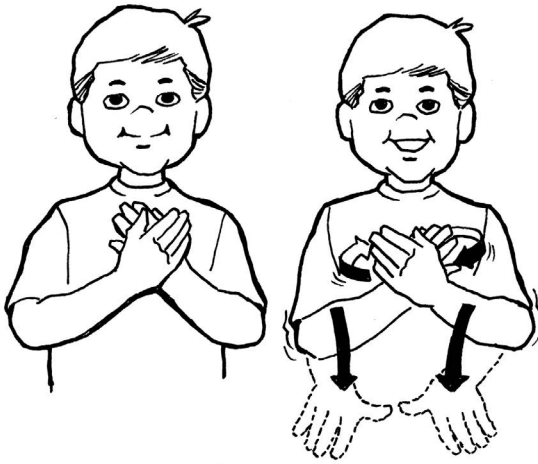
When the messengers told David how Nabal had acted, David was very angry! He and four hundred of his men set out to fight the people of my town. But one of Nabal's servants told me the whole story. "David's men were often nearby when we were caring for the sheep. They never hurt us or stole from us, and we were always safe," he said. "Can't we do something now about how Nabal treated David?"

I knew I had to do something! I told my servants to load donkeys with bread, wine, meat, grain, raisins, and figs for me to take to David. Suddenly, as I was riding my donkey on the path, there was David!

Quickly, I got off my donkey and bowed to David. "Don't pay any attention to that worthless Nabal!" I said. "His name means fool, and it really fits him! Please take this gift of food I've brought and share it with your men. The Lord has kept you from killing innocent people to get back at Nabal. The Lord will always protect you and promises good things for you."

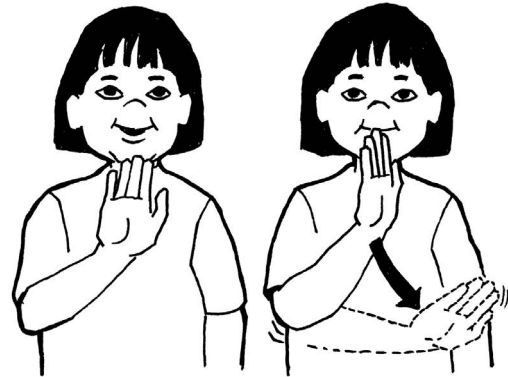
David said, "God must have sent you to meet me! Praise God, and you should also be praised for your good sense. You kept me from getting back at Nabal. Don't worry—I'll do what you asked."





PEACE

Press palms together. Rotate palms to switch which hand is on top. Open hands and move them down and away from the body.



BE

Make a "B" sign with your hand. Place index finger at lips, then move hand forward and away.



WITH

Make an "A" sign with both hands. Bring the signs together, with knuckles and palms touching.



YOU

Point at the other person using your index finger.

Bringing an offering of peace

